

Work and the Environment

LABRST 4F03 / ENVSOCTY 4LW3

Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. S. Mills
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Note: please indicate 4F03 in Subject
Heading

Tuesdays
Small Group Meetings: 8:30am-9:30am
On-line Seminar: 9:45am-11:00am
Presentation group meetings: 11:00-
11:20am
Online office hours: Tuesdays: 8:30-
9:30am
Zoom link provided in Avenue to learn
announcements

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Course Description

Nature is the basis for our economic system, yet we often overlook the dynamic ways that it interacts with the economy and people’s livelihoods. Instead, questions about nature and environmental protection are often separated from questions about work, inequality and social justice. This separation often forecloses the ability to imagine economies that are both socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Given the prevalence and urgency of environmental and social problems in the world it is critical that we consider the complex relationships that exist between the economy, labour, nature and environmental protection. This course adopts a broad understanding of both labour and environment to explore these connections. We will move from the global to the local and back again to explore how environmental degradation relates to economic inequality, the economy and ultimately work.

Some of the questions we will address in this course include: What is nature and how is it related to the economy? How is work in natural resource sectors different from work in other sectors? Why have labour unions been in conflict with environmental groups? How can environmental justice movements address environmental racism? And what is degrowth and how will it affect workers in the global south?

Learning Objectives

Expected learning outcomes include:

- the ability to critically evaluate competing theories and explanations about labour, the environment and resource industries;

- the ability to clearly communicate a well-supported argument orally and in written form;
- the ability to work collaboratively with other students;
- and a deepened awareness of historical and contemporary way that colonization and racialization relate to economic development and environmental degradation.

Required Materials and Texts

All course materials will be made available on Avenue to Learn

Course Evaluation Breakdown

Formal evaluation	% of final grade	Due date
Participation	30	In class
Student Presentation/Active Learning	25	*sign-up for date
Article critique	20	*sign-up for date
Case study paper	25	4pm, Dec 4

*Students must complete either their presentation or article critique by October 27th.

Student Participation (30%)

Student participation will include three components:

- Individual reading notes
- Small group work and summary notes
- Participation in synchronous online seminar

Individual reading notes

In a seminar course, the readings are the course. As such, students need to read the assigned readings at least once and submit summary notes prior to class that include:

- A. A list of at least five words & concepts that were new to you or that you feel are important in each reading
- B. A summary of the main argument of each reading in your own words (2-4 sentences)
- C. A short description of the evidence provided if the article is a research study (2-4 sentences)
- D. Two discussion questions for the class

Summary notes need to be submitted on Avenue to learn before 8:30am on the day of class.

Small group work and summary notes

Each week you will meet with your assigned group to discuss the readings. Please assign one person in each group to serve as the scribe. The aim is to help one another understand concepts that you identified in your individual reading notes as well as the main arguments and ideas in each reading.

Each group will assign one scribe and one chair (a different person each week). The chair's role is to ensure that everyone participates equitably in the discussion while the scribe drafts a new summary sheet that will be submitted to the instructor.

The group will prepare one one-sided summary sheet for each reading which will include a revised version of A through D above that represents what the group considers to be: the most important concepts (usually that which was the most commonly selected) along with definitions; very clear and concise summaries of each reading; and two thoughtful questions for the class.

Group summary sheets must be submitted on Avenue to Learn before 9:30am on the day of the course.

Each week group summary sheets will be graded with one of three grades:

[+]= very well done

[☹]= satisfactory

[-]= needs work

Participation in online synchronous discussion

The final way that student participation will be assessed is through participation in the online synchronous discussion. Participation grades will be based on the ability to demonstrate a knowledge of the content of the readings as well as on their ability to critically engage with the reading material by applying and evaluating concepts or comparing ideas across weeks. Quantity does not trump quality. A student can earn an A grade by making one or two thoughtful comments that demonstrate a critical engagement with the ideas from the readings each seminar. Alternatively, a student who comments frequently but does not demonstrate any of the learning outcomes above will fair poorly. Students may participate by contributing to the simultaneous chat in zoom or orally.

Note: You are not expected to understand 100% of the readings prior to the small group or class discussions but rather to have tried your best to engage with the materials, identify what you do not understand and absorb what you do understand.

Disruptive behaviour or speech, missing classes, coming to class late or leaving early, and/or the use of cell phones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, or any electronic devices to do things other than participate in course material will earn a student negative participation grades.

It is our collective responsibility to foster an open, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment and discussion space. As such, we must commit to honest and critical engagement with the course materials and competing theoretical perspectives, while remaining respectful to each other and our space. Towards this end, this seminar has a zero-tolerance policy on rude, disrespectful, intolerant, and/or offensive behaviour and/or speech. Students who prove disruptive or disrespectful through their actions and/or speech towards the instructor or peers will be asked to leave.

Student Presentation/Active Learning (25%)

Each group will be responsible for creating a presentation or learning activity to solidify one of the key concepts from the readings during ten minutes of the synchronous component of class on one week. Presentations must be submitted to the instructor or **uploaded on Avenue to Learn by 9am on the Monday prior to class.**

- Presentation option
 - o Should consist of either an application/example of a key concept from one or more of the readings
 - o Must include one or two discussion questions for the class or other participation technique
 - o Must be less than 5 minutes in length *will be timed*
 - o Can be prepared ahead of time as a video or delivered synchronously in zoom. If delivered synchronously power points must be e-mailed to the instructor.
 - o Videos must include captioning

- Active learning option
 - o Should reinforce a key concept from one or more of the readings
 - o Should introduce a short activity that students are able to complete in 5-10 minutes or an activity that can be done prior to class
 - o Emphasis on clarity and creativity
 - o Can involve assigning students a 'pre-activity' prior to class
 - o Can make use of other software provided it can be easily accessed and is free
 - o All external videos or links must be posted on Avenue by 9am on the Monday before class.

*Note, all members of the group must be prepared to deliver the presentation in case of technical disruptions.

On the Tuesday of the week immediately before the assigned class the group will meet with the instructor virtually at 11am to present their understanding of the readings and

their plan for the presentation. Presentations and activities will be graded on the basis of 1. Preparation (did all group members read all of the readings and come prepared with a plan to the pre-presentation meeting), 2. Content (to what extent did the presentation help solidify, deepen knowledge about a concept), 3. Creativity, 4. Presentation style (was the presentation well organized and clearly delivered did the video adhere to the three minute time limit). DOING A TRIAL RUN IS CRUTIAL!

Article Critique (20%)

Students will submit an article critique on a week that they are not delivering a group presentation. The article critique is due at the beginning of class on the day where the class is discussing the readings that you have chosen to write about. See the article critique handout for further details.

Case Study, Presentation, Paper and Response (25%)

Students will research a case study paper of no more than 2500 words (10 double-spaced pages max). Students may complete this assignment as individuals or in groups. The paper will apply one of the theoretical concepts learned in the course to analyze, and present a position on, a contemporary problem/case study within the subject area of the course. See the case study handout for further detail.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: September 8

Introduction: why should labour scholars care about the environment?

Kenuajuak, Bobby 1999. My Village in Nunavik. 47 min. National Film Board.
https://www.nfb.ca/film/my_village_in_nunavik/

*Assignment: take a picture of something that represents the environment to you. Submit by Thursday September 17.

Week 2: September 15

Indigeneity and resource development in Canada's north

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996. Volume 2: Restructuring the Relationship, Chapter 5 - Economic Development; 2.4 Lands and Natural Resources, retrieved from:

http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071211061401/http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sh76_e.html#2.4%20Lands%20and%20Natural%20Resources

Glen Coulthard, 2010. "Place Against Empire: Understanding Indigenous Anti-Colonialism," *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action*, Volume 4, Number 2, Fall 2010, pp. 79-83

Week 3: September 22

Understanding nature and the economy

White, R. 1995 "Are you an environmentalist or do you work for a living?" *Work and nature IN: Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 69-90.

Cronon, William. 1996. *The trouble with wilderness IN: Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 69-90

http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble_with_Wilderness_Main.html

Week 4: September 29

Staples industries and work

Watkins. M.H. 1963. A Staple Theory of Economic Growth. *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue Canadienne d'Economie et de Science politique*, 29(2):141-158

Marchak, P. 1979 Labour in a staples economy. *Studies in political economy*.2(1):7-34

Stanford, J. 2008. Staples, Deindustrialization, and Foreign Investment: Canada's Economic Journey Back to the Future, *Studies in Political Economy* 82:7–34.

Week 5: October 6

Resource extraction, worker identity and geography

Dorow S. 2015. Gendering Energy Extraction in Fort McMurray. In: Shrivastava M and Stefanick L (eds) *Alberta Oil and the Decline of Democracy in Canada*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 275-292.

Dunk, Thomas, 1991. *It's a Working Man's Town*. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. Chapter 3 The Regional Setting (45-64)

Reading Week: October 13

Week 6: October 20

Working with nature and labour mobility

Storey K and Hall H. .2018. Dependence at a distance: Labour mobility and the evolution of the single industry town. *The Canadian Geographer* 62: 225-237.

Mitchell, Don 2001. The Devil's Arm: points of passage, networks of violence, and the California Agricultural Landscape. *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics*. 43(Spring): 44-60.

Week 7: October 27

Workers versus environmentalists

Foster, John Bellamy 1993. The Limits of Environmentalism Without Class: Lessons from the Ancient Forest Struggle of the Pacific Northwest. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 4(1): 11-41.

Savage, Larry and Dennis Soron 2011. Organized Labor and the Politics of Nuclear Energy: The Case of the Canadian Nuclear Workers Council. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 22(3): 8-29 doi: 10.1080/10455752.2011.593873

Week 8: November 3

Global Climate Change

Whyte Kyle P. 2018. Indigenous science for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of climate change crises. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 1: 224-242.

Räthzel, Nora and David Uzzell 2011. Trade unions and climate change: The jobs versus environment dilemma. *Global Environmental Change* 21(4):1215-1223.

Week 9: November 10

Environmental Justice

Ducre, Kishi Animashaun 2018. The Black feminist spatial imagination and an intersectional environmental justice, *Environmental Sociology*, 4:1, 22-35, DOI:10.1080/23251042.2018.1426089

McGregor, Deborah 2018. Mino-Mnaamodzawin: achieving Indigenous Environmental Justice in Canada. *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 9 (2018): 7–24.

Pellow, David, N. 2005. The next revolutionary stage: recycling waste or recycling history? In: King, Leslie and Deborah McCarthy (eds.) *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action*. Toronto: Roman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Week 10: November 17

Green jobs and ecological modernization

Nugent, James 2011. Changing the Climate: Ecoliberalism, Green New Dealism, and the Struggle over Green Jobs in Canada. *Labor Studies Journal* 36(1): 58-82. DOI: 10.1177/0160449X10392528

Carlota Perez 2018. Techno-economic paradigm shifts – video 18:44
<http://www.carlotaperez.org/media?s=vid&l=en>

Cheryl Teelucksingh (2018): Diverse environmentalism and inclusivity in Toronto's Green Economy, *Environmental Sociology*. 2325-1042

Week 11: November 24

The question of development: degrowth

Martinez-Alier, Joan 2009. Socially Sustainable Economic De-growth. *Development and Change* 40(6): 1099–1119. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7660.2009.01618.x

Rodríguez-Labajos, Beatriz, et al. "Not So Natural an Alliance? Degrowth and Environmental Justice Movements in the Global South." *Ecological Economics*, vol. 157, no. Complete, Mar. 2019, pp. 175–184, doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2018.11.007.

CBC Ideas. The Degrowth Paradigm. December 10th, 2013:
<http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2013/12/10/the-degrowth-paradigm/>

Week 12: December 1

The role of unions

Senior, Laura, Mayer, Brian, Brown, Phill and Rachel Morello-Frosch 2007. School Custodians and Green Cleaners: New Approaches to Labor-Environment Coalitions. *Organization & Environment* 2007; 20: 304-324. Doi: 10.1177/1086026607305740

Obach, Brian 2004. New labor: slowing the treadmill of production? *Organization and environment* 17(3): 337-354. doi: 10.1177/1086026604267939

Week 13: December 8

Case study paper [asynchronous]

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Weekly participation assignments and article critiques will be submitted on avenue to learn.

Case studies will be submitted using Turnitin.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

There is no allowance for late assignments except in extenuating circumstances.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Students may be absent from one class without it affecting their participation grade. All other absences will affect a student's participation grade. If a student is unable to participate in the synchronous lecture component of a given class because of technical difficulties, they have the option of submitting an additional article critique for that class en-lieu of participation.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com so that it

can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

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.

Email 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 and course # in the subject line of messages.**

University Policies:

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