

Work: Dangerous to Your Health?

FALL 2021

INSTRUCTOR: Stephanie Premji

OFFICE: KTH 701

EMAIL: spremji@mcmaster.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Zoom or phone meeting by appointment. Any in-person office hours will be announced on Avenue.

SYNCHRONOUS LECTURES: Wednesdays at 11:30am (see schedule for dates)

Please email me if you have any difficulties accessing course materials

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Course Description

Work is an important determinant of the health and wellbeing of individuals, households, and communities. In this course students will explore the changing world of work its implications for workers’ health. They will learn about health and safety regulations and workers’ compensation, and about how science, the law and the media shape the recognition of work injuries and illnesses. Throughout, the course will investigate social inequalities in work and health, such as related to gender and racialization. While the focus will be on Canada, the global interconnectedness of health and safety issues will be discussed. The course will conclude by examining strategies to protect workers’ health. Empirical, conceptual, and methodological dimensions of health and safety will be explored through multidisciplinary course materials.

** COVID-19 has brought to light long-standing cracks in health and safety. Some of the course material will examine the implications of the pandemic for workers’ health. **

Course Learning Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the health and safety system in Canada, including the rights and the responsibilities of workers and employers.
- To build an awareness of historical and contemporary changes in the world of work and their impacts on occupational hazards and health problems.
- To reflect on how processes at the local and global scales are shaping unequal experiences of work and health.

- To critically evaluate competing arguments about the causes and solutions of health and safety problems.
- To clearly communicate a well-balanced and supported argument orally and in writing.

Required Materials and Texts

- Premji, S. (ed). 2018. *Sick and Tired: Health and Safety Inequalities*. Fernwood Publishing: Halifax.
- Other readings are / will be available on Avenue to Learn.
The instructor may change or add material as the course progresses, for instance in response to current events. Changes will be announced at least one week prior to the class

Course Evaluation Breakdown

Students will be evaluated in the following ways:

Hidden figures assignment	20%	October 6
Pecha Kucha group presentation	25%	November 3
Comment on presentations	5%	November 10
Short paper	25%	December 1
Final exam (take-home)	25%	Released on December 9, due on December 14

Course Structure

Each week, lectures will consist of videos posted on Avenue to Learn. We will also have synchronous classes (via Zoom, see schedule for dates). Synchronous lectures will be recorded and posted on Avenue.

Students will be expected to read, watch, or listen to the assigned materials each week. Optional materials (e.g. relevant news stories) are recommended for some weeks; additional optional material will be posted on Avenue throughout the term.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1

Zoom class 11:30-12:30 – Welcome and course overview

September 8 – How Does Work Impact Health?

- Jackson A. 2016. The unhealthy Canadian workplace (chapter 7). In: *Social determinants of health. Canadian perspectives 3rd edition*. Raphael D. (ed). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press. Pp. 150-170.
- Bittle et al. 2018. Work-related deaths in Canada. *Labour / Le Travail*, 82, 159-187.

Week 2

September 15 – Changing Work, Changing Workforce

- Sick and Tired, Introduction, Chapter 1
- MacEachen E. et al. 2019. *Driving for Uber: a developmental evaluation of occupational health and safety conditions of ride-share work*. Waterloo. Pages 7-12 and 21-42.
- McArthur, J.E. et al. 2020. Government failings put health-care workers at risk. In: *Sick of the system. Why the COVID-19 recovery must be revolutionary*. Between the Lines. Pages 17-27.

Optional:

- Flavelle, C. 2021. Work injuries tied to heat are vastly undercounted, study finds. *The New York Times*. July 17.

Week 3

Zoom class 11:30-1:00 (discussion weeks 2 & 3)

September 22 – Violence & Harassment / Chronic Stress

- Sick and Tired Chapter 2
- Andrews BK, Karcz S, Rosenberg B. 2008. Hooked on a feeling: emotional labor as an occupational hazard of the post-industrial age. *New Solutions*, 18: 245-255.
- Lyons, S. 2016. Hands off pants on. Sexual harassment in Chicago's hospitality industry. *Unite Here Local 1*. Pages 1-12.

Optional:

- Lim, C-J. 2021. The other victims of the pandemic: Workers killed in fights over masks. *Buzzfeed*. July 15.

Week 4

September 29 – Origins of the Health and Safety System

- Sick and Tired Chapter 4.
- Barnetson, B. 2010. Development of occupational health and safety in Canada. In: *The Political Economy of Workplace Injury in Canada*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press. Pages 28-41.
- Jordan Thompson. 2019. Workers' History of Health and Safety: An OHS Timeline. Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

Optional:

- Workers Health & Safety Centre. 1996. Lessons from Elliot Lake. 30 min.

Week 5

Zoom class 11:30-1:00 (discussion weeks 4 & 5)

October 6 – Protecting and Compensating Workers

- Foster J. and Barnetson B. 2016. Legislative framework of injury prevention and compensation. In: *Health and Safety in Canadian Workplaces*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press. Pages 21-42.
- Gray G. 2002. A socio-legal ethnography of the legal right to refuse dangerous work. *Studies in Law, Politics & Society*, 24: 133-169.
- Annable K., Marcoux J., Kubinec V-L. 2017. The price of death : A look at seven Canadians who died at work – and the families wondering whether justice was served. CBC News. November 30.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/workplace-death-injury-labour-laws/>

Optional:

- Paul Cowan. 2001. *Westray*. National Film Board. 1h19 min.
<https://www.nfb.ca/film/westray/>

Hidden figures assignment due today

Week 6

October 13 – Mid-term recess

Week 7

October 20 – The Recognition of Work Injuries and Illnesses

- Sick and Tired Chapters 5 and 6.
- Natasha Luckhardt and Rob Viscardis. Town of widows. CBC Docs Pov. 44 min. <https://gem.cbc.ca/media/cbc-docs-pov/season-3/episode-2/38e815a-0116f264f2d>

Week 8

Zoom class 11:30-2:30 (discussion weeks 7 & 8)

This week we will have a presentation by Natasha Luckardt, producer of Town of Widows.

October 27 – Workers' Experiences of Illness and Injury

- Walter, N. et al. 2004. Masculinity and undocumented labor migration: injured latino day laborers in San Francisco. *Social Science and Medicine*, 59(6): 1159-1168.
- Senthanar S. et al. 2020. Return to work and ripple effects on family of precariously employed injured workers. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 30(1): 72-83.
- Decent Work and Health Network. 2020. Before it's too late: How to close the paid sick leave gap during COVID-19 and beyond. Executive summary, Pages 2-3.

Optional:

- Watch injured workers' stories: <https://injuredworkersonline.org/stories/>

Week 9

November 3 – Pecha Kucha

There are no lectures or readings for this week. Pecha Kucha presentations are due today. Students will view and comment on presentations.

Week 10

November 10 – Sex, Gender and Occupational Health

- Sick and Tired Chapter 7.
- Messing K. 2020. If it's a war against COVID-19, who are the soldiers on the front lines? In: *Sick of the system. Why the COVID-19 recovery must be revolutionary*. Between the Lines.
- Stergiou-Kita, M. et al. 2015. Danger zone: Men, masculinity and occupational health and safety in high risk occupations. *Safety Science*. 80: 213-220.

Optional:

- Foulis N. 2021. The new radium girls: Modern echoes. *The Safety Mag*. June 17. <https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/occupational-hygiene/the-new-radium-girls-modern-echoes/258083>

Week 11

Zoom class 11:30-2:30 (discussion weeks 10 & 11)

This week we will have a presentation by Eduardo Huesca, from the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, on migrant agricultural workers' health and safety.

November 17 – Immigration, Migration, Racialization and Occupational Health

- Sick and Tired Chapter 8.
- Berger Richardson, S. 2020. Worked to the bone: COVID-19, the agrifood labour force, and the need for more compassionate post-pandemic food systems. In: *Vulnerable. The law, policy and ethics of COVID-19*. Edited by Colleen Flood et al. University of Ottawa Press. P. 501-509.
- Star staff. 2020. Another day on the job: racism and workplace PTSD. September 14. Podcast (19:31 min.) <https://www.thestar.com/podcasts/thismatters/2020/09/14/another-day-on-the-job-racism-and-workplace-ptsd.html>

Week 12

November 24 – Strategies to Protect Workers' Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapters 9 and 10.

- Donald Duck “How to have an accident at work”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WEXRwdlJ4A>
- Alberta ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k5CFoOGzE8>
- Ontario ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5kiz7GhJt0>

Please note that the two ads depict disturbing scenes. Watch at your own discretion

Week 13

Zoom lecture 11:30-1:00 (discussion weeks 12 & 13)

December 1 – The Global Interconnectedness of Health and Safety

- Sick and Tired Chapter 11.
- Barua U. and Ansary A. 2017. Workplace safety in Bangladesh ready-made garment sector: 3 years after the Rana Plaza collapse. *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*. 23(4): 578-583.
- Mathur C, Morehouse W. 2002. Twice poisoned Bhopal: notes on the continuing aftermath of the world’s worst industrial disaster. *International Labor and Working-Class History*. 62: 69-75.

Optional:

- National Geographic. The Bhopal Disaster (2014). 1h01 min.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsuUQzhP2Ds>

Short paper due today

Course Policies

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be submitted on Avenue.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor will permit extensions for exceptional circumstances only.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

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.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The

available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): 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".

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

ZOOM LECTURES

There will be classes held on Zoom. Guidelines for attending Zoom classes are as follows:

- The meeting link will be communicated to you on Avenue. The link will be the same for all meetings.
- Your mic will be muted upon entering the session. Wait to be called upon to unmute.
- Use the 'raise hand' function to ask questions.
- Sessions will be recorded and posted on Avenue afterwards.

Please let me know if you have any accommodation needs for Zoom meetings.