

# **LABOUR AND GLOBALIZATION**

**Winter 2023**

**Instructor:** Dr. Geraldina Polanco  
**Email:** polancoa@mcmaster.ca  
**Lecture:** Monday, 2:30-5:20pm  
**Room:** BSB B103

**Office:** KTH 714  
**Office Hours:** Monday, 1-2pm or by apt  
**TA:** Lindsay McNabb Gamble  
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## **Course Description**

This course takes a critical lens to examine the relationship between work, employment and globalization. Because globalization and labour are both separate and intersecting fields, we will draw from literature centrally situated within (1) globalization studies and (2) work and employment scholarship, and (3) link these fields at important intersections. This course provides students with an opportunity to examine the transformative impact that globalization is having to work and labour market dynamics. Accordingly, we will address several themes over the course of the semester, including how imperialism established the foundation for the global political economy; the impact that migration is having to work and labour market dynamics; how technology is altering our experiences of time, space, and work; and changes to important institutions like the family. Students will gain knowledge of key theoretical debates and, through exposure to empirical cases, become well equipped to describe how social, political, and economic forces are reshaping work and globalization patterns at different scales, within locally situated, historical, and transnational contexts.

A central objective of this course is to provide students insight into how various micro and macro processes are organizing social patterns of privilege and inequality at the nexus of work and globalization. Several methods will be employed to facilitate this exposure, from course readings, class lectures, films, debates, and group assignments. As a learning strategy students are also encouraged to situate their own lives and experiences within the material covered, as an entry point for interrogating changing dynamics to work and migration.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Explain key debates on globalization, including the role of migration in promoting increased global connections
- Describe how social location, power and inequality ration and shape opportunities for mobility and work, and in turn life chances
- Summarize key debates regarding globalization and citizenship, including how being a “non-citizen” shapes working conditions and belonging
- Be equipped to discuss what’s at stake for people and work in a world increasingly marked by globalization

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- All required materials are available on Avenue to Learn

## **Class Format**

- Attendance and Participation, 10%
- Midterm, 25%
- Critical Film Commentary, 15%
- Group Newspaper Assignment, 20%
- Final Exam, 30%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Attendance and Participation, 10%**

This class is scheduled to meet every Monday, from 2:30-5:20pm, over the fall semester. To succeed in this course, commitment and sustained engagement is required. This includes regular attendance and active participation in class activities. It is assumed you have done the readings prior to class, taken notes/formulated questions on the assigned readings, and arrived prepared for group discussion. Attendance is taken regularly and constitutes a portion of your attendance and participation mark. (If you are required to be absent due to COVID-related issues, you should inform the instructor prior to your absence to avoid losing participation marks).

You will also be evaluated on the basis of your participation in class (e.g. asking questions, offering comments, taking notes, participating in group discussions, etc.) and through a number of in-class assignments. Some assignments require group facilitation and public speaking. While I understand not everyone is comfortable addressing an audience, the ability to speak in public is an important and transferable skill. Accordingly, you are encouraged to challenge yourself and treat this course as an opportunity to hone this practice. If you have concerns about your ability to participate in class orally, please see the instructor ASAP.

### **Critical Film Commentary, 15%**

We will be watching (portions of) four films related to the weeks' readings over the course of the semester. For ONE of these films, you will provide a review of the film and its relevance to the course. Your commentary should be 7-10 double-spaced pages (12-point font). Your task will be to review the film employing a critical social science lens, drawing from theories/social issues covered in the course to support your observations and argument. You have one week following the viewing of the film to submit your critical film commentary (e.g. If we view a film on January 23, you should submit your review on January 30). You will submit a hard copy to the instructor at the beginning of class. More details are available on Avenue to Learn.

### **MIDTERM, 25%**

The midterm is scheduled for February 13. It consists of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and short essay questions. The material will cover everything up to the point of the midterm, including readings, lecture material, videos, and class discussions.

### **Group Newspaper Assignment, 20%**

Working in groups of 2-3, over the course of the semester you will be responsible for selecting a newspaper article related to the course's theme (labour and globalization), conducting additional research on the topic, and presenting both the article and your research to the class. Your goal will be to connect the newspaper article to questions of globalization and labour (broadly conceived), highlighting some observations and/or critiques about the article employing a theoretical, social science lens. This may involve providing additional context for what the article is describing, some insight into how we should be reading the problematic at hand, and any other links you can make to the article and theories. Accordingly, you should draw from scholarly material to bolster your analysis of the newspaper article. For example, do you agree with how the article is posing the issue? Or do you find it deeply biased or problematic? Does the article illustrate a theory we've covered in class (such as "time-space compression") or a process we've discussed (such as bordering), and how does this help us to better understand the newspaper article? Each presentation should be approximately 20 minutes long. This includes both your review of the article, as well as your scholarly insights. You are welcome to include interactive components in your presentation, such as short video clips, discussion questions, etc. The group presentation constitutes 10% of your mark and is a shared assessment with your partner/group members.

You will also submit a write-up (8 pages, double spaced) on the newspaper article. To this end, you should be making links to the course and drawing from scholarly material to bolster your analysis of the article. Further instructions for carrying out this assignment will be provided during the first few weeks of class. The write-up constitutes 10% of your final mark.

For this assignment, you are given the option to do your write-up individually or as a team. However, if you decide to do a group writeup, you may not complain to the TA or instructor of inequitable distribution of work, etc. You assume this risk in making that decision.

### **Final Exam, 30%**

There will be a final exam during the scheduled exam period. It will consist of short answer and short essay questions. The final is cumulative (though more weight will be given to material covered since the midterm), and will include readings, lecture material, videos, and class discussions.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (January 9)**

Introduction to Course. No assigned readings.

### **Week 2 (January 16)**

Theme: Globalization and Migration

#### Readings:

Robinson, William (2007). "Theories of Globalization" in *The Blackwell Companion of Globalization*. Edited by George Ritzer. Blackwell Publishing, pp. 125-143.

Dickinson, Eliot (2017). "The Onset of a Borderless World" in *Globalization & Migration: A World in Motion*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Press, pp. 1-20.

Munck, Ronaldo (2008). "Globalisation, Governance and Migration: An Introduction." *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7: 1227–1246.

### **Week 3 (January 23)**

Theme: World Systems Theory & the Political Economy of Globalization

#### Readings:

Shannon, Thomas (2019). "The Origins of World Systems Theory" and "World System Structure" in *An Introduction to the World Systems Perspective, 2nd edition*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-43.

Gill, Stephen (2002). "The Political Economy of Globalization: the Old and the New." *Democratizing Global Governance*, edited by Joseph Camilleri and Aksu Esref. New York: Palgrave Press.

Film (Second portion of class)

### **Week 4 (January 30)**

Theme: Work, Technology, & Time-Space Compression

#### Readings:

Stein, Jeremy (2001). "Reflections on Time, Time-Space Compression and Technology in the Nineteenth Century". *Timespace*, New York: Routledge, pp. 106-119.

Rowe, Aime, Sheena Malhotra, and Kimberlee Perez (2014). "Answering the Call: Virtual Migration in Indian Call Centres". *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal*, 12(1-2): 51-70.

### **Week 5 (February 6)**

Theme: Footloose Capital & Gendered Workers in Global Production

#### Readings:

Safa, Helen (1981). "Runaway Shops and Female Employment: the Search for Cheap Labor." *SIGNS*, 7(2), pp. 418-433.

Ngai, Pun and Jenny Chan (2012). "Global Capital, the State, and Chinese Workers: The Foxconn Experience" in *Modern China*, 38(4): 383-410.

Film (Second portion of class)

### **Week 6 (February 13)**

Midterm (No Assigned Readings)

### **Week 7 (February 20–Reading Break)**

No assigned readings or assignments

### **Week 8 (February 27)**

Theme: Black Caregivers, Border Regimes and (Un)Belonging in Canada

#### Readings:

Kihika, Maureen (2020). “Conceptualizing Canada’s Subtle- ‘Not So Bad’- Racism Problem”. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 57(4): 713-716.

Kihika, Maureen (2013). “Ghosts and Shadows: A History of Racism in Canada”. *Canadian Graduate Journal of Sociology and Criminology*, 2(1): 35-44.

Note: For today's class, you will attend the School of Labour Studies' & Dept. of Sociology's Joint Speaker Series (Virtually), featuring a talk by Dr. Maureen Kihika (Assistant Professor, Labour Studies and Sociology, Simon Fraser University). Following the talk, you will complete a short worksheet (available on Avenue to Learn) where you will answer some questions and offer reflections on the talk.

### **Week 9 (March 6)**

Theme: Remittances & Inequalities

#### Readings:

Carling, Jorgen (2020). “Remittances: Eight Analytical Perspectives”. *Routledge Handbook of Migration & Development*. New York: Routledge, pp. 114-124.

Nieswand, Boris (2014). “The burgers’ paradox: Migration and the transnationalization of social inequality in southern Ghana.” *Ethnography*, 15(4): 403-425.

Film (Second portion of class)

### **Week 10 (March 13)**

Theme: Intimate Migrations: Commodifying Love, Sex and Reproductive Labour

#### Readings:

Constable, Nicole (2009). “The Commodification of Intimacy: Marriage, Sex, and Reproductive Labor.” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 38, pp. 49-64.

Cabezas, Amalia (2004). “Between Love and Money: Sex, Tourism, and Citizenship in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.” *SIGNS*, 29(4), pp. 987-1015.

### **Week 11 (March 20)**

Theme: Migrant Workers in Canada

#### Readings:

Preibisch, Kerry (2010). "Pick-Your-Own-Labor: Migrant Workers and Flexibility in Canadian Agriculture." *International Migration Review*, 44(2), pp. 404-441.

Film (Second portion of class)

### **Week 12 (March 27)**

Theme: State Brokering of Labour Migrants

#### Readings:

Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit (2010). "A Global Enterprise of Labor: Mobilizing Migrants for Export" and "Able Minds, Able hands: Marketing Philippine Workers" in *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 19-74.

### **Week 13 (April 3)**

Theme: Global Work & Transnational Families

#### Readings:

Skrbis, Zlatko (2008). "Transnational Families: Theorising Migration, Emotions and Belonging". *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3): 231-246.

Francisco, Valerie (2015). "'The internet is magic': Technology, Intimacy and Transnational Families". *Critical Sociology*, 41(1): 173-190.

Tsong, Yuying and Yuli Liu (2008). "Parachute Kids and Astronaut Families" in *Asian American Psychology*, New York: Psychology Press, pp. 365-379.

### **Week 14 (April 10—Last day of Class)**

Theme: Elite, Mobile Workers in a Global World

#### Readings:

Cranston, Sophie (2017). "Expatriate as a 'Good' Migrant: Thinking Through Skilled International Migrant Categories." *Population, Space and Place*, 23(6): 1-12.

Nowicka, Magdalena (2007). "Mobile Locations: Constructions of Home in a Group of Mobile Transnational Professionals". *Global Networks*, 7(1): 69-86.

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Assignments will be printed off and submitted to the professor at the beginning of class, unless otherwise specified in the course syllabus.

## **Late Assignments**

Assignments should be submitted in person (unless otherwise specified). Please **DO NOT SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS UNDER MY DOOR / EMAIL THEM TO ME** (unless granted prior written approval); I will not accept them through these methods. Extensions will be considered only under exceptional circumstances. Requests for extensions must be made prior to the due date, should be submitted in writing along with any relevant documentation (e.g. note from doctor). Otherwise, late assignments come with a 5% penalty per day, including weekends.

## **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

In the case of absence for an extended period of time (e.g. illness, current (mental) health issues, bereavement, etc.) please let me know as soon as possible and / or have the appropriate person contact me directly (e.g. a counsellor, doctor, disability office, etc.). I am committed to your success but need to have a general sense of current barriers. The earlier you can advise me of the need for accommodation(s) due to absence the more options we have (e.g. alternative methods of evaluation, learning support systems, rescheduling, etc.).

## **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.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

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.

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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

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.

### **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](mailto: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 requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation 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.

### **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.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that 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 becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.



### **Course Modification**

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 his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **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.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale: