

Work: Dangerous to Your Health?

FALL 2019

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LECTURE: Mondays, 7:00-10:00pm, KTH 104

OFFICE: KTH 701

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

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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 work and workforce and their 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. It will also examine collective strategies to protect workers' health. While the focus will be on Canada, the interrelatedness of health and safety issues at the global scale will be discussed. Empirical, conceptual and methodological dimensions of health and safety will be explored through multidisciplinary, contemporary course materials.

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 available on Avenue to Learn.

Course Evaluation Breakdown

- Short paper 1 (20%) due October 7
- Poster session (25%) due October 21
- Short paper 2 (20%) due November 11
- Final exam (35%) Exam period

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1

September 9 – Course Overview, Introduction

Readings:

- 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 16 – Changing Work, Changing Workforce

Readings:

- 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.
- Newhook JT et al. 2011. Employment-related mobility and the health of workers, families, and communities: The Canadian context. *Labour / Le Travail*, 67: 121-156.

Recommended: Sick and Tired, Chapter 3

Week 3

September 23 – Work-Related Mental Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapter 2
- Valiani S. 2013. Ontario Nurses' Association. *The Cycle of Sacrifice: Nurses' Health and the Ontario Health System*. Toronto: 1-16
- 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.

Week 4

September 30 – History of Health and Safety

Readings:

- 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.

Week 5

October 7 – Rights and Responsibilities

Readings:

- 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.

Note: Short paper 1 due today

Week 6

October 14 – Mid-term recess

Week 7

October 21 – Poster session

There are no readings for this week; however, students should have consulted scientific articles in preparation for their poster presentation and should be prepared to discuss this literature with the instructor.

Week 8

October 28 – The Recognition of Work Injuries and Illnesses

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapters 5 and 6.
- Egilman DS, Bohme SR. 2005. Over a barrel: corporate corruption of science and its effects on workers and the environment. *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health*. 11: 331-337.
- Mojtehedzadeh, S. 2016. Lethal legacy. General Electric's Peterborough plant was a symbol of opportunity for generations of workers – but did it also make them sick? Toronto Star, December 17.
<http://projects.thestar.com/lethal-legacy/>

Week 9

November 4 – Injured Workers' Experiences

Readings:

- Lippel K. 2007. Workers describe the effect of the workers' compensation process on their health: A Québec study. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 30: 427-443.
- Senthanaar S. et al. 2019. Return to work and ripple effects on family of precariously employed injured workers. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. Published online July 15. Pages 1-12.

Week 10

November 11 – Gender, Immigration, Racialization and Occupational Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapters 7 and 8.

Note: Short paper 2 due today

Week 11

November 18 – Collective Strategies to Protect Workers' Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapters 9 and 10.
- Andres H. 2016. Should prostitution be a crime? *The New York Times*. May 5. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/should-prostitution-be-a-crime.html>

Week 12

November 25 – The Global Interconnectedness of Health and Safety

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapter 11.
- Barua U. and Ansary A. 2017. Workplace safety in Bangladesh ready-made garment sector: 3 years after the Rama 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.

Week 13

December 2 – Course Wrap-Up and Review

There are no readings for this week.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Short papers should be submitted in class in hard copy. The final exam should be submitted on Avenue (instructions to be provided).

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	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

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor will permit extensions for exceptional circumstances only, for example when students have followed the requirements to report their absences.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

<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.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

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.

Department/University Policies:

Labour Studies staff does not date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of student papers. All papers for this class should be submitted/returned in-class, unless other arrangements have been made with the 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:

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.

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, 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/>

Location: MUSC – B107

Contact: 905-525-9140 x 28652

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

Please find the McMaster University policy on academic accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy at the following link:

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

Student Success Centre:

Email Address: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/>

Location: GH-110

Contact: 905-525-9140 x 24254

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:

Email Address: <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/>

Location: MUSC-B10

Contact: 905-525-9140 x 27700

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