

# **LABOUR STUDIES - LS 2G03**

## **Labour and Globalization**

Winter 2018  
Thursdays @ 7-10pm  
DSB AB-102

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

European colonial powers created the first global labour regimes, leveraging brutal institutions like slavery, indentured servitude, and transnational patterns of social reproduction to supply North Atlantic societies with key commodities. In light of these violent origins, the relationship between globalization and labour continues to be informed by institutionalized hierarchies that divide people according to their ability, citizenship, class, gender, place, race, or sexuality. Nevertheless, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, anti-colonial, feminist, and working-class movements created regimes – ranging from developmental, Keynesian, and socialist – that promised to deliver socio-economic progress. Unfortunately, these regimes often fell short of their rhetoric, while globalizing pressures in the '70s and '80s intensified crisis tendencies within these models. This provided an opening for powerful corporate and financial actors to advance a more austere neoliberal agenda, one based on the (re)institutionalization of more flexible and precarious forms of work. This course traces how these histories are informing the relationship between labour and globalization in the present. To this end, the course is divided into three parts: Part I examines the origins of the current global labour regime; Part II unpacks key concepts needed to understand the relationship between globalization and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and, Part III surveys global labour initiatives proposing alternatives to neoliberalism.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Marcus Taylor and Sébastien Rioux. 2018. *Global Labour Studies*. Polity Press.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Film Review (February 1)	15%
10 short Weekly Study Questions	20%
Major research paper (March 29)	35%
Final Exam (TBA)	30%

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course addresses three important University Undergraduate Degree Expectations. First, the course will introduce a range of theories relevant to the study of globalization and work. These theories are drawn from a range of disciplines and will provide a basis for developing strong analytical and critical thinking skills. Second, through the assignments and final exam, students will be required to develop arguments and apply the theories, concepts, and histories we consider in the course. Lastly, through structured class discussions, the course aims to support the development of effective communication skills.

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Week 1 (January 4) – Introduction

This week we review the structure of the course, key assignments, and some core concepts used throughout the semester. Readings for this week are to be done at your own leisure, but should complete them in time for the final exam.

- CH1 - Introduction: Thinking Global Labour Studies. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 1-12.
- CH2 - The Toolkit of Global Labour Studies. *Global Labour Studies*. 13-28.
- “Textbook” from the *I-PEEL* project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/textbook>.

## PART I Setting the Scene: Roots, Current Realities, and Governance of Global Labour

### WEEK 2 (January 11) - The Colonial Roots of Globalization: Understanding the Role of Slavery and Unfree Labour in the Making of Capitalism

This week examines the colonial roots of capitalist globalization, including varied colonial labour regimes and the techniques deployed by colonial powers to repress resistance.

*WSQ #1: Drawing on the readings, why is an understanding of colonialism essential in any discussion of the relationship between globalization and labour?*

- Anibal Quijano. 2000. “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.” (Nepantla: Views from the South), **only pages 533 – 556.**  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=F568B95273967D501131A75B681769D2?doi=10.1.1.483.5399&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.
- Blake Smith. 2017. “Slavery as Free Trade” (Aeon).  
<https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-original-laissez-faire-economists-loved-slavery>.
- “Indentured Labour From South Asia (1834-1917).” Striking Women Project.  
<http://www.striking-women.org/module/map-major-south-asian-migration-flows/indentured-labour-south-asia-1834-1917>.
- “A History of Indentured Labor Gives ‘Coolie’ Its Sting” (CodeSwitch - 25 November 2013).  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/11/25/247166284/a-history-of-indentured-labor-gives-coolie-its-sting>.
- Podcast: “Violence and the Colonial Order” (Talking Empire, 2015)  
<https://imperialglobalexeter.com/2015/04/29/violence-and-colonial-order-a-new-talking-empire-podcast>.

### Week 3 (January 18) - The Global Working Class and Social Reproduction

This week we examine the emergence of a global working class in the early 21s century. Along these lines, we also consider how the institutionally maintained division between waged and unwaged workers informs struggles over social reproduction on a global scale.

*WSQ #2: With reference to the readings, what role does the division between waged and unwaged workers play in the reproduction of capitalism on a global scale?*

- John Bellamy Foster *et. al.* 2011. "The Global Reserve Army of Labor and the New Imperialism" (Monthly Review): <https://monthlyreview.org/2011/11/01/the-global-reserve-army-of-labor-and-the-new-imperialism/>.
- Michael Denning. 2010. "Wageless Life." (New Left Review).  
<https://newleftreview.org/II/66/michael-denning-wageless-life>.
- "ILO World Employment Social Outlook" (2017), pp. 1-3.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_540899.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_540899.pdf).
- "Care" from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/care>.
- Sue Ferguson and David McNally. 2015. "Social Reproduction, Surplus Populations, and the Role of Migrant Women" (Viewpoint Magazine).  
<https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/11/01/social-reproduction-and-surplus-populations>.

### **Week 4 - Governing Global Labour (January 25)**

This week we ask what major multilateral institutions have shaped what we know and understand as globalization today? What are the implications of the decisions made by these institutions on how labour is governed globally? Are these organizations working to reduce global inequality or are they entrenching uneven development?

*WSQ #3: According to Standing, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the ILO? According to the additional readings what other agencies are important in governing labour? Are these institutions helping reduce or are they instead entrenching global inequalities?*

- Guy Standing. 2008. "The ILO: An Agency for Globalization" Development and Change. Volume 39, Issue 3. pp. 355-384.  
[https://www.guystanding.com/files/documents/ilo\\_published\\_article.pdf](https://www.guystanding.com/files/documents/ilo_published_article.pdf).
- "Wrong all along: Neoliberal IMF admits neoliberalism fuels inequality and hurts growth" The Nation. 31 May 2016.  
[https://www.salon.com/2016/05/31/wrong\\_all\\_along\\_neoliberal\\_imf\\_admits\\_neoliberalism\\_fuels\\_inequality\\_and\\_hurts\\_growth](https://www.salon.com/2016/05/31/wrong_all_along_neoliberal_imf_admits_neoliberalism_fuels_inequality_and_hurts_growth).
- "World Bank Accused of Destroying Traditional Farming to Support Corporate Land Grabs" (Oakland institute 2014).  
<https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/press-release-world-bank-accused-destroying-traditional-farming-support-corporate-land-grabs>.
- "The WTO has failed developing nations" (The Guardian, 2011).  
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/nov/14/wto-fails-developing-countries>.
- "Grain" from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/grain>.

## **PART II**

### **Exploring Key Concepts**

### **Week 5 (February 1) – Global Supply and Value Chains \*FILM REVIEW DUE\***

This week, we examine how work is organized in global supply and value chains, including key factors shaping their governance. To illustrate these concepts, we trace the complex pathways that everyday commodities traverse before reaching the end consumer.

*WSQ #4: Drawing on the readings, what are global production networks? How did container technology enable the rise of such networks? How does your smartphone illustrate the influence of such networks on workers?*

- CH4 - Global Production Networks. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 47-63.
- “Container” from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/container>.
- “Phone” from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/phone>.

### **Week 6 (February 8) – Varieties of Labour Regulation**

This week takes a comparative look at the broad array of models used to regulate labour around the world, with a particular emphasis placed on formal labour regimes.

*WSQ #5: According to the readings, what is a labour regime and what common types are discussed in the textbook? How is formal work currently being reshaped around the world?*

- CH3 - Labour Regimes. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 29-46.
- CH5 - Formal Work in Transition. *Global Labour Studies*. 64-82.

### **Week 7 (February 15) - Agrarian and Urban Informality**

This week examines both rural and urban forms of informality, that is work that is hard to capture in statistics but that nevertheless dominates labour markets in the global South.

*WSQ #6: According to the readings what are some of the main challenges facing agricultural and urban informal workers?*

- CH7 - Agrarian Labour. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 100-116.
- CH6 - Labour in the Informal Economy. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 83-99.
- “Coffee” from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/coffee-3>.
- Podcast: “Cities for the Poor” (BBC, December 2017).  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csw8cz>.

### **Week 8 (March 1) – Migrant Workers and Forced Labour Regimes**

This week examines issues related to migrant labour, undocumented workers, and forced labour. We consider how the current neoliberal regime governing global labour flows generates the conditions that make modern slavery possible.

*WSQ #7: Using the textbook describe the challenges faced by migrant workers? Along these lines, what are some of the key causes of forced labour today? How do the I-PEEL and openDemocracy articles assigned for this week relate to these discussions?*

- CH8 - Migrant Labour. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 117-134.
- CH9 - Forced Labour. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 135-153.
- “Housework” from the I-PEEL project: <http://i-peel.org/homepage/housework>.
- Ben Richardson. 2015. “Still slaving over sugar” (openDemocracy).  
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/ben-richardson/still-slaving-over-sugar>.

## **Week 9 (March 8) - Climate Change and Work**

This week we explore the impacts of climate change on workers around the world. What is the relationship between climate change and labour? Is there a future for 'green jobs'? What are the implications of such a transition for workers around the world?

*WSQ #8: According to the textbook what are the key issues that govern the relationship between the environment and labour? Using the readings, consider how climate change is changing conditions for workers and the feasibility of a green-energy transition?*

- CH10 - Environment and Labour. *Global Labour Studies*. p. 154-170.
- "The heat and the death toll are rising in India. Is this a glimpse of Earth's future?" The Guardian (31 May 2015) - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/31/the-heat-and-the-death-toll-are-rising-in-india-is-this-a-glimpse-of-earths-future>.
- ILO. 2017. "Just Transition, Decent Work, and Climate Resilience" [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_589098.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_589098.pdf).
- "Green jobs boom: meet the frontline of the new solar economy" (The Guardian, 2016). <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/feb/01/solar-economy-renewable-energy-asia-africa>.

## **PART III**

### **Globalizing Resistance?**

## **Week 10 (March 15) – Labour Internationalism, Global Labour Unions, and Transnational Labour Advocacy**

This week we explore the historical origins of labour internationalism, as well as the more recent rise of global labour unions and transnational labour advocacy campaigns.

*WSQ #9: According to this week's readings, what are some of the strategies that the global labour movement is using to contest neoliberal globalization?*

- CH11 - Corporate Social Responsibility. *Global Labour Studies*. 171-188.
- CH12 - Organizing Global Labour. *Global Labour Studies*. 189-207.
- Beverly Silver. 2016. "The Remaking of the Global Working Class." ROAR Magazine. <https://roarmag.org/magazine/the-remaking-of-the-global-working-class>.

## **Week 11 (March 22) - Labour Struggles in the BRICS**

This week we explore the specific labour struggles unfolding in some of the world's largest emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

*WSQ #10: Using the readings, identify some of the key similarities and differences between labour struggles in the BRICS. In your opinion, what (if any) are the potential implications of these movements for workers in the global North?*

- Immanuel Ness. 2016. "Working Class Militancy in the Global South." ROAR Magazine. <https://roarmag.org/magazine/working-class-militancy-in-the-global-south>.
- BRAZIL: "Brazilians sick of corrupt politicians hit the streets to protest austerity measures." (The Guardian, April 2017).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/28/brazil-corruption-unions-strike-michel-temer-austerity>

- RUSSIA: “Russian Truckers Prepare to Strike.” (The Russia Reader, February 2016): <https://therussianreader.com/2016/02/16/lomasko-russian-truckers-nationwide-strike>.
- INDIA: “India on Strike.” (Jacobin, October 2016).  
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/10/indian-workers-general-strike>.
- CHINA: “China’s New Labor Insurgency” (Jacobin, August 2014).  
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/08/china-labor-insurgency>.
- SOUTH AFRICA: “Rebuilding a Workers’ Movement.” (Jacobin, May 2017).  
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/05/south-africa-trade-unions-saftu-nums-a-anc-zuma>.

## **Week 12 (March 29) - Building Alternative Economies \*FINAL PAPER DUE\***

This week we consider alternatives to neoliberalism, including existing initiatives to create more equitable and sustainable economies that prioritize people over profits.

*WSQ #11: According to the readings, what role can cooperatives play in organizing a more just economy? How feasible do you think they are as an alternative model for the economy?*

- ILO. 2013. “Cooperatives today: Challenges and opportunities.”  
[http://www.ilo.org/actrav/media-center/pr/WCMS\\_213266/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/actrav/media-center/pr/WCMS_213266/lang--en/index.htm).
- “Worker Cooperatives Are More Productive Than Normal Companies” (*The Nation*, 2016).  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/worker-cooperatives-are-more-productive-than-normal-companies>.
- “Yes, there is an alternative to capitalism: Mondragon” (*The Guardian*, June 2012).  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/24/alternative-capitalism-mondragon>.
- “Meet the Radical Workers’ Cooperative Growing in the Heart of the Deep South” (*The Nation*, April 2017): <https://www.thenation.com/article/meet-the-radical-workers-cooperative-growing-in-the-heart-of-the-deep-south>.
- “Platform Cooperativism: Challenging the Corporate Sharing Economy.” **Intro only.** (*Rosa Luxemburg Foundation*, 2016): <http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/platform-cooperativism-2>.

## **Final Week (April 5) – EXAM REVIEW!!!**

Overview of course, key terms, and study sheet.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

### **Weekly Study Question (WSQ) (20%) – Weeks 2 to 12 (January 11 – March 29)**

You are expected to select and answer 10 out of the 11 WSQs listed in the syllabus. Each week you will answer the assigned WSQ in 300 (min) to 500 words (max) drawing on the required readings for that specific lecture. You will be graded on your demonstrated knowledge of the assigned weekly readings and your ability to integrate these into a concise answer. Consider this a useful study tool to help you prepare for the final exam. **All weekly summaries are to be handed in at the beginning of the relevant lecture in hardcopy. No late submissions will be accepted** (unless you can provide appropriate documentation for why you did not submit a WSQ for a given week).

### **Film Review Assignment (15%) – Week 5 (February 1)**

Watch the film *The True Cost* (2015). After watching the film, write a 1,000-word review highlighting how 'fast fashion' is affecting labour conditions in the global apparel industry. In watching the movie and preparing your review, consider the following questions: What is driving the demand for 'fast fashion'? What are the arguments made for and against relocating apparel manufacturing to the global South? What types of labour management techniques are being used to discipline workers in the industry? How do class, gender, and race play into these dynamics? What solutions does the film propose to this problem and how feasible are they? All reviews must include a word-count.

### **Major Research Paper (35%) – Week 12 (March 29).**

The major research paper can be on any topics drawn from the weekly lectures or readings, offering you an opportunity to explore an issue covered in class in greater depth (not including the supply chain governing the global apparel industry). Papers should be between 2,000 to 2,500 words (8-10 double-spaced pages) and are due on March 29. All papers must include a word-count and draw on at least five sources not in the syllabus.

### **Final Exam (30%) – TBA**

The final exam consists of 5 (out of 10) definitions worth 10% each, and 2 (out of 3) essay style questions worth 25% each. A review sheet will be made available during the last class.

## COURSE POLICIES

### **Late Penalties and Submission of Late 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 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 (WSQs) must be submitted on the day they are due and no late submissions will be accepted unless a valid reason is given. Late assignments can only be handed in during office hours or in-class. Only **hard copies** will be accepted. Please retain a copy of all your submitted work.

### **Use of Laptops, Smartphones, and Hand Held Devices**

Please make sure that all smartphones and hand held devices are turned off during class. I also strongly encourage students to not use laptops in class. This creates a better learning environment for everyone (including you). Here's a recent article explaining the rationale:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html>.

**Citation Format - <http://library.mcmaster.ca/citation-and-style-guides>**

You may use MLA or Chicago style. Make sure to be consistent.

**Email Guidelines**

The best way to reach me is to visit me at my office hour from 12-1pm on Mondays in Room 724, Kenneth Taylor Hall. I will do my best to return emails within 24-48 hours of the time they are sent. Please take that into consideration when sending emails i.e. if you send an email the day the research paper is due I will likely not get back to you in time. Email should be restricted to emergencies and arranging to meet with me. If you have questions about the course material please visit me during my office hours.

**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.

**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.

**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 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 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 Avenue to Learn 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.

**Course 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.