1. Course Description
This course examines how unions work, what they do for workers, and the challenges they face in the Canadian context. Students will explore collective bargaining, union democracy, labour’s role in politics, working class diversity, and union renewal. The course will also focus on the processes by which unions make decisions and try to take action on key issues. Tutorials will provide students with an opportunity to gain experience with how these processes work. By the end of the course, students will have a better grip on the purpose of unions, why they are important, why some interests are hostile to them, and how they hope to survive in the future.

In addition to attending the lectures, students will come to weekly tutorials. The tutorials will be organized on a problem-based working model. Working in groups, students will choose a labour organization and then explore its history, structure, and composition in depth. Students will then decide on some key issues facing the union, and determine a course of action going forward. The small group learning process culminates in a national union policy convention in which students from the various unions debate the merits of their policy proposals with fellow delegates. There will be a mid-term test and an analytical paper. The final exam will cover all course material.

2. Required Reading
- Custom Courseware, Labour Studies 2A03
- Some readings online as outlined below

3. Evaluation Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Test</td>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Essay</td>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorials &amp; Convention</td>
<td>See detailed breakdown</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Assignments</td>
<td>See detailed breakdown</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Exam period</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Important Notes About Assignments and Grades:

- **Late Penalties** will be 2% per working day. (This means 2% out of 100 on that assignment, not 2% from the final course grade.)
- **MSAF** – if you use MSAF for an assignment, test, tutorial or the convention for this course, please make sure to send the follow-up email that is required with the MSAF form. Also, make sure to spell out what accommodation you are seeking. **If you want an extension for a paper through MSAF**, remember the limits of what this method will give you.
- **Grade Adjustments**: redistributions of grade values (for example, moving the weight for an assignment to the final exam) are extremely rare and given only in truly extraordinary circumstances. Expect any accommodation – if given – to involve an extension or a make-up test.

4. Learning Objectives

This course will enhance the student’s depth and breadth of knowledge – depth will be especially enhanced, as we will explore in detail the successes and limits of organized labour in Canada. As with all Labour Studies courses, it takes an interdisciplinary approach, thus allowing students to learn and apply different theoretical frameworks and analytical tools from various fields. The course will also help students to understand the limits of knowledge, in particular because scholars remain divided (or simply uncertain) about the causes of the recent struggles of unions, and especially about how unions can recover their strength.

The course will give students greater knowledge of methodologies, in both the research assignment, and especially in the group work. Through the research for the group project and the mock labour convention, students will also enhance their teamwork and their oral communication skills. Since the group work challenges students to pick their own union and develop policies to further its interests, the course will further their professional capacities and their ability to apply knowledge.

5. Outline of Lecture Topics and Readings

September 6 – Introduction

September 13 – Union Structure

**Readings:**
- CUPE Handbook – online – address posted on Avenue
- CUPE Stewards Handbook – online – address posted on Avenue
- Black and Silver, "Excerpts from Chapter 2: Workplace Citizenship, Union Roles and Structures” from *Building a Better World – An Introduction to Trade Unions in Canada*
September 20 – The Wagner Model - Strengths and Limits
   Reading:
   Cuthbertson, “War for the Common Man” – LS 1A3 coursware

September 27 – Unions, Democracy, and Inequality
   Reading:
   Nelson Lichtenstein “Decline of the Union Ideal” from State of the Union
   J. Brennan, “Chapter 2: Unionization and Distribution,” and “Chapter 3: The
   Value of Trade Unions to Canadian Workers” from The Creation of a Shared
   Prosperity in Canada – Unions, Corporations and Countervailing Power.

October 4 – Protecting the Vulnerable – or Not?
   Lectures:
   • Social Unionism
   • Representing Marginalized Workers
   Reading for Social Unionism:
   Stephanie Ross, Derek Hrynyshyn, “Canadian Autoworkers, the Climate Crisis,
   and the Contradictions of Social Unionism”
   Readings for Expanding Rights & Marginalized Workers:
   P. Champ, “Advancing Human Rights for All Canadians” from Unions Matter
   Basok and Carrasco, “Advancing the Rights of Non-Citizens in Canada: A
   Human Rights Approach to Migrant Rights”

October 11 – First Term Break – No Class

October 18 – **Mid-Term Test this week ***

October 25 – Labour in Quebec
   Reading:
   Peter Graefe, “Whither the Quebec Model” from Boom Bust and Crisis: Labour,
   Corporate Power and Politics in Canada

November 1 – The Neo-Liberal Attack on Unions
   Reading:
   Mark Thomas and Steven Tufts, “Austerity, Right Populism, and the Crisis of
   Labour in Canada.”
   Thomas Edsall, “Republicans Sure Love to Hate Unions”
   http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/republicans-sure-love-to-hate-
   unions.html

November 8 – Union Resistance
   Readings:
   John Peters, “Down in the Vale: Corporate Globalization, Unions on the
   Defensive, and the USW 6500 Strike in Sudbury”

**November 15 - Labour Convention!**

**November 22 – Labour and Politics**
**Readings:**
Bryan Evans, "The New Democratic Party and the Era of Neo-Liberalism" from *Rethinking the Politics of Labour In Canada*

**November 29 – Union Renewal**
**Readings:**
Bronfenbrenner and Juravich, “It Takes more than Housecalls. Organizing to Win with Comprehensive Union Strategy” from *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies*
Lichtenstein in *Dissent* – Labour moving Left
https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/nelson-lichtenstein-labor-moving-left

**December 6 – Wrap-Up and Exam Prep**

5(a). **Tutorial & Group Work Outline**

**NOTE – Much of this program is tentative. It is up to the group to set a schedule and keep it in order to be ready for the convention.**

**Tutorial 1 – Sept. 13: Set-up Your Sub-Group**
**Tutorial 2 – Sept. 20: Finalize Labour Organizations**
**Tutorial 3 – Sept. 27: Explore Background on Your Union**
**Tutorial 4 – Oct. 4: Prioritize Key Challenges**
**Tutorial 5 – Oct. 18: Debate & Draft Policy Resolutions**
  - Oct. 28: Draft Policy Resolution Due (Electronically)
**Tutorial 7 – Nov. 1: Research & Draft Resolution Report**
  - Nov. 4: Deadline for Final Resolutions
  - Nov. 4: Deadline for Resolution Report
**Tutorial 8 – Nov. 8: Convention Preparation**

**Convention: November 15**
**Tutorial 9 – Nov. 22: Convention Debriefing**

**Tutorial and Convention Activities in Detail**
Tutorials will be based on a problem-based small group project, which culminates in the mock labour convention. Each group will decide on a labour organization they want to represent, and then explore that organization in depth. The group will then identify some key challenges facing their organization, and work on a resolution that will address some of those challenges. They will then prepare to get this resolution adopted by the convention.
Attendance and active student participation are extremely important in this course. The problem-based learning aspect of the course will not work unless the students make it work. You need to show not only a willingness to participate, but also some initiative in making decisions and setting your agenda. The marks for this aspect of the course are allocated as follows:

- Tutorial & Convention Attendance 5%
- Participation in Group Discussion, Planning Work, and Convention Proceedings 10%

**Group Assignments**
The Group Meeting Summaries are not given grades – however, failure to submit summaries will result in lost grades on the group assignments. The summaries will be used to track the progress of the group, and the contributions of individual members of the groups.

In addition, each group will prepare a Resolution Report, on the model of a report to a union body, explaining their resolution and offering reasons why it should be supported at the convention. Students will be given guidelines about the requirements for the report.

***Note on Peer Evaluation:*** One of the methods (but not the only one) used to determine the grade for both Tutorial participation and the Group Projects is peer evaluation. Students will be given forms that ask them to assess in detail the work of the other members of their group – and of themselves. These forms, of course, will be confidential.

Participation will also be assessed based in part on the Group Meeting Summaries, which are explained in detail in the Tutorial and Group Work Outline.

**Group Meeting Summaries**
A member of each group will submit weekly meeting summaries by 9am Friday morning following the tutorial.

Note taking responsibility should be allocated to a group member. It is recommended that you rotate responsibility for this, although it is not required (and yes, of course being the one who writes these reports counts as good participation!). Summaries must include the following:

- A list of group members present
- Record of key discussion points
- Plans for future action
- Agenda for next meeting

Reports do not need to be excessively detailed. 400-500 words may be adequate in some cases; most should not exceed 750 words, although some could.

**Resolution Report** – details on this report will be provided in a separate handout (as will details on the essay assignment).
6. DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Labour Studies staff does not date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of student papers. All papers should be submitted/returned in-class, in tutorials or during Professor/TA office hours. Instructors who utilize Avenue to Learn will provide instructions on that preference.

Absence Reporting: [http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/) On-line self-reporting tool – illness lasting less than 3 days. Can only be used once per term. Instructors are not allowed to accept medical notes! These must be submitted to your Faculty office. In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please also communicate with the course instructor.

Code of conduct: [http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca](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.”

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.

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 the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email AND Avenue to Learn (if used by instructor) regularly during the term to note any changes.

E-Mail Communication Policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences: all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor/TA receives a communication from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Please always include student name, ID, course # and TA name in messages.

Evaluations (Online): [http://evals.mcmaster.ca](http://evals.mcmaster.ca), and log in via MACID. These help faculty and the School of Labour Studies to meet our goal of continually improving teaching effectiveness. All students in the course are invited and encouraged to complete the evaluation.

Student Accessibility Services: [http://sas.mcmaster.ca/](http://sas.mcmaster.ca/)
MUSC-B107  905-525-9140 x28652

NOTE: Disclosure of disability-related information is personal and confidential. Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. We work with full time and part time students. SAS provides or assists students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, and Classroom Accommodations. *Please inform the instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.
McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy


Student Success Centre: [http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/)
GH-110  905-525-9140 x24254
Some services include: student orientation, academic skills, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition. Writing Support: [http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html)

Student Wellness Centre: [http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/](http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/)  MUSC-B101  905-525-9140 x27700
Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services