

McMaster University

Labour Studies 2M03
Creating and Connecting:
Popular Culture, Social Media, and Labour

Spring 2018

Tuesday and Thursdays @ 6:00pm in BSB-136
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The simultaneous rise of the knowledge/creative economy and neoliberal economic policies in the 1970s decisively ruptured the postwar Keynesian social contract and its associated images of class and work. This course examines the role social movements, new technologies, and media-ecosystems play in reshaping our experiences and perceptions of class and work. The course is divided into three sections, exploring in turn: (1) historical and more recent representations of class and workers in popular culture (i.e. music, TV, film, online); (2) the new knowledge economy, the role of social media in it, and associated transformations in class and work; and, (3) a closer look at the actual labour underpinning the cultural industries and new media technologies, including historic and more recent efforts to organize workers in these fields. Significantly, the course brings an intersectional lens to bear on these issues by drawing attention to the ways in which race, gender, sexuality, and ability also frame popular understandings of class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The assigned readings are drawn from a variety of sources (including playlists, films, videos, podcasts, etc). While the majority of texts will be accessible online, a number of key readings are in the course-pack (**CP**) designed for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

LSQ (Lecture #2 – Lecture #12)	- 20%
Film Review (Lecture #6)	- 15%
Research paper proposal (Lecture #8)	- 5%
Major Research Paper (Lecture # 12)	- 30%
Final Exam (June 14)	- 30%

COURSE CALENDAR AND REQUIRED READINGS

LECTURE 1 – May 1 COURSE INTRO

This lecture provides a general introduction to the course, key terms and concepts that will be used throughout, and an outline of expectations/assignments. We will also watch a segment from the documentary *Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class*.

<p style="text-align: center;">PART I CLASS AND WORK IN POPULAR MUSIC AND VISUAL CULTURE</p>
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LECTURE 2 – May 3 SOUNDING OUT THE WORKPLACE: FROM THE DEPRESSION ERA TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (1930s – 1960s)

LSQ 1: With reference to the readings and the weekly playlist, does the music from this period speak in any way to our lives today? Why do you believe it does or doesn't?

This lecture explores the explosion of socially conscious popular music across North America from the 1930s to the 1960s. This was music that reflected critically on themes of work, class, and racial inequality. Musicians in this period were often intimately involved with significant social movements, including the labour and civil rights movements.

Playlist 1 is on *Avenue to Learn* – this playlist includes some of the songs referenced in this week's readings and lecture. Try to listen to the playlist while doing the readings.

Required Readings

- “Foreword” (John Steinbeck, pg. 8-9) and “Introduction” (Woody Guthrie, pg. 15-20) from *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* (Oak Publications, 1967). [CP]
- “This Machine Kills Fascists: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie” (US History Scene - <http://ushistoryscene.com/article/woody-guthrie>).
- “Spokane Wobblies Create First IWW Songbook” (HistoryLink.org, 2005) - <http://historylink.org/File/7338>.
- “Which Side Are You On?": The Life and Travels of a Working-Class Song – Working Class Perspectives (9 April 2012) – <https://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/2012/04/09/which-side-are-you-on-the-life-and-travels-of-a-working-class-song/>.
- “Lead Belly, Folk-Music Giant, Has a Smithsonian Moment” (New York Times, 22 February 2015) - <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/arts/music/lead-belly-folk-music-giant-has-a-smithsonian-moment.html?r=0>.
- “Birth of a Freedom Anthem” (New York Times, 14 March 2015) – <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/opinion/sunday/birth-of-a-freedom-anthem.html>.

LECTURE 3 – May 8
PICTURING WORK:
VISUAL CULTURE AND FILM IN THE MID-20th CENTURY

LSQ 2: According to Puette, how did early Hollywood productions ‘frame’ the labour movement? Do you agree with this portrayal of unions? Why do you agree/disagree?

This week explores early visual representations of work, including those in the ‘social realist’ tradition. Particular focus is placed on the evolution of the nascent film industry in the early to mid-twentieth century, the contested representation of workers on film, and how work was re-imagined for the silver screen up to the early 1960s. Particular attention is placed on the ways in which workers and unions were represented, as well as an overview of attempts to build alternative imaginaries of working-class life in film.

Film List 1 on *Avenue to Learn*. These are some of the films mentioned in the readings and lecture for this week. You are encouraged to watch at least one before the lecture.

Required Readings

- “The Movies: Labour Framed” in *Through Jaundiced Eyes: How the Media View Organized Labour* (Cornell University 1992), pp. 12-31. [CP]
- “Salt of the Earth: Made of labour, by labour, for labour” (The Guardian, 10 March 2014) - <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/mar/10/salt-of-the-earth-labour-workers-blacklisted-filmmakers>.

LECTURE 4 – May 10
POSTINDUSTRIAL MUSIC-SCAPES:
MUSIC AND WORKING CLASS REALITY FROM THE 1970s TO THE 2010s

LSQ 3: According to this week’s readings/podcast, how are the social realities of the post-industrial era being reflected in pop music? How have popular meanings of ‘work’ changed?

As globalization, neoliberalism, and new technologies unsettled the old certainties of the postwar social order, an explosion of new music emerged accompanying the transformed landscape of the postindustrial era. This week we explore the evolution of popular music from the 1970s to the present, including the working-class dimensions of country, disco, funk, rock, punk, R&B, and hip hop.

Required Readings

- “Dead Man’s Town” in *Stayin’ Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (The New Press 2010), pp. 357-369. [CP]
- “Kickin’ Reality, Kickin’ Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles” in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (The Free Press, 1994), pp. 183-209, 223-226. [CP]
- “Listen to Britney Spears – work is the new religion” (Federico Campagna, The Guardian, 7 October 2013) - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/07/britney-spears-bitch-work-religion>.
- “Why Everyone Is Obsessed With Songs About Work Right Now” (Fader, 28 April 2016) - <http://www.thefader.com/2016/04/28/rihanna-work-fifth-harmony-work-from-home>.
- “How #BlackLivesMatter started a musical revolution” (The Guardian, 13 March 2016) - <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/13/black-lives-matter-beyonce-kendrick-lamar-protest>.

- Podcast: “Work It! Dance, Labour, Capitalism” (*Beholder Halfway* 2016) - <http://www.beholderhalfway.com/2015/11/work-it-capitalism-labor-dance.html>.

Playlist 2 on *Avenue to Learn* – this playlist includes some of the songs referenced in this week’s readings and lecture. Try to listen to the playlist while doing your weekly readings.

LECTURE 5 – May 15
THE POSTINDUSTRIAL WORKING-CLASS ON FILM AND TV (1970s – 2010s)

LSQ 4: According to the readings, what are some of the dominant ways that the working class is represented in popular media since the 1970s? What recent shows or films do you believe accurately represent the reality of working class life in North America?

This week explores postindustrial representations of work in visual media (film, TV, online). We examine the period that begins with the return of social realist portrayals to Hollywood and network TV in the 1970s, to more recent portrayals of work that reflect growing precarity. In this period, the inaccurate image of a North American ‘working-class’ dominated by white, male, industrial/manual-workers was importantly disrupted.

Required Readings

- “The Important Sound of Things Falling Apart” in *Stayin’ Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (The New Press, 2010), pp. 313-337, 348-352. [CP]
- “How Labor Gets Framed” in *Framed! Labor and the Corporate Media* (Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 1-20. [CP]
- “TV’s Dwindling Middle Class” (New York Times Magazine, 27 April 2016) - <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/01/magazine/tvs-dwindling-middle-class.html>.
- “Office lol-itics: the evolution of the workplace sitcom” (*The Guardian* – 23 Jan 2018) - <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/jan/23/office-comedy-tv-shows-evolution-corporate>.
- “Decades Ago, Roseanne Got the Working Class Right. Can It Do the Same in the Age of Trump?” (Vanity Fair, 22 March 2018) - <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/03/roseanne-revival-abc-season-10-roseanne-barr-donald-trump-working-class-sitcoms>.
- “‘Duck Dynasty’ vs. ‘Modern Family’: 50 Maps of the U.S. Cultural Divide” (New York Times, 27 December 2016) - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/26/upshot/duck-dynasty-vs-modern-family-television-maps.html>.

Film List 2 on *Avenue to Learn*. These are films that are mentioned in the readings and lecture for this week. You are encouraged to watch at least one of these films before class.

PART II
UNDERSTANDING THE CREATIVE/KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE

LECTURE 6 – May 17 – YOUR FILM REVIEW IS DUE TODAY!
UNDERSTANDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE, LABOUR, AND LOGISTICS BEHIND THE CREATIVE/KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Before exploring the creative/knowledge economy, it’s important to pause and consider the underlying physical infrastructure, human labour, and logistics that make it possible. This

week we explore the material foundations underpinning our virtual worlds, examining the global supply chains that enable the digital technologies pervading our lives to emerge.

Required Readings

- Two pieces on the raw-materials used in the production of digital technologies:
 - (1) “Where Apple Gets the Tantalum for Your iPhone” (Newsweek, 4 February 2015) - <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/02/13/where-apple-gets-tantalum-your-iphone-304351.html>.
 - (2) “Tech firms must go beyond Congo's 'conflict minerals' to clean supply chain: study” (Reuters, 6 April 2017) - <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-congo-minerals-supply-idUSKBN1781M1>.
- Watch/read the following videos and articles dealing with the different types of labour embedded in Apple’s supply chain, from design and manufacturing to retail:
 - (1) “Motion Graphic: The iPhone Economy” (New York Times, 21 January 2012) - <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/01/20/business/the-iphone-economy.html>.
 - (2) “Video: Made in China” (New York Times, 26 January 2012) – <http://www.nytimes.com/video/business/100000001313019/made-in-china.html>.
 - (3) “Apple’s Retail Army, Long on Loyalty but Short on Pay” (New York Times, 23 June 2012) - <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/business/apple-store-workers-loyal-but-short-on-pay.html#>.
- A number of academics and artists have also recently begun to explore the physical infrastructures underpinning the internet. Briefly take a look at their work:
 - (1) “Bundled, Buried & Behind Closed Doors” (Ben Mendelson, Vimeo) - <https://vimeo.com/30642376>.
 - (2) “Internet Machine” (Timo Arnall) – <http://www.elasticspace.com/2014/05/internet-machine>.
 - (3) “Where the internet lives: the artist who snooped on Google’s data farm” (The Guardian, 4 February 2015) – <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/04/google-data-farm-john-gerrard-internet-art>.
- These two pieces explore what happens to the world’s electronic waste and the workers who deal with it:
 - (1) “Making and Unmaking the Digital World” (New York Times, 5 June 2015) - <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/making-and-unmaking-the-digital-world.html>.
 - (2) “E-waste Republic” (Al Jazeera, 2015) – <http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2015/ewaste/index.html>.

LECTURE 7 – May 22 IMAGINING POSTINDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES: THEORY AND REALITY

LSQ 5: According to this week’s readings, what are the main ways in which labour is being transformed by new technologies?

This week explores some of the leading theories that promise a ‘new’ postindustrial economy, including those addressing the increasing role of knowledge, innovation, and creativity in the 21st century workplace. While the mainstream literatures that address these issues are often couched in optimistic language, the underlying realities of expanding low-wage and precarious service work tell a different story. Along these lines, the emerging app-based ‘gig-economy’ – Uber, TaskRabbit, AskForTask, Fiver, Mechanical Turk, etc. - is becoming an important site of new labour market controversies.

Required Readings

- Three pieces on the post-industrial labour force:
 - (1) “A New Historical Subject: The Non-Class of Post-Industrial Proletarians” in *Farewell to the Working Class* (Pluto Press 1982), pp. 66-74. [CP]
 - (2) “On the phenomenon of ‘bullsh*t jobs’” (Strike, 17 August 2013) – <http://strikemag.org/bullshit-jobs/>.
 - (3) “On ‘bullsh*t jobs’” (The Economics, 21 August 2013) – <http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/08/labour-markets-0>.
- Two articles on Richard Florida’s concept of the ‘creative class’:
 - (1) “The Rise of the Creative Class” (Washington Monthly, May 2002) – <https://www.os3.nl/media/2011-2012/richard-florida-the-rise-of-the-creative-class.pdf>.
 - (2) “Fallacy of the creative class: Why Richard Florida’s ‘urban renaissance’ won’t save U.S. cities” (Grist, 11 February 2013) - <http://grist.org/cities/fallacy-of-the-creative-class/>.
 - (3) “Montreal ‘coffices’ emerge to meet needs of self-employed” (CBC News, 5 March 2016) - <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/coffice-anticafe-montreal-self-employers-1.3445024>.
- A number of articles on the app-based gig economy:
 - (1) “In the Sharing Economy, Workers Find Both Freedom and Uncertainty” (New York Times, 16 August 2014) – <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/technology/in-the-sharing-economy-workers-find-both-freedom-and-uncertainty.html>.
 - (2) “Against Sharing” (Jacobin, 19 September 2014) – <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/09/against-sharing>.
 - (3) “How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers’ Buttons” (New York Times, 2 April 2017) – <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/02/technology/uber-drivers-psychological-tricks.html>.
 - (4) “How Domestic Workers Wager Safety In The Platform Economy” (Fast Company, 29 March 2018) - <https://www.fastcompany.com/40541050/how-domestic-workers-wager-safety-in-the-platform-economy>.

LECTURE 8 – May 24 - **YOUR FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL IS DUE TODAY!** DIGITAL DYSTOPIAS: LABOUR IN AN AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

LSQ 6: According to this week’s readings how are new technologies constraining the choices of the working-class in the emerging digital economy?

Are new technologies disempowering workers? This week looks at everything from new digital surveillance technologies in the workplace, the use of algorithms to guide managerial decisions, new forms of low-wage work in the knowledge/creative economy, and the increasing use of digital technologies to police the poor.

Required Readings

- “Chapter 1: Proletariat” in *Cyber Proletariat: Global Labor in the Digital Vortex* (Pluto Press 2015), pp. 1-18 – http://issuu.com/plutopress/docs/pages_from_dyer_cp_no_crops_05-03-2.
- “Justice for ‘Data Janitors’” (Public Books, 15 January 2015) – <http://www.publicbooks.org/nonfiction/justice-for-data-janitors>.

- Four articles that explore the effects of new technologies in shaping the workplace environments of employees:
 - (1) “Unblinking Eyes Track Employees: Workplace Surveillance Sees Good and Bad” (New York Times, 21 June 2014) – <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/22/technology/workplace-surveillance-sees-good-and-bad.html>.
 - (2) “Working Anything but 9 to 5: Scheduling Technology Leaves Low-Income Parents With Hours of Chaos” (New York Times, 13 August 2014) – <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/starbucks-workers-scheduling-hours.html>.
 - (3) “Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace” (New York Times, 15 August 2015) – <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/technology/inside-amazon-wrestling-big-ideas-in-a-bruising-workplace.html>.
 - (4) “When Your Boss is an Algorithm” (Financial Times, 8 September 2016) – <https://www.ft.com/content/88fdc58e-754f-11e6-b60a-de4532d5ea35>.
 - (5) “Wearables in the workplace and the dangers of staff surveillance” (Financial Times, 28 February 2017) - <https://www.ft.com/content/089c0d00-d739-11e6-944b-e7eb37a6aa8e>.
 - (6) “The trouble with companies asking workers to get microchip implants” (Macleans, 23 April 2017) - <http://www.macleans.ca/society/the-trouble-with-companies-asking-workers-to-get-microchip-implants-2/>.
- **PODCAST:** “Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor” (Data & Society, 17 January 2018) - <https://listen.datasociety.net/automating-inequality-high-tech-tools-profile-police-punish-poor/>.

LECTURE 9 – May 29
SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?
NEW MODELS OF LABOUR ORGANIZING

LSQ 7: Based on this week’s readings, what are some of the possibilities and limitations of using social media to affect social change?

This week explores some of the basic building blocks that labour unions use to build-up successful social media campaigns. It also explores some of the deeper social movement organizing skills necessary to move beyond ‘clicktivism’ or hashtag-activism in the service of sustainable social change. The readings for this week point directly to both the possibilities and limitations of using social media for positive social change.

Required Readings

- Four articles that explore the use of social media in recent labour campaigns:
 - (1) “Fight for \$15: Directed-network campaigning in action” (Mobilization Lab, 8 September 2016) - <https://mobilisationlab.org/fight-for-15-directed-network-campaigning-in-action/>.
 - (2) “The Verizon Strike, The Virtual Picket Line, & The Labor Movement” (OnLabor, 4 May 2016) - <https://onlabor.org/the-verizon-strike-the-virtual-picket-line-the-labor-movement/>.
 - (3) Two articles on the recent teachers’ strikes in the US:
 - (a) “Social Media Helps Public-Sector Labor Organizing Efforts” (Government Technology, 16 March 2018) - <http://www.govtech.com/social/Social-Media-Helps-Public-Sector-Labor-Organizing-Efforts.html>.

- (b) “On Social Media, Striking Teachers Are Organizing for Themselves” (T74, 3 April 2018) - <https://www.the74million.org/on-social-media-striking-teachers-are-organizing-for-themselves/>.
- The following three articles focus on the difference between social-media mobilization and the harder (but equally important) work of grassroots organizing and social change:
 - (1) “Having the Hard Conversations: Jane McAlevey on Fight for 15, labor’s crisis of strategy, and the difference between organizing and mobilizing” (Jacobin, 10 April 2015) - <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/10/strike-chicago-teachers-union-public-private-sector>.
 - (2) “Uncommon CORE” (Jacobin, 3 June 2014) – <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/03/uncommon-core-chicago-teachers-union>.
 - (3) “Fight for \$15, Black Lives Matter Groups Join Forces” (VOA, 24 March 2017) - <http://www.voanews.com/a/fight-for-15-black-lives-matter-groups-join-forces/3780009.html>.
- Briefly visit and have a look at the websites of the following labour campaigns that use social media to get their message across:
 - (1) #FightFor15 - <https://www.15andfairness.org/>.
 - (2) Employees’ Walmart Canada - <http://employeswalmartcanada.ca/>.
 - (3) Workers’ Action Centre – Toronto - <http://workersactioncentre.org/>.
 - (4) Justicia for Migrant Workers - <http://justicia4migrantworkers.org/>.
- Quickly scan the contents of these social media guides and training modules prepared by unions for their members: (1) IATSE’s training guide for members on “Netiquette” (http://www.iatse.net/sites/default/files/updated_june_17_iatse_netiquette_guide.pdf) and “Social Media Guide” (http://www.iatse.net/sites/default/files/2017_-_june_social_media_guide_netiquette_guide_pdf.pdf) | (2) Take a quick look at one of the following Training Modules and Resources on using social media released by the AFL-CIO: <http://www.aflcio.org/About/Digital-Strategies-Trainings/Digital-Strategies-Training-Modules-and-Resources>.

<p>PART III ORGANIZING CULTURAL PRODUCERS</p>

LECTURE 10 – May 31
ORGANIZING LABOUR IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

LSQ 8: According to the readings, what are some of the major challenges that musicians have faced historically? What are some emerging challenges confronting musicians today?

Struggles for control over output and the distribution of profits between musicians and the major recording labels have been a feature of the industry since its beginnings. Patterns of exploitation have tended to match those in the labour market more broadly, with racialized musicians and women more likely to be undervalued and short-changed for their contributions. As technology develops and business models in the music industry shift, new opportunities and challenges are emerging for cultural producers. We will also examine the role of behind the scenes workers who are equally crucial to the music industry.

Required Readings

- Three articles on the history of early labour organizing by musicians in the USA and Canada:
 - (1) “The Silence That Sparked New Sounds” (Wall Street Journal, 26 December 2012) – <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324024004578171403739777528>.

- (2) “History of the American Federation of Musicians” (AFM): <http://www.afm.org/about/history-2/>.
- (3) Musicians Unions (Canadian Encyclopedia) – <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/unions-emc/>.
- On some of the current challenges faced by musicians in light of the growing popularity of digital streaming services:
 - (1) “Revenge Of The Record Labels: How The Majors Renewed Their Grip On Music” (Forbes, 15 April 2015) – <http://www.forbes.com/sites/zackomalleygreenburg/2015/04/15/revenge-of-the-record-labels-how-the-majors-renewed-their-grip-on-music/print/>.
 - (2) “How streaming saved the music industry” (Financial Times, 16 January 2017) - <https://www.ft.com/content/cd99b95e-d8ba-11e6-944b-e7eb37a6aa8e>.
 - (3) “This Is How Many Streams a Musician Needs to Make Minimum Wage in America” (Music.Mic, 15 April 2015) - <http://mic.com/articles/115384/this-is-how-many-streams-a-musician-needs-to-make-minimum-wage-in-america#.liLpdv0bZ>.
 - (4) “Music Artists Take On the Business, Calling for Change” (New York Times, 31 July 2015) - <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/business/media/music-artists-take-on-the-business-calling-for-change.html>.
 - (5) Songwriters Sing Blues Over Diminished Streaming Royalties (Bloomberg, 7 March 2017) - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-07/songwriters-sing-blues-over-diminished-royalties-from-streaming>.
- Two articles highlighting the precarity facing Canadian musicians:
 - (1) Service Canada’s Review of Musicians and Singers labour market prospects in Canada – http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/5133.shtml.
 - (2) “The average Canadian indie artist earns a whopping \$7,228 a year playing music, plus some other industry stats” (National Post, 5 March 2013) - <http://news.nationalpost.com/arts/the-average-canadian-indie-artist-earns-a-whopping-7228-a-year-playing-music-plus-some-other-industry-stats>.

LECTURE 11 – June 5
ORGANIZING LABOUR IN THE FILM AND TV INDUSTRIES

LSQ 9: According to the readings, why did Hollywood become and why did it remain ‘a union town’? What are some of the emerging challenges facing film and TV workers?

This week explores the long history of labour organizing in film and TV, including some of the most important strikes by actors/actresses, screenwriters, production crews, etc. in recent decades. It also looks at how more recent shifts in the way film/TV content is produced, marketed and distributed – not to mention how we acquire, consume, and watch our favorite movies and shows – is influencing new rounds of labour struggle.

Required Readings

- Two articles on some of Hollywood’s early union organizing history:
 - (1) “Hollywood Is a Union Town” (The Nation, 2 April 1938) – <http://newdeal.feri.org/nation/na38146p381.htm>.
 - (2) “The Disney Artists’ Strike of 1941 (Cartoon Brew, 29 May 2016) - <http://www.cartoonbrew.com/artist-rights/day-75-years-ago-disney-animation-changed-forever-140103.html>.
- More recent perspectives on Hollywood as a union town:
 - (1) “Hollywood - America's Last Union Town” (Daily Kos, 14 August 2012) – <http://www.dailykos.com/stories/2012/8/14/1120288/-Hollywood-America-s-Last-Union-Town>.

- (2) “The gig economy is a disaster for workers. Hollywood’s unions can help them learn to fight back” (Quartz, 1 September 2017) - <https://qz.com/1052310/hollywood-unions-offer-the-perfect-model-for-the-beaten-down-workers-of-todays-gig-economy/>.
- (3) “Powerful Hollywood Women Unveil Anti-Harassment Action Plan” (The New York Times, 1 January 2018) - <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/01/movies/times-up-hollywood-women-sexual-harassment.html>.
- Some emerging challenges in organizing TV workers:
 - (1) “The Real World of Reality TV: Worker Exploitation” (In These Times, 14 October 2014) - http://inthesetimes.com/working/entry/17254/reality_tv_production_workers_win_collective_bargaining.
 - (2) “WGA Deal: Extended Talks Highlight Major Shifts in Peak TV Era” (Variety, 2 May 2017) - <http://variety.com/2017/tv/features/wga-strike-peak-tv-labor-strike-1202405696/>.
 - (3) “SAG-AFTRA Seeks to End Auditions in Hotel Rooms” (Teen Vogue, 15 April 2018) - <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/sag-aftra-end-auditions-hotel-rooms>.

**LECTURE 12 – June 7 – YOUR FINAL PAPER IS DUE TODAY!
ORGANIZING SOCIAL MEDIA AND APP-ECONOMY WORKERS
[LECTURE WILL ALSO FEATURE AN EXAM REVIEW]**

LSQ 10: According to the readings, what are some of the new possibilities emerging for organizing workers directly involved in social media content generation and in the app-economy? What alternative visions exist for the digital economy?

We end with a consideration of nascent efforts to organize workers directly involved in social media content generation, as well as those who are increasingly resorting to the app-based gig-economy for employment. Recent organizing drives at popular social media outlets and websites speak to an emerging terrain of struggle. We also explore the possibility of alternative digital economies that wouldn’t be based on worker exploitation.

Required Readings

- Three articles on recent moves to unionize online content generators at some of the world’s largest online platforms:
 - (1) “Why HuffPo and other ‘new’ media journalists are choosing unions” (The Conversation, 22 October 2015) - <http://theconversation.com/why-huffpo-and-other-new-media-journalists-are-choosing-unions-49204>.
 - (2) “Organizing New Media” (Jacobin Magazine, 17 November 2016) - <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/11/gawker-union-gizmodo-deadspin-organized-labor-online-univision-writers-guild/>.
 - (3) “Internet Creators Guild Releases First Report on Brand Deals” (Forbes, 1 June 2017) - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/fruzsinaeordogh/2017/06/01/internet-creators-guild-releases-first-report-on-brand-deals/#2155e49462cb>.
- Four articles exploring the intersections between new apps, digital technology, and work:
 - (1) “Labr? An App For Organizing Workers Is Coming” (10 June 2015) -

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/coralewis/digitizing-the-labor-movement-an-app-for-organizing-workers#.ukXwoY6Bp2>

- (2) "New Weapon in Day Laborers' Fight Against Wage Theft: A Smartphone App" (New York Times, 1 March 2016) - <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/nyregion/new-weapon-in-day-laborers-fight-against-wage-theft-a-smartphone-app.html>.
- (3) "Innovating the Labor Movement" (Medium, 23 January 2017) - <https://medium.com/the-workers-lab-library/innovating-the-labor-movement-f83ea6a603cf>.
- (4) "The Network Uber Drivers Built" (FastCompany, 9 January 2018) - <https://www.fastcompany.com/40501439/the-network-uber-drivers-built>.
- Four articles examining alternative ways of organizing the digital economy:
 - (1) Platform Cooperativism vs. the Sharing Economy (The Medium, 5 December 2014) - <https://medium.com/@trebors/platform-cooperativism-vs-the-sharing-economy-2ea737f1b5ad>.
 - (2) "Worker-owned tech cooperatives find a niche near Silicon Valley" (Al Jazeera, 26 May 2015) - <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/26/worker-owned-tech-cooperatives-find-a-niche-near-silicon-valley.html>.
 - (3) "How workers can profit by taking control of technology" (Financial Times, 17 April 2017) - <https://www.ft.com/content/beb85bdc-1f8e-11e7-b7d3-163f5a7f229c>.
 - (4) "Trump's Tech Opposition" (Jacobin, 2 May 2017) - <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/05/tech-workers-silicon-valley-trump-resistance-startups-unions>.

FINAL EXAM

IN CLASS (June 14)

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

LECTURE STUDY QUESTION (LSQ) - EVERY WEEK (20%)

Students will be required to submit 10 responses to the weekly Lecture Study Questions (LSQs) in the course. You will need to answer the LSQ for a given lecture in 300 (min) to 500 words (max) - drawing on the required podcasts, readings, videos, or playlists for that specific lecture. Students will be graded for their demonstrated knowledge of the assigned weekly materials and their ability to integrate these into a concise answer to the weekly question. Consider this a useful study tool helping you prepare for the final exam. All weekly summaries are to be submitted in hardcopy format at the beginning of the relevant lecture. No late submissions are accepted.

FILM REVIEW ASSIGNMENT (15%) - LECTURE #6 (May 17)

Students are expected to choose one movie from **Film List 1** (Lecture 3) and one from **Film List 2** (Lecture 5). After watching both films, students should prepare a 1,000-word film review comparing and contrasting representations of class, work, and trade unions (if relevant) in both films. In preparing your review, consider the following questions: What are the main differences in the ways working class lives are portrayed in the two films? What are the most significant shifts in the nature of work in the two eras represented? How do issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, or ability play into the different experiences of characters in both films? All reviews must include a word-count. Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day.

MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER (35%) - LECT. #8 (May 24) + LECT. #12 (June 7).

This assignment consists of two parts: (1) a proposal that includes a brief research question and preliminary thesis as well as an annotated bibliography of five sources (due May 24). Essay topics are to be drawn from the weekly lecture topics and are meant as an exploration of these issues in greater depth (excluding topics from Lecture #3 and Lecture #5 already covered in your film-reviews). Papers are to be a minimum of 2,000 and a maximum of 2,500 words and are due on June 7. All papers must include a word-count. Late assignments are penalized 2% a day.

FINAL EXAM (30%) – IN CLASS (June 14)

The final exam will consist of 5 short-definitions (out of a list of ten key terms) worth 10% each and 2 long-answer questions worth 25% each.

COURSE POLICIES

LATE PENALTIES AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances. All requests for deadline extension must be made through the Faculty of Social Sciences (KTH-120). All other late **assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2% a day** (with weekends counting as a single day). Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Dean of Social Sciences. Furthermore, Lecture Study Questions (LSQs) must be submitted on the day they are due and no late summaries will be accepted unless a valid medical or work-related reason is given. Late assignments can only be handed in during office hours or in-class. Only **hard copies** of assignments will be accepted. Please ensure that you also retain a hardcopy of all your submitted work.

ACADEMIC ETHICS - New policy:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located on the website above. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: **plagiarism**, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained; **improper collaboration in group work**; as well as **copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations**.

COURSE MODIFICATIONS

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all

courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email and course website weekly during the term and to note any changes.

USE OF COMPUTERS

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT [<http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca>]

“McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, the dissemination of knowledge and personal and professional development. Membership in this community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study work and live within it.”

EMAIL POLICY

Labour Studies has adopted the policy that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

ABSENCE REPORTING

Absence Reporting: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf>, self-reporting for less than 3 days.

STUDENT RESOURCES

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (MUSC-B107) [<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>]

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) supports students who have been diagnosed with a disability or disorder, such as a learning disability, ADHD, mental health diagnosis, chronic medical condition, sensory, neurological or mobility limitation. SAS assists with academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies; Assistive Technologies; Test & Exam Administration; Note-taking; Accommodations for Courses; SAS Lounge and Events. The course instructor and McMaster University welcome feedback on disability issues. Please inform your instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.

University Accommodation Policy:

<http://mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf> [AODA website: <http://mcmaster.ca/accessibility>].

LABOUR STUDIES' LIAISON LIBRARIAN

Did you know that Labour Studies has its own Liaison Librarian who can help you:

- Search for, evaluate, and use information effectively.
- With advice on plagiarism and the ethical use of information, including proper citation methods.

Contact: Mills Library L-305, (905) 525-9140, Olga Perkovic or ext. 24719 Krista Godfrey <http://www.copyright.mcmaster.ca/copyright-mcmaster.html>.

MCMASTER ASSOCIATION OF PART-TIME STUDENTS (MAPS)

MAPS exists to look after the special interests of part-time degree and certificate students, who have a different educational experience than full-time students. While classes are in session, MAPS is open: Monday to Thursday: 9:30am to 8:30pm and Friday 9:30am to 2:00pm. MAPS is located in the Student Centre, Room 234, ext. 22021, email: maps@mcmaster.ca, website: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/maps/index.html>.

YOUR SAFETY ON CAMPUS

Emergency phones are located around campus with a direct connect to the Security Office. You can also dial "88" from any campus phone. **Working late?** Call Security at ext 24281 and let them know. You can request periodic checks by phone and the officers who patrol the buildings will know to keep an eye out for you. There is also a **Walk Home Assistance Team** that will escort anyone to any location on campus or to/from an off campus location within a designated area. They can be reached at ext 27500.

You can also receive emergency notifications as texts by registering at:

http://security.mcmaster.ca/campus_emergencies_staff.html.

USEFUL WEBSITES @ MCMASTER

Human Rights and Equity Services: <http://http://www.hres.mcmaster.ca>.

Ombuds Office: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/ombuds>.

Student Success Centre: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca>.

Housing: <http://housing.mcmaster.ca/index.php> | <http://macoffcampus.mcmaster.ca>.

University Technology Services: <http://mcmaster.ca/uts>.

McMaster Clubs Directory: <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/clubs-directory>.