

Department of Geography, University of Toronto  
**GGR 328 H1F Labour Geographies**  
Fall Term 2015 (September 17<sup>th</sup>—December 3<sup>rd</sup>)  
Lecture: Thursdays 2-4pm WI 524

**COURSE INSTRUCTOR**

**Emily Reid Musson**

Office Hours & Location:

PGB 307B Thursdays 4:30-6pm

**TEACHING ASSISTANT**

**Katie Mazer**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How is work socially and spatially organized? How are workers geographical actors and political agents who negotiate, contest, and create economic systems? What kinds of work exist beyond wages, including reproductive or alternative forms of work? Throughout this course, we apply a *geographical* approach to the contemporary organization of work. While labour geography has often predominantly focused on patterns of organized labour and industrial relations in Anglo-American settings, we will explore uneven and socially differentiated patterns of insecure, migrant, informal, unpaid, and unfree work from a transnational lens.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, we will have a theoretically informed and empirically improved understanding of:

- Key labour geographies and critical labour theories for understanding work, particularly as it is related to social difference.
- The challenges and opportunities that precarity (migrant, informal, insecure, and reproductive work) poses for labour geographies.
- The broad contours of geographical and historical transformations in labour.
- Improved writing, reading, and reasoning skills; strategies for critically evaluating personal experiences and positionality as a scholar analyzing work and workers.

**Prerequisite:** 7.5 FCE's including 1.0 FCE in Geography (SOC SCI/BR=3)

**Distribution Requirement Status:** This is a Social Science course

**Breadth Requirement:** Society and its Institutions (3)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The most important requirement for this course, as with any course dealing with the politics of difference and representation is that we approach all readings, lectures, and especially one another with patient and open minds; a willingness to see from new perspectives, and a commitment to honestly challenges our own assumptions.

- Come to every class *on time*, prepared and ready to engage. Complete all readings and assignments *before* lecture. Be ready to pose questions, share your thoughts, and discuss the material as you are able and inclined to.

- Bring the relevant course materials to each lecture, preferably in hard copy (readings, syllabus, assignment guidelines, notes, etc.).
- Required readings are an essential component of this class and your attendance at all class meetings is expected. Allot approximately 6 hours per week to complete the readings, take notes, and reflect before class. This is in addition to in-class time and time to complete assignments. Lectures will not summarize readings, but rather expand on them. Even if you find the reading challenging, you will benefit from having working toward completing it; you cannot participate without at least attempting to do the required readings.
- Please be aware of the needs of others in the classroom – we are sharing this learning space and can show each other respect by being considerate and listening to one another.
- Please think carefully about which uses of technology support your learning and which distract or isolate you and others in the room. Electronic multi-tasking detracts from learning outcomes because it is difficult to focus on our own learning and each other if we are distracted. Laptops/tablets are permitted in class for note-taking only. Turn off Internet access and resist the urge to multi-task. Use of cell phones, cameras, and other devices are not permitted during class (see the policy on recording lectures below). If you are managing an urgent work or personal matter that requires your cell phone, feel free to quietly and momentarily leave the room to do so.

**Assignment & Grading Summary:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Short Description</b>
Participation	10%	Ongoing assessment, based on <i>quality of overall engagement</i>	Active engagement and attendance in lecture (includes completing pre-lecture readings, active listening & speaking, participating in group activities, attending office hours where appropriate).
Film or Music Review	20%	<b>22 October</b> by 2:10pm in class	3 page review of one song or film (double spaced pages; ~250 words per page)
Labour Geographies Essay	40%	<b>19 November</b> by 2:10pm in class	8 page essay examining labour geographies through a job you have or had (double spaced pages; ~250 words per page)
Final Exam	30%	TBA	Exam period Dec 11-22

## ASSIGNMENTS

ALL assignments are due in hard copy before the start of lecture on the deadline. Any assignments submitted after the start of lecture will be subject to late penalties (for the policy late penalties, see the course policies below). Full information and guidelines on assignments will be provided in lecture.

**Film/Song Review (20%):** The purpose of this review is to apply the course material we have considered in the beginning of the course through a film or song that is related to work in the broadest sense. This 3-page, double-spaced paper is short. Your review should be succinct and analytical rather than summative, and relevant to the course. You should focus on a limited set of themes or concepts (1-2) covered in the course which help you relate the film or song to labour geography. You must cite and discuss at least 2 academic articles to reinforce your review, of which 1 must be an assigned course reading. Organize your review as you would a standard academic essay, including a thesis statement, introduction, body and conclusion. **The assignment is due on October 22<sup>nd</sup> before the start of lecture.**

**Labour Geographies Analysis (40%):** An 8-page, double-spaced paper in which you will explore one of your own present or past work experiences from a labour geographies perspective. You will integrate course concepts and scholarly sources to evaluate how your work/workplace is spatially organized as well as some of labour geographers' key claims or arguments. Either paid or unpaid (housework, volunteer work, etc.) can be the focus of the paper. **The paper is due on November 19<sup>th</sup> before the start of lecture.**

**Participation (10%):** Each class meeting will involve active learning and group activities during which you engage with your colleagues in small groups and report back to the large group. Participation marks are based on a combination of attendance and the *quality* of engagement in lectures, group discussions, in-class writing exercises, and other course activities. Participation includes demonstrating genuine engagement and effort throughout the course in all aspects (preparation, questions, interaction with your colleagues, etc.). You cannot participate without at least attempting to complete assigned readings prior to class, and there are no "make-ups" for missed participation activities.

**Final Exam (30%):** The final exam covers all of the course material. The final exam format is 2-3 short essays. Further details on the exam format as well as an exam review guide will be provided to you. The exam period for this course is December 11<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> (specific date, time, and location TBA October 10<sup>th</sup>).

## COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

**Accessibility:** If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or the course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>. You are not obligated to inform us but are welcome to see either of the course instructors in person to discuss how we can create a learning environment that is accessible for your needs.

**Class Meetings:** This course is designed assuming that all students attend all classes and complete all course requirements. If you cannot attend all class meetings, as well as complete the readings and course requirements you will struggle to succeed in class. If any difficulties arise during the course that may prevent you from attending class or completing readings or assignments, please speak with your College Registrar immediately.

**Absence from exam:** The final exam is managed by the Faculty of Arts and Science. You must file a formal petition with FAS if you miss the exam for any reason:  
[http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/Rules\\_&\\_Regulations.html](http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/Rules_&_Regulations.html)

**Recording Lectures:** You may, only with the prior permission of the Course Instructor, create audio recordings for your own personal use only. No photographs or video recordings are permitted under any circumstances. Permission to record lectures does not mean that you have the consent of your colleagues to record small group discussions without asking for their explicit permission and full agreement. If you are given permission by the Course Instructor to make personal audio recordings of lectures, you agree to the following: You may not under any circumstances distribute audio recordings in any form (websites, email, file sharing, or any other means) and you may not share audio recordings with other students in the class. Since audio recordings are permitted with the prior permission of the Course Instructor, your voice may be recorded by others during the lecture. Please speak with the Course Instructor promptly if this is a concern for you. In accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, students with accommodation needs are permitted to make personal audio recordings of lectures. Non-compliance with any of the above terms will be subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct.

**Submitting Assignments:** ALL assignments are due in hard copy in class before the lecture begins on the due date. You must also submit an electronic copy of all assignments to Turnitin.com in order to have your assignment marked (see below for details). NO assignments will be accepted by either of the TAs directly and NO assignments will be accepted via email, fax, or under office doors. Contact the Course Instructor in advance if you need to submit your assignment early.

**Late Assignments:** Can be submitted to the Geography Department's drop box on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of Sid Smith, Room 5047. Note that assignments will only be date stamped at the end of the day on working days that the office is open (usually Monday-Friday until 4.30 pm). This means that any assignments submitted to the "after hours" drop box outside the main office doors will be date stamped at the end of the day the next day the office is open again. Take this into account to avoid further late penalties.

**Penalties for Late Assignments:** A penalty of 5% per day with no work accepted five days after a deadline. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) count as one day. Note that the penalty

applies *after the lecture begins* on the due date. Plan your schedule accordingly to avoid any penalties.

**Missed Assignment Deadlines:** Extensions will be granted sparingly and only in the case of *documented* illness or personal emergencies. For medical reasons, you will need an official medical note that clearly excuses you from work or school on the day the assignment is due: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/>

Contact your College Registrar immediately if a personal emergency arises that prevents you from submitting your assignment on time. Without proper documentation for missing an assignment or exam, you will receive a grade of zero for the work.

**Turnitin.com:** In order to have the hard copy of an assignment marked, you must upload an electronic copy to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. By uploading to Turnitin, you allow your assignments to be included in an institutional repository, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of Turnitin.com are described on the Turnitin.com website. You may opt out of submitting your assignments to Turnitin. If you choose this alternative, you must inform the course instructors in advance to make arrangements for submitting copies of all your research notes and drafts of the assignment.

**Copies of Assignments:** It is your responsibility to maintain digital copies of your written assignments and a hard copy of marked assignments until the final course marks are recorded.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** You must comply with the university's policies on plagiarism and academic honesty. Please don't plagiarise. As a student at the UofT, it is your responsibility to understand and follow these policies: <http://life.utoronto.ca/get-smarter/academic-honesty/>

### **English language support**

For many U of T students, English is not a first language. The English Language Learning center offers support to students whose first language is not English, as well as those who consider English their first language but find formal, academic English challenging and want to improve their skills. In either case, you can find assistance here: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

**Email with Course Instructor:** Please conduct as much course business in person before or after class and during office hours. *You are therefore asked to limit email exchanges to very short (yes/no) questions for which you cannot otherwise find answers.* You must use your [mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:mail.utoronto.ca) email account for all communication related to this course. I will respond to emails within 1 standard business day (24 hours, Mon-Fri).

### **Office Hours:**

You are encouraged to visit my instructor office hours from 4:30 to 6 pm each Thursdays throughout the term (Room PGB 307B). You're also encouraged to be in contact with each other to discuss the course, assignments, and readings. Please carefully consult the resources you have (syllabus, assignment guidelines, course website, and each other) for answers to most of your questions. All of the information you need for the course is provided in class and on the course website.

## RESOURCES

Academic skills – research, writing, reading, studying, note taking, citing, etc. – require much practice: we are not born with them! If you have ever put 150% effort into studying for a test and received a poor grade, you might benefit from a skills workshop on effective note taking, reading, or studying for tests and exams. Think of this as ongoing professional and intellectual development that will help you far beyond one course.

I strongly recommend the following resources:

Workshops, appointments, and online resources can be found at the college **Writing Centres** [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca), the **Academic Skills Centre** <http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/> and **English Language Learning program** <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

Links to and information on these resources will also be provided on Portal.

### **Skills to Support Academic Integrity & Avoid Plagiarism:**

Academic integrity is a *process* that we have to learn and actively cultivate. Students sometimes plagiarize without intending to do so. Yet whether one intends to plagiarize or does so accidentally matters little because any breach of academic integrity is viewed seriously. We strongly recommend honing good academic practices to avoid plagiarizing.

### **Robarts Library research & reference services:**

You can book an appointment, online chat, or walk-in to a reference desk: <http://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/contact-us/>.

If you require additional help, please contact **Eveline Houtman**, Geography's liaison librarian at Robarts. Her contact info is [eveline.houtman@utoronto.ca](mailto:eveline.houtman@utoronto.ca), and you can arrange to meet her to help you with your research needs.

### **Mental health and well-being**

Students' mental health is a growing concern on university campuses. The Organization of University and College Health released a study in 2013 showing that a majority of undergraduates were juggling multiple mental health concerns. The U of T offers Counselling and Psychological Services to its students and you should take advantage of these services ([www.caps.utoronto.ca](http://www.caps.utoronto.ca)).

### **A Note on our course Teaching Assistant:**

We are privileged to be assisted by an expert TA and labour researcher in this class. **Katie Mazer** is a PhD Candidate in Geography at the University of Toronto. Her research considers how Atlantic Canada became a 'labour export' region, or source of flexible mobile labour, for the Canadian resource-based economy. She is interested in labour, pipeline politics and resource economies.

## COURSE SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

All course readings, unless otherwise noted, are posted on Portal as PDFs, provided through the University of Toronto Libraries.

[R] indicates that the reading is scholarly and peer-reviewed.

### **17 Sept      Defining Work**

JK Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron & Stephen Healy (2013) Ch. 2 “Taking Back Work: Surviving Well” in *Take Back the Economy: an Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, p. 17-48. [R]

### **24 Sept      Making Workers**

Jamie Peck (1996) “Making Workers: Control, Reproduction, Regulation” in *Work-Place: the Social Regulation of Labor Markets*: p. 23-45. [R]

Rebecca Mead (2014) “Cold Comfort: Tech Jobs and Egg Freezing” in *The New Yorker*.

### **1 Oct          Fordism, Organized Labour, & Labour Geography ‘proper’**

Andrew Herod (2012) “Workers as Geographical Actors”, in *Labor History* 53(3), p. 335-353. [R]

Book Review of Stanley Aronowitz’ (2014) “The Death and Life of American Labor: Towards a New Workers’ Movement”, in *Labor Notes*.

Richard Seymour (2013) “China’s trade union reforms aim to control its militant workforce”, in *The Guardian*.

**Guest Presentation** by Eveline Houtman, Liaison Librarian for Geography, will be presenting on “Evaluating Scholarly Sources and Scholarly Conversation”

### **8 Oct          Neoliberalism and Flexible Work**

Melissa Wright (2001) “Desire and the Prosthetics of Supervision: a Case of Maquiladora Flexibility” in *Cultural Anthropology* 16(3), p. 354-373. [R]

Nicholas Rose (1999) Ch. 4 “Advanced Liberalism”, in *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, p. 148-177. \*\*Read pages 156-164 only\*\* [R]

### **15 Oct          Labour Organizing against Insecure Work**

Jennifer J. Chun (2009) “The Symbolic Leverage of Power” in *Organizing at the Margins: the Symbolic Policies of Labor in South Korea and the United States*, p. 1-23. [R]

William Finnegan (2014) “Dignity: Fast-food workers and a new form of labor activism” in *The New Yorker*.

## **22 Oct            Service and Knowledge Work**

### **\* Review Essay Due in-class\***

Linda McDowell and Jane Dyson (2011) “The other side of the knowledge economy: ‘reproductive’ employment and affective labours in Oxford”, in *Environment and Planning A*, 43: 2186-2201 [R]

Claire Cain Miller (2015) “Restaurant of the Future? Service with an Impersonal Touch”, in *The New York Times*.

## **29 Oct            Insecure Masculinities**

Linda McDowell (2003) *Redundant Masculinities: Employment Change and White Working-Class Youth* [excerpts], p. 1-7, 79-89. [R]

Deborah Cowen & Amy Siciliano (2011) “Surplus Masculinities and Security”, in *Antipode* 43(5) p. 1516–1541 [R]

## **5 Nov             Social Reproduction as Unfree & Unregulated Work**

McGrath, Siobhán & James DeFilippis (2009) “Social Reproduction as Unregulated Work”, in *Work, Employment and Society*, 23(1), p. 66-83.[R]

Kendra Strauss (2012) “Coerced, Forced and Unfree Labour: Geographies of Exploitation in Contemporary Labour Markets”, in *Geography Compass* 6(3), p.137–148.[R]

## **12 Nov            Global Labour, Citizenship & Migration**

Nicole Constable (2006) “Migrant workers and the many states of protest in Hong Kong”, in *Critical Asian Studies* 41(1), p. 143-164 [R]

Explore the research findings from the project, “Global Cities at Work: Migrant Labour in Low-Paid Employment in London” (find the video, audio recordings and/or reports on the [project website](#)).

## **19 Nov            Informality and the Global Economy**

### **\*Labour Geographies Essay Due in-class\***

Lorena Muñoz (2013) “From Street Child Care to Drive-Throughs: Latinas Reconfigure and Negotiate Street Vending in Los Angeles”, in *Immigrant Women Workers in the Neoliberal Age*, Eds. Nilda Flores-González, Anna Romina Guevarra, Maura Toro-Morn, Grace Chang, p. 133-144.[R]

Explore “Workers’ Stories” and “Occupational Groups” on the website by [WIEGO](#) (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing)

**26 Nov          Youth, Unemployment & Politics**

Craig Jeffrey (2010) "The politics of waiting", in *The Guardian*.

Cynthia Spring (2014) "Office Wives: Unpaid Internships and the Feminization of the Creative Class", in *Guts Magazine* (Spring Issue).

**3 Dec            Review & Responses**

Read the exam review guide and prepare your questions before class.

**\* Final Exam: Week of 11-22 Dec. (TBA) \***