

Work: Dangerous to Your Health?

FALL 2020

INSTRUCTOR: Stephanie Premji

OFFICE: KTH 701

EMAIL: spremji@mcmaster.ca

OFFICE HOURS (Zoom or phone): By appointment

SYNCHRONOUS LECTURES: Wednesdays 7:00-8:30pm (see schedule for dates)

Please email me if you have any difficulties accessing course materials

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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. While the focus will be on Canada, the global interconnectedness of health and safety issues will be discussed. The course will conclude by examining strategies to protect workers’ health. Empirical, conceptual, and methodological dimensions of health and safety will be explored through multidisciplinary, contemporary course materials.

****COVID-19 has brought to the forefront many important dimensions of work and health, and some of the course materials will focus on the implications of the virus for workers’ health****

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 / will be available on Avenue to Learn.

Course Evaluation Breakdown

Students will be evaluated in the following ways:

Short paper 1	25%	October 7
Pecha Kucha group presentation	30%	November 4
Short paper 2	25%	December 2
Online discussion participation	20%	Throughout – Portfolio due December 9

Course Structure

Each week, lectures will consist of videos posted on Avenue to Learn. In addition, students will be expected to read, watch, or listen to complementary resources from outside of academia (documentaries, podcasts, news articles, blog posts), and engage with this material and the class readings in an online discussion forum.

Throughout the term, we will also have a few synchronous lectures (via Zoom). Synchronous lectures will be used to introduce the class and discuss assignments as a group (see schedule for dates). Attendance to synchronous lectures, while encouraged, is optional; sessions will be recorded and posted on Avenue.

Students should spend *on average* 3 hours a week on lectures (synchronous and asynchronous) and complementary resources. Some complementary resources are highlighted in grey in the course schedule below and posted on Avenue. Others will be added as the term progresses. There are no complementary resources on Weeks 1 (introduction), 6 (mid-term) and 9 (Pecha Kucha).

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1

Zoom lecture 7:00-8:30pm: Welcome and course overview

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.
- McArthur, J.E. et al. 2020. Government failings put health-care workers at risk. In: *Sick of the system. Why the COVID-19 recovery must be revolutionary*. Between the Lines. Pages 17-27.

Watch:

1) Three digital stories of your choice on the increasingly common reality of work-related geographical mobility:

<https://www.onthepartnership.ca/results/digital-stories/>

Read:

1) Three blog posts of your choice on how COVID-19 has impacted the work and health of mobile workers:

<https://www.onthepartnership.ca/covid-19-and-the-mobile-labour-force/>

The links are at the bottom of the page. You may read any three blog posts except for the two working papers (unless you want to!). Blog posts are also available as PDFs on Avenue.

2) Mojtehdzadeh, S. 2020. More than 180 workers at this Toronto bakery got COVID-19 – but the public wasn't informed. Why aren't we being told about workplace outbreaks? August 10.

<https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/08/10/more-than-180-workers-at-this-toronto-bakery-got-covid-19-but-the-public-wasnt-informed-why-arent-we-being-told-about-workplace-outbreaks.html>

Week 3

Zoom lecture 7:00-8:30pm: Short paper 1 peer review

September 23 – Emotional Labour, Harassment, and Violence

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapter 2
- 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.
- Lyons, S. 2016. Hands off pants on. Sexual harassment in Chicago's hospitality industry. *Unite Here Local 1*. Pages 1-12.

Read:

1) Press, A. 2018. What's next for #MeToo? The McDonald's strikes have an answer. *Vox*. September 19. <https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/9/18/17876024/mcdonalds-strikes-walkout-me-too>

2) Bhattarai, A. 2020. Retail workers are being pulled into the latest culture war: getting customers to wear masks. *The Washington Post*. July 8.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/08/retail-workers-masks-coronavirus/>

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.

Watch:

1) Storey, R. Their only power was moral: A history of injured workers in Ontario – Parts 1,2 & 3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWA_slY1B4 (12:25 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGFcBzsybWQ&pbjreload=101> (22:24 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=K307vgEzTkk&feature=emb_title (21:32 min)

2) Workers Health & Safety Centre. 1996. Lessons from Elliot Lake. 30 min.

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.
- Lippel. 2020. Occupational health and safety and COVID-19: Whose rights come first in a pandemic? In: *Vulnerable. The law, policy and ethics of COVID-19*. Edited by Colleen Flood et al. University of Ottawa Press. P. 473-486.

Note: Short paper 1 due today

Watch:

1) Paul Cowan. 2001. *Westray*. National Film Board. 1h19 min.

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/westray/>

2) Robert Cotter. 1994. *Hamlet: Out of the ashes*. 22:32 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9G5dWMXz8V8>

Read:

1) Quinones, S. 2017. How a deadly chicken processing plant fire reveals a decline in worker protections. *The Washington Post*. September 1st.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/how-a-deadly-chicken-processing-plant-fire-reveals-a-decline-in-worker-protections/2017/09/01/afb9b484-7e0f-11e7-9d08-b79f191668ed_story.html

Week 6

October 14 – Mid-term recess

Week 7

October 21 – The Recognition of Work Injuries and Illnesses

Zoom lecture 7:00-8:30pm: Pecha Kucha peer-review

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.

Watch:

1) Jane McArthur, Bridging the gap on environmental breast cancers. 3:05 min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBjy6lUxuXs>

2) Natasha Luckhardt and Rob Viscardis. Town of widows. CBC Docs Pov. 44 min.
<https://gem.cbc.ca/media/cbc-docs-pov/season-3/episode-2/38e815a-0116f264f2d>

Week 8

October 28 – Workers' Experiences of Illness and Injury

Readings:

- Walter, N. et al. 2004. Masculinity and undocumented labor migration: injured latino day laborers in San Francisco. *Social Science and Medicine*, 59(6): 1159-1168.
- Senthanar S. et al. 2020. Return to work and ripple effects on family of precariously employed injured workers. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 30(1): 72-83.

Watch

1) TVO. 2016. WSIB: Working for injured workers? 39:58 min.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hglvl6dfPTc>

2) Three injured workers' stories of your choice:
<https://injuredworkersonline.org/stories/>

Week 9

November 4 – Pecha Kucha

There are no lectures or readings for this week. Students will view and discuss the Pecha Kucha presentations on Avenue.

Week 10

November 11 – Sex, Gender and Occupational Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapter 7.
- Messing K. 2020. If it's a war against COVID-19, who are the soldiers on the front lines? In: *Sick of the system. Why the COVID-19 recovery must be revolutionary*. Between the Lines. Pages...
- Stergiou-Kita, M. et al. 2015. Danger zone: Men, masculinity and occupational health and safety in high risk occupations. *Safety Science*. 80: 213-220.

Watch

1) Rainbow Collective. 2015. Udita (Arise). 1h15 min.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_tuvBHR6WU

Read

1) Mojtehedzadeh, S. 2020. Why the pandemic is a triple whammy for nail salon workers – and an opportunity for change. *The Toronto Star*. July 17.

<https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/07/17/why-the-pandemic-is-a-triple-whammy-for-nail-salon-workers-and-an-opportunity-for-change.html>

Week 11

November 18 – Immigration, Migration, Racialization and Occupational Health

Zoom lecture 7:00-8:30pm: Short paper 2 peer review

This week we will have a lecture by Eduardo Huesca, from the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, on migrant agricultural workers' health and safety. The lecture will be posted on Avenue.

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapter 8.
- Berger Richardson, S. 2020. Worked to the bone: COVID-19, the agrifood labour force, and the need for more compassionate post-pandemic food systems. In: *Vulnerable. The law, policy and ethics of COVID-19*. Edited by Colleen Flood et al. University of Ottawa Press. P. 501-509.
- Gould E. and Wilson V. 2020. Black workers face two of the most lethal preexisting conditions for coronavirus – racism and economic inequality. *Economic Policy Institute*. Pages 1-12.

Read

1) Mojtehedzadeh, S. 2020. A Jamaican migrant worker suffered catastrophic injuries on the job, then was told he could work as a 'show shiner' and had his workers' compensation cut off. The Toronto Star. July 25.

<https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/07/25/a-jamaican-migrant-worker-suffered-catastrophic-injuries-on-the-job-then-was-told-he-could-work-as-a-shoe-shiner-and-had-his-workers-compensation-cut-off.html>

2) Francis, A. 2020. A Black AGO worker was told her hair could 'scare' customers. The gallery agreed that was discrimination and promised to do better. A year later, she's still fighting for justice. The Toronto Star. July 30.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/07/30/a-black-ago-worker-was-told-her-hair-could-scare-customers-the-gallery-agreed-that-was-discrimination-and-promised-to-do-better-a-year-later-shes-still-fighting-for-justice.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 Rana 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.

Watch

1) National Geographic. The Bhopal Disaster (2014). 1h01 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsuUQzhP2Ds>

Week 13

December 2 – Strategies to Protect Workers' Health

Readings:

- Sick and Tired Chapters 9 and 10.

Watch

1) Donald Duck "How to have an accident at work": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WEXRwdIJ4A>

2) Alberta ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k5CFoOGzE8>

3) Ontario ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5kiz7GhJt0>

****Please note that the two ad videos depict disturbing scenes. Watch at your own discretion****

Read

1) Kantor, J. 2020. No bleach and dirty rags: How some janitors are asked to keep you virus-free. The New York Times. July 17.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/us/coronavirus-janitors.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Note: Short paper 2 due today.

Course Policies

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be submitted on Avenue.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor will permit extensions for exceptional circumstances only.

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](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), 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.

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.

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”.

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.

ZOOM LECTURES

There will be 4 Zoom lectures on the following dates: September 9, September 23, October 21, and November 18 (all from 7:00-8:30pm). Guidelines for attending Zoom lectures are as follows:

- The meeting link and password will be communicated to you on Avenue.
- When joining the meeting, you will see a message stating “Please wait, the meeting host will let you in soon.” Please wait to be admitted into the meeting by the instructor.
- Your mic will be muted upon entering the session. Wait to be called upon to unmute.
- Use the ‘raise hand’ function to ask questions.
- Meetings will be locked 10 minutes after the start time to avoid disruptions.
- Sessions will be recorded and posted on Avenue afterwards.

Please let me know if you have any accommodation needs for Zoom meetings.