

# LABOUR STUDIES 3D03: Work: Dangerous To Your Health?

Fall 2017  
Day and Time of Classes: Tues: 11.30-2:20

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## 1. Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore the social scientific and legal dimensions of workplace health and safety in Canada and other industrialized countries. The course will begin with an analysis of the origins and evolution to the 1970s of factory and workers' compensation legislation in Canada. After outlining the current situation relating to injury and disease in Canada, we will highlight and discuss a number of the more important health and safety issues: musculoskeletal injuries, stress/mental health, violence, overwork, and occupational disease. In the final section of the course, we will return to the theme of regulating workplace health and safety and workers' compensation – paying particular attention to the ways our regulations and laws need to change if we are to meet the health and safety challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplaces. Throughout the course our main concern will be with understanding the social processes that have helped shape our workplace health and safety systems in Canada. Hence, while we will examine many of the details of occupational health and safety and workers' compensation legislation, our attention will be directed principally toward understanding the programs and actions of the major actors in this area.

## 2. Text/Courseware

All course reading material will be available on Avenue To Learn.

## 3. Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

[1] Mid-Term Exam (20%) The examination will be based on all class content, i.e., required readings, lecture materials, class discussions, films, and guest lectures from the beginning of classes to the date of the examination. The examination will be one hour (60 minutes) in length and will be composed of short essay questions. Date of the examination is Tuesday, October 24.

[2] Mini Essays (2x20%) The class will be divided into two groups. At two points during the course, each student in these groups will be required to write a 3-5 page essay comprised of required readings and other articles chosen by the instructor. The reviews will be due Tuesday, November 7, and Tuesday, November 28. Late submissions will be accepted **only** when medical documentation is provided. Late penalties are 3% per day. Each review will be worth 20% of the total grade.

[3] Final Exam (40%) The final examination will be two hours in length and will be held during the university examination period. It will be based upon required readings, lecture materials, class discussions, films, and guest lectures from the mid-term examination to the end of the course.

## **Tutorials**

There are no formal tutorials for this course. However, on numerous occasions throughout the course we will use the final hour as a time for group and class discussions of the reading materials and lectures.

#### **4. Learning Objectives**

This course addresses four University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations. First, it involves students in an in-depth understanding of the foremost issues and interpretations relating to workplace health, safety and workers' compensation. Second, the analytical frameworks to which students are exposed in this course will enable them to critically evaluate research and scholarship in the broad field of work and health. Third, the assignments for this course expose students to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in studying relationships between work and health. Finally, through the prism of understanding worker-management conflicts relating to workplace illness and disease, students will confront the roles they will need to play if these illnesses and diseases are to be addressed and solved.

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#### **SCHEDULE/READINGS/DUE DATES**

##### **Topic 1 (Sept. 12): Introduction: Framing The Issues**

1. Sean Comish, *The Westray Tragedy: A Miner's Story*. (Halifax 1993): 7-58

##### **Topic 2 (Sept. 19): Ontario's Health & Safety/ Workers' Compensation Systems**

1. Bob Barnetson, *The Political Economy of Workplace Injury in Canada*. (Edmonton 2010): 27-46.

##### **Topic 3 (Sept.26): Workplace Injury & Disease: A Contemporary Picture**

1. Lenore S. Azaroff, et. al., "Wounding The Messenger: The New Economy Makes Occupational Health Indicators Too Good To Be True," *International Journal of Health Services*, 34, 2 (2004): 271-303.
2. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, *By The Numbers: 2016 WSIB Statistical Report, Schedule 1*.
3. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, *By The Numbers: 2016 WSIB Statistical Report, Schedule 2*.

##### **Topic 4 (Oct. 3): Issues: Musculoskeletal Injuries**

1. N. Girish, MPT; Kamath Ramachandra, MD; Maiya Arun G, PhD; Kamath Asha, "Prevalence of Musculoskeletal Disorders Among Cashew Factory Workers," *Archives of*

*Environmental & Occupational Health*, 67, 1 (2012): 37-42.

2. Jenny Hsin-Chun Tsai, “Chinese Immigrant Restaurant Workers Injury and Illness Experiences,” *Archives of Environmental & Occupational Health*, 64, 2 (2009): 107-114.3.

3. Teresa Aversa and Nicolette Carlan, “Navigating Chronic Injuries in the Workplace: Five Workers’ Experiences with Systems and Relationships.” In, Sharon-Dale Stone, Valorie A. Crooks and Michelle Owen, eds., *Working Bodies: Chronic Illness in the Canadian Workplace*. (Montreal 2014): 71-85.

### **Topic 5 (Oct. 17): Issues: Stress/Mental Health [\*\*Mid Term Exam\*\*]**

1. Maria Carla Barnes et al., “Beliefs about common health problems and work: A qualitative study.” *Social Science & Medicine*, 67 (2008): 657-665.

2. Marlea Clarke, et al., “‘This just isn’t sustainable’: Precarious Employment, stress and workers’ health,” *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 30 (2007): 311-326.

3. Salimah Valiani, “The Cycle of Sacrifice: Nurses’ Health and the Ontario Health System.” (Toronto 2013): 1-16.

### **Topic 6 (Oct. 24): Issues: Violence In The Workplace**

1. Jeremy Milloy, “Out of the Back Streets and Into the Workplace: The Discovery of Workplace Violence in the 1980s and 1990s.” In his book, *Blood, Sweat and Fear: Violence at Work in the North American Auto Industry, 1960-80*. (Vancouver 2017): 157-171.

2. Donna Baines, “Staying with People Who Slap Us Around: Gender, Juggling Responsibilities and Violence in Paid (and Unpaid) Work,” *Gender, Work and Organization*, 13, 2 (2006): 129-151.

### **Topic 7 (Oct. 31): Issues: Overwork & The Long Arm of the Job**

1. Alan Derickson, “Six Days on the Road: Long-Haul Truckers Fighting Drowsiness.” In his book, *Dangerously Sleepy: Overworked Americans and the Cult of Manly Wakefulness*, (Philadelphia 2014): 108-141.

2. Karen Messing, “Home Invasion: When Workers Lose Control Over Their Schedules.” In, Karen Messing, *Pain and Prejudice: What Science Can Learn about Work from the People Who Do It*. (Toronto 2014): 71-85.

### **Topic 8 (Nov. 7): Occupational Disease [\*\* 1<sup>st</sup> Mini Essay Due\*\*]**

1. Robert Storey and Wayne Lewchuk, “From Dust to DUST to Dust: Asbestos and Struggle for Worker Health and Safety at Bendix Automotive,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 45 (Spring 2000): 103-140.

2. Ann Del Bianco, "Trends in compensation for death from occupational cancer in Canada: a descriptive study," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 1,3 (2013): E91-E95.

**Topic 9 (Nov. 14): New Economy = New Regulations?**

1. Bob Barnetson, *The Political Economy*: 47-104.

**Topic 10 (Nov. 21): Health & Safety: Wither the Three Rs?**

1. LOARC, *Health and Safety Representation: Writing The Workers Back In*. (April 2014).

**Topic 11 (Nov. 28): Workers' Compensation: Administering Injury, Illness & Disease?  
[\*\* 2<sup>nd</sup> Mini Essay Due \*\*]**

1. Crystal Jaye and Ruth Fitzgerald, "The lived political economy of occupational overuse syndrome among New Zealand workers," *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 32, 7 (2010): 1010-1025.

3. Ontario Federation of Labour, *Rewarding Offenders: Report on How Ontario's Workplace Safety System Rewards Employers Despite Workplace Deaths and Injuries*. (Toronto 2014).

**Topic 12 (Dec. 5): Workers' Compensation: Meredith's Principles?**

1. Robert Storey and Carolann Elston, *'My compensation will end on my 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday when my brain injury goes away': Final Report of the Revived Meredith Commission*. (Hamilton 2015).

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**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html>

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

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.

2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

#### 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/> 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>

“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>, 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> **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**

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

**Student Success Centre:** <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>

**Student Wellness Centre:** <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/> **MUSC-B101 905-525-9140 x27700**

Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services

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