

Work and Labour Studies 1E03 | Navigating the World of Work

Semester & Year:	Winter 2023	Instructor:	Dr. Tommy Wu
Days and Times:	Thursdays 12:30 – 2:20pm Tutorials: Based on your chosen section	Email:	wu21@mcmaster.ca
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Classroom:	HH 302	Office Hours:	By appointment

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Course Description & Format

Welcome to Labour Studies 1E03 - Navigating the World of Work! Work is perhaps the most important thing that defines us as individuals and as a society. Work is central to our quality of life, identities, and well-being. However, finding and keeping work that is meaningful, fair, safe and sustainable is becoming more challenging. This course explores the changing nature of today's increasingly global workplaces and labour markets, the way that class, 'race', gender and ability shape our access to work, the laws and regulations that define workplace rights and obligations, and the strategies workers use to navigate these relationships.

This course consists of a 100-minute lecture on Thursdays and a 50-minute tutorial each week, in which the major themes and debates from the readings will be highlighted and elaborated upon. This course lends itself to a range of pedagogical formats, predominated by lectures delivered by the instructor on the scheduled topics. However, as the emphasis is on a student-centric approach to learning, the class will also require a considerable amount of collaborative student interaction among themselves and with the instructor/TAs particularly in the tutorials, which are conducted weekly. Note that lecture content will cover more than the readings, and so they are not interchangeable. Thus, it is of utmost importance that you not only ensure that you are present at lectures/tutorials but also stay engaged since your participation is critical to your success and to the success of the class. It is also important to keep in mind that knowledge in the course is cumulative – so you will need to have read the material for earlier weeks to fully understand that in the later weeks. In other words, it is very important to keep up on a week-to-week basis.

Disclaimer: Given the uncertainties of our times, elements of the course outline may change prior to the start of classes in January.

Required Texts

Andrew Jackson and Mark Thomas (2017). *Work and Labour in Canada: Critical Issues*, 3rd ed. Canadian Scholars' Press (referred to as J&T in the Class Schedule) E-Book version available online from the McMaster University Bookstore

- All other required course readings will be made available electronically on Avenue to Learn or online via the McMaster University library.

Evaluation (In Brief)

Requirements	Due Date	Value
Participation		25%
Exit Cards + Class Discussion	During each lecture session	10%
Tutorials	During each tutorial session	15%
5 Journal Entries	Signup on first lecture session	25%
Final Essay	Last lecture session	25%
Take Home Final Exam	One week after the last tutorial session	25%

Evaluation (In Detail)

Class participation is a critical element of the course. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from your peers. As soon as you can, exchange contact information with at least one other classmate in case you miss or late to a session. You should not contact the instructor to ask about work that you missed. You're allowed to miss one exit card and one tutorial session without question; subsequent misses would negatively impact your participation assessment.

You do not need to notify me or the TAs in advance of absence or lateness unless they will be recurring. In those circumstances, I will likely ask that you to seek for SAS from the University and accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Participation consists of two components – 25%

1) Exit Cards /Class Discussions – 10%

At the end of each lecture session, you will be asked to submit an online exit card to reflect on the lecture. The submission is only available during the lecture session. This means if you are absent, you will miss the exit card submission.

2) Tutorial Participation – 15%

Students are expected to come to each tutorial, well prepared, with both questions and comments about what they have read, and ready to participate actively in discussion of the issues and readings. Students will be evaluated according to both the frequency and quality of their interventions and on the extent to which they contribute to in-session group work. At a minimum, each student should strive to make at least one contribution in each tutorial session.

- Note: Tutorials begin the week of January 23rd, 2023

Journal Entries – 25%

Journal are meant to provide you the opportunity to critically engage with the weekly readings. Each student must sign up during the first class to write journal entries for four weeks. Each entry should be between 400-600 words and must be submitted by 11:59pm of each Tuesday. Late journal entries will not be accepted. If you complete all four journal entries, you will automatically receive 1 point to your final grade.

Each entry should contain all the following:

- *Content: One or two meaningful quotes or paraphrased passages from the assigned works (be sure to cite them appropriately!), and a discussion of why you chose them, their relevance, and any other reflections you have on them.*
- *Internal context: A reflection on the relationship between the week's readings to other readings/ concepts from the course*
- *External context: A discussion of the readings' relevance to yourself and to broader social, cultural, and political issues or events.*

- *One discussion question for based on the readings and lectures*

Journal Entries are evaluated on a scale of 0-5.

- *5 - Covers all three points (content, internal context, external context) thoroughly and thoughtfully + discussion question*
- *4 - Covers two points adequately or all three points with less than stellar effort + discussion question*
- *3 - Needs improvement but demonstrates a sincere effort + discussion question*
- *2 - Shows some effort but lacks comprehension and/or discussion question*
- *1 - Shows minimal effort and lacks comprehension*
- *0 - Missing*

Final Essay

Are Jackson and Thomas right to say that we are “working in precarious times?” In what ways is work today precarious? In what way does your own work experience support or disprove the claim that precarious work is the “new normal”? Using the course materials and concrete examples from one’s own experience, each student will write a 1500-word analytical essay addressing the above questions. The paper must be clearly written with a thesis or argument and substantiated with scholarly evidence. It must be typed using 1.5 spacing, accompanied with a bibliography and proper citations (8 minimum). Citations should include at least four from the course and the rest from external sources. The citations must be from academic sources. Should you utilize web-accessed materials, you must cite them with the URL address and date retrieved. More details will be provided during lecture sessions. The paper is due at midnight on April 12, 2023, via Avenue to Learn.

Take Home Final Exam

The final exam will be distributed on the last tutorial session and you will be given 7 full days to complete. The exam will consist of 7-9 questions that require 1-paragraph responses. More details will be given during lecture sessions.

Extra Credit

Details of the extra credit will be discussed during the first lecture.

Course Objectives

- learn the key foundational concepts in Labour Studies related to the contemporary organization of work in Canada and within a global economy;
- develop your ability to collaborate with and learn from other students equally and respectfully;
- work on articulating and refining your own ideas, in both speaking and in writing; read carefully, critically and deeply;
- make links between the classroom, the readings, and the world; and
- enhance your research and writing abilities, including your ability to find relevant material and assess sources, to construct and support own argument out of a variety of sources, and to appreciate different positions on an issue.

Class Schedule and Readings

<p>Week 1 Jan 12</p>	<p>Introduction to the Course:</p> <p>For Next Week, in addition to the required readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letter of Introduction: Write a letter of introduction to your teaching assistant and professor. Tell us a bit about yourself, your interests, and especially your goals in this class: Why did you take this course? What are your experiences at work and with the labour movement? What is at least one thing you want to learn in this class? What would you say are your strengths as a student, and what areas would you like to improve? Are there any circumstances that might affect your performance in this class that you'd like us to be aware of? Please upload this letter to Avenue to Learn by January 17, 2021.
<p>Week 2 Jan 19</p>	<p>Working in Precarious Times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● J&T Chapters 1 & 2 ● Lorinc, Jacob (2021). "I had enough": Restaurants changed during the pandemic. But wages haven't, data shows," Toronto Star. August 6. https://www.thestar.com/business/2021/08/06/i-had-enough-thousands-of-restaurant-workers-are-leaving-the-industry-saying-they-are-underpaid-and-overworked.html <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lewchuk, Wayne (2019) "The Political Economy of Precariousness in an Era of Artificial Intelligence: Precarious Work, or None At All?" Canadian Labour and Employment Law Journal. 21(2), 239-266. [Available on Avenue to Learn]
<p>Week 3 Jan 26</p>	<p>Locating Classes: Workers and Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Zweig, Michael (2012). "The Class Structure in the United States" and "What We Think about When We Think about Class" in <i>The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (Available online via McMaster University Library) <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Naiman, Joanne (2009). "Analyzing Social Class" in <i>How Societies Work: Class, Power and Change in a Canadian Context</i>. Halifax: Fernwood. ● Standing, G. (2014). <i>The precariat</i>. Contexts, 13(4), 10-12. Read Chapter 1 ● Mitchell, Andrew & Luann Good Gingrich (2021). <i>The Story So Far: COVID-19 and the Canadian Labour Market -Comparing the 'Great Recession' and the Pandem-ecession'</i>. York University: Global Labour Research Centre.
<p>Week 4 Feb 2</p>	<p>Globalization and its Discontents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● J&T, Chapter 11 ● Taplin Ian (2014). "Who is to blame? A re-examination of fast fashion after the 2013 factory disaster in Bangladesh," <i>Critical Perspectives on International Business</i>. 10(1/2): 72-83. (Available <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing, G. (2014). <i>The precariat</i>. Contexts, 13(4), 10-12. Read Chapter 2.
<p>Week 5 Feb 9</p>	<p>Gender, Paid and Unpaid Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● J&T, Chapter 5 ● Parreñas, R. (2015). <i>Servants of globalization: Migration and domestic work</i>. Stanford University Press. – Read Chapter 2, <i>The Global Migration of Filipino Domestic Workers: The International Division of Reproductive Labor</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chand, Ashlynn (2021). “Young, racialized, female and powerless: Front-line fast-food workers have taken the brunt of bad behaviour during the pandemic and it’s affecting their mental health,” Toronto Star. July 10. https://www.thestar.com/business/2021/07/10/young-racialized-female-and-powerless-front-line-fast-food-workers-have-taken-the-brunt-of-bad-behaviour-during-the-pandemic-and-its-affecting-their-mental-health.html <p>Toronto Star articles may also be accessed for free through the McMaster Library: https://library.mcmaster.ca/databases/lexisnexis</p>
Week 6 Feb 16	<p>Race and Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J&T, Chapter 6 Wilson, Ruth-Marie et al (2011). Working rough, living poor: employment and income insecurities faced by racialized groups in the Black Creek area and their impacts on health. Toronto: Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services. Pages 21-24 and 32-50. <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilson, Daniel and David Macdonald (2010). The income gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada. (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives). Pgs. 3-19. https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/reports/docs/Aboriginal%20Income%20Gap.pdf
Week 7 Feb 23	Reading Week (No class)
Week 8 Mar 2	<p>The Challenges of Finding, Keeping and Leaving Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J&T, Chapter 3 and 8 <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shan, Hongxia (2013). “Skill as a relational construct: hiring practices from the standpoint of Chinese immigrant engineers in Canada,” Work, Employment & Society. 27(6): 915-931.
Week 9 Mar 9	<p>Work and the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘The future of work in a changing natural environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability’, International Labour Organization https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_644145.pdf Lipton, Eric. ‘The Coal Industry Is Back,’ Trump Proclaimed. It Wasn’t. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/05/us/politics/trump-coal-industry.html Flint Water Crisis: Everything You Need to Know https://www.nrdc.org/stories/flint-water-crisis-everything-you-need-know
Week 10 Mar 16	<p>Health and Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J&T, Chapters 4 and 7 <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zuberi, Dan (2013). Cleaning up. How hospital outsourcing is hurting workers and endangering patients. Ithaca: ILR Press. Chapter 3 (pages 36-50). (Available as an e-book through Mac Library)
Week 11 Mar 23	<p>Labour Laws and Employment Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirchandani, Kiran & Sheldon Bromfield (2019). “Roundabout wage theft: The limits of regulatory protections for Ontario workers in precarious jobs,” Labor and Society. 22(3): 661-677. Thomas, Mark (2020). “For the people? Regulating employment standards in an era of Right-wing populism,” Studies in Political Economy. 101(2): 135-154.

	<p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore the Ontario Employment Standards Act: https://files.ontario.ca/employment-standards-in-ontario.pdf
<p>Week 12 Mar 30</p>	<p>Work and Resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● J&T, Chapter 9 ● Ross, Stephanie and Larry Savage (2015). “Unions and Political Action,” (Chapter 6) in Building a Better World: An Introduction to the Labour Movement in Canada. Halifax: Fernwood. (Available at Mills Library) ● Kim, E. Tammy. “As Pro-Union Sentiment Reaches a Fifty-Year High, U.S. Law Remains Pro-Management” https://www.newyorker.com/culture/2022-in-review/as-pro-union-sentiment-reaches-a-fifty-year-high-us-law-remains-pro-management?fbclid=IwAR0NJW-XyzMNgUKG0Ih47-gFNEDeY0j8Wsq5ZO2SAID2b06Q155xy-DqXK4 <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Burse, Renee & Jonah Gindin (2020). “‘No Increase? No Work!’ Toronto Health Care Workers Save Pandemic Premium via Job Action,” Labor Notes. July 24. https://labornotes.org/blogs/2020/07/no-increase-no-work-toronto-health-care-workers-save-pandemic-premium-direct-action
<p>Week 13 Apr 6</p>	<p>The Future of Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● J&T, Chapter 12 ● Dzieza, Josh (2020). “How hard will the robots make us work?” The Verge. https://www.theverge.com/2020/2/27/21155254/automation-robots-unemployment-jobs-vs-human-google-amazon

Course Policies

Submitting Assignments | All assignments must be submitted electronically via Avenue to Learn. You must use either Word or Open Office to submit your assignment, and it must appear exactly as you would submit it in paper format. Electronic submission will facilitate both academic integrity and the tracking of late submissions (see below).

Late Policy | Late submissions is generally not accepted. If you need special accommodation, you must contact me well in advance of the due dates. Electronic submission of assignments via Avenue to Learn is mandatory in order to allow us to keep track.

Extensions | Extensions may be arranged in advance of the deadline, but, in the interests of fairness, usually only in cases of medical problems or severe personal difficulties. Please see your teaching assistant as soon as you are aware of these difficulties to discuss and negotiate alternative arrangements. Please note that workload or poor time management is not an acceptable reason for extension. If you have ongoing difficulties with managing your time, please see me about resources you can access. In most cases, **SAS and MSAF requests will be granted with a 7-day extension**. Please remember that only one MSAF can be used per semester for all your classes.

Grade Appeals | Students are entitled to ask questions about grades, to understand the reasons behind an evaluation in order to do better next time, and to request a regrade if the situation warrants. However, students must observe the following guidelines:

1. Students must normally **wait one week** after they receive a grade before we will discuss it.
2. Students must show that they have **read and understood the feedback** given on the assignment.
3. Students must **ask specific questions** about the substance of the feedback, or **provide specific reasons** for why they believe their work has been improperly evaluated. These questions / reasons should be submitted in writing, and should address the specific nature of the assignment and the feedback given.
4. Regrades will **not** be granted for the following reasons:
 - *“I didn’t understand the assignment”*: It is your responsibility to ensure you fully understand what is expected of you before you submit an assignment.
 - *“I do well in other courses”*: All courses have different criteria and expectations, and rely on different skills, abilities and background preparation; students’ performance will vary as a result.
 - *“I need a higher grade for grad school / law school / insert reason here”*: Assignments are evaluated on their merits alone, and not on the impact they may have on your future plans. If you need high grades, you must find out how to fulfill the criteria so as to obtain such a result.
 - *“I worked really hard”*: It is expected that you will have worked hard on any assignment; this, however, doesn’t guarantee that you will have fulfilled the criteria. Sometimes, effort can be misdirected.
5. Students should speak first with the teaching assistant who originally graded the assignment. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of that conversation, please make an appointment to see the professor.
6. Regrades can result in an **increase or a decrease** in the assigned grade.

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*](#), 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.

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”.

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.

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.