

LER497 Global Workers' Rights: Semester Calendar		
Week of class	Tuesday	Thursday
Week one	8 Jan.	10 Jan.
Week two	15 Jan.	17 Jan.
Week three	22 Jan.	24 Jan.
Week four	29 Jan.	31 Jan.
Week five	5 Feb.	7 Feb.
Week six	12 Feb.	14 Feb.
Week seven	19 Feb.	21 Feb.
Week eight	26 Feb.	28 Feb.
Mid-term break	3-9 March	
Week nine	12 Mar.	14 Mar.
Week ten	19 Mar.	21 Mar.
Week eleven	26 Mar.	28 Mar.
Week twelve	2 Apr.	4 Apr.
Week thirteen	9 Apr.	11 Apr.
Week fourteen	16 Apr.	18 Apr.
Week fifteen	23 Apr.	25 Apr.
Week sixteen	EXAM WEEK	

Course instructor

Daniel Hawkins, 123b Keller

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Office hours: Monday, 2-4pm

Course information

Spring 2013

Tues/Thurs, 11:15-12:30

207 Donald H Ford Building

Course description

This course examines the multiple debates around the topic of workers' rights: taking legal, political and social perspectives and linking them to contemporary debates and proposals to enhance and/or strengthen workers' rights in the global economy. The course combines an initial discussion of the nature and breadth of workers' rights, both as philosophical discussions and institutional policy parameters, with a more practical examination of the legal grounding of workers' rights and the actual political enforcement and/or negation of rights. The course looks at workers' rights from a multiplicity of angles, focusing on the ambiguity of rights in the contemporary age of global economic integration. This is done by examining how different actors (states, MNCs, and labor unions) perceive rights and what they do to either subvert or improve workers' rights in different regions of the world and in different sectors or economic processes.

Questions to be explored

1. What is work and labor? How important is work for human development? What are rights and how can workers' rights be defined and justified?
2. How have workers' rights been both elevated and yet also sidestepped or ignored since the onset of globalization?
3. What are some of the structural problems confronting the advancement of a rights'-based agenda in the world of work?
4. What are some of the relatively new mechanisms in place that look to replace or compensate for the limits of State action in regulating work in today's global economy? How effective are they in protecting and guaranteeing workers' rights?

Course objectives

By the course's end, students will have a more nuanced understanding of what workers' rights mean and what elements comprise workers' rights. Furthermore, students will be able to think critically about the multiple dimensions of rights and about the institutional protections of rights as well as the limitations to the improvement/protection of workers' rights. Students will learn more about the problems inherent in combining pro-workers' rights policies with enhanced economic liberalization. Finally, students will be able to list and critique some of the new mechanisms and proposals promoted by diverse actors to promote respect for labor rights and workers' rights and ensure that they are upheld in all sectors, spheres and geographies of the global economy.

Course structure

The course is designed as a seminar format, with core readings discussed in-depth in each class based on a careful reading of the texts prior to class. **READING TEXTS IS ESSENTIAL**, not optional. The course is roughly divided into two components. The first part carries us into the terrain of rights, from conceptual and philosophical perspectives. Thereafter, the discussion moves into the legal and institutional dimension of rights, focusing on the notions and practicalities of labor law and labor standards, both at the national and international levels. The second component of the course looks into non-state initiatives at regulating rights in a global economy. These classes will examine mechanisms such as codes of conduct, social clauses in trade agreements and international framework agreements. Furthermore, we will examine the heterogenous role of labor movements in promoting workers rights in diverse parts of the globe.

Assessments

1. Class participation (20%): This course will involve a high level of discussion in class, and your active participation in these discussions is essential.

Everyone is expected to lead one class discussion and to write a 1 or 2 paragraph statement discussing an important point they gained from their particular reading and how it relates to the themes of the class session. This “discussion memo” should be uploaded to the course ANGEL website’s drop box by 5pm on Mondays. Students should read all memos prior to class.

2. Take-home essay exam (25%): At the courses’ mid-point, students will be given a take-home essay exam that will cover all the material discussed up until that point in the course. The exam will be given out on February 19 and will be due back on 28 February. (All mid-term papers must be uploaded to the corresponding folder on Angel before midnight of the date specified).
3. During the week of March 20-23, the Global Center for Workers’ Rights will be hosting the International Symposium on the topic of workers’ rights. During this week there will be no formal class sessions. However, all students must attend at least two discussion panels and summarize the topic and main arguments (in max. two pages) made by one of the panelists presenting his/her work (10%) These summaries must be uploaded to the respective folder on Angel by midnight the following Monday (25 March).
4. Final research paper (45% of final grade): Students should produce a 20 page research paper which addresses a topic of their choice related to the themes of the course. The paper should be double-spaced, 12 pt. font, with 1 inch margins. Content details will be discussed in class. A one-page research proposal is due on Thursday, March 28. The final paper is due on May 2, 2013.

Readings

All readings can be found on ANGEL. Students are expected to read and take notes on all assigned readings prior to class. Students are also asked to print out readings and bring them to class for easy reference during classroom discussions.

Class attendance (policy)

Students are expected to attend all classes. Obviously, unexpected events can occur such as ill health, family or personal commitments and/or professional obligations. Such events are unavoidable and understandable. However, both for respect to your fellow classmates, to the teacher, and to the Department and University, students should ensure that if they miss class they catch up on the work missed. Therefore, it is policy that any time a student misses a class he/she must send (no later than one full day after the missed class) a three-page summary of the main ideas and arguments found in the respective readings for that class, to the teacher. Students should ensure that they do not miss more than 10% of all class sessions.

Week 1: January 8

Introduction and discussion of syllabus.

Brief presentation of Professor Hawkins' academic and professional work and interests.

Brief discussion of what students understand by workers' rights: problems and possibilities.

January 10, What is work? What is labor?

1. Standing, Guy. 2009. *Work After Globalization: Building Occupational Citizenship*. Cheltenham, Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, chapter one, pp.1-31
2. Castel, Robert. 1996. "Work and usefulness to the world". In: *International Labour Review*, Vol. 135 (6), pp.615-622

Week two: January 15 & January 17, What do we mean by Rights and especially Workers' Rights? What is the history of debates involving workers' rights?

1. Sen, Amarty. 2000. "Work and rights". In: *International Labour Review* Vol.139 (2), pp.119-128
2. Mishra, Lakshmidhar. 2012. "History of Labour rights". In: *Social Change* (42), 335-357

Worker rights: Politico-legal dimensions and regimes

Week three: January 22 & January 24, Fitting rights into legal frameworks

1. Mundlak, Guy. 2007. "The right to work: Linking human rights and employment policy", In: *International Labour Review*, Vol. 146 (3-4), pp.189-215
2. Bronstein, Arturo. 2009. "Labour law at a crossroads" in: *International & Comparative Labour Law: Current Challenges*, Geneva: ILO/Palgrave MacMillan, pp.1-29

Week four: January 29 & January 31, Labor rights and globalization: expanding legal protections to encompass liberalization and informalization

1. Bronstein, Arturo. 2009. "Who is protected by labour law?" in: *International & Comparative Labour Law: Current Challenges*, Geneva: ILO/Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 30-59

2. Bronstein, Arturo. 2009. "Global trade and labour law", in: *International & Comparative Labour Law: Current Challenges*, Geneva: ILO/Palgrave MacMillan, pp.86-123

Week five: February 5, The heterogeneities of labor law in developing countries: problems and proposals

1. Bensusan, Graciela. 2010. "Labour law in Latin America: The gap between norms and reality", in: Tzehainesh Tekle (Ed.), *Labour Law & Worker Protection in Developing Countries*, Oxford/Switzerland: ILO & Hart Publishing, pp.142-160
2. Sankaran, Kamala. 2010. "Labour law in South Asia: The need for an inclusive approach", in: Tzehainesh Tekle (Ed.), *Labour Law & Worker Protection in Developing Countries*, Oxford/Switzerland: ILO & Hart Publishing, pp.225-251

February 7, Special guest lecturer: Professor Dr. Ruth Milkman (CUNY Graduate Center, New York)

"Back to the future? U.S. labor organizing in the new gilded age"
12:00p.m. in Room 502 Keller

Week six: February 12 & February 14, Core labor rights and international political power struggles

1. Kaufmann, Christine. 2007. "International economic organisations and Core Labour Rights: Conflicting interests". In: *Globalisation & Labour Rights: The conflict between core labour rights and international economic law*. Oxford/Portland: Hart Publishing, chapter 2, pp.87-154
2. Van Roozendaal, Gerda. 2002. "Trade unions, labour standards and global governance: An introduction". In: *Trade Unions & Global Governance: The Debate on a Social Clause*. London/New York: Continuum, pp. 1-28

Week seven: February 19 & February 21, Multinational production and labor rights: Going up or going down?

1. Mosley, Layna. 2011. "Inside and out: The determinants of labor rights", in: *Labor Rights & Multinational Production*, New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 3, pp.46-98
2. Mosley, Layna. 2011. "Conceptualizing workers' rights", in: *Labor Rights & Multinational Production*, New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 4, pp.99-134

Beyond the ILO and beyond national labor law: Codes of conduct, social lauses, and international framework agreements: Enhancing or compromising workers' rights?

Week eight: February 26 & February 28, Can capital really incorporate rights'-based practices?

1. Blowfield, Michael. 2004. "CSR and development: Is business appropriating global justice? In: *Development* 47(3), pp.61-68
2. Mezzadri, Alessandra. 2012. "Reflections on globalisation and labour standards in the Indian garment industry: Codes of conduct versus 'codes of practice' imposed by the firm", in: *Global Labour Journal*, Vol.3 (1), pp.40-62
3. Jenkins, Rhys. 2002. "The political economy of codes of conduct", in: Rhys Jenkins et al., (Eds), *Corporate Responsibility & Labour Rights: Codes of Conduct in the Global Economy*. UK & USA: Earthscan Publications, pp.13-30

**Mid term take-home exam
(Exam due Thursday, 28 February; drop box)**

Week nine: March 12 & March 14, Workers' struggles against corporate codes of conduct

1. Justice, Dwight W. 2002. "The international trade union movement and the new codes of conduct", in: Rhys Jenkins et al., (Eds), *Corporate Responsibility & Labour Rights: Codes of Conduct in the Global Economy*. UK & USA: Earthscan Publications, pp.90-100
2. Rodríguez-Garavito, César A. 2005. "Global Governance and Labor Rights: Codes of Conduct and Anti-Sweatshop Struggles in Global Apparel Factories in Mexico and Guatemala", in: *Politics & Society* 33, pp.203-233
3. Locke, Richard et al., 2007. "Beyond corporate codes of conduct: Work organization and labour standards at Nike's suppliers", in: *International Labour Review* Vol.146, No.1-2, pp.21-40

Week ten: Special event: The Global Center for Workers' Rights' International Symposium (March 20-23):

"Global Workers' Rights: Patterns of Exclusion, Possibilities for Change"

Assignment: Students must attend two discussion panels and summarize the main arguments of one panelists' presentation. (15%)

Week eleven: March 26 & March 28, International Framework Agreements

1. Stevis, Dimitris. 2010. "International framework agreements and global social dialogue: Parameters and prospects", *Employment sector, Employment Working Paper No.47*, International Labour Office, Geneva
2. Siglinde, Hessler. 2012. "International framework agreements: Possibilities for a new instrument", in: *Global Labour Column*, No.89, February

Week twelve: April 2 & April 4, Repressing labor rights: Global chains of production and instances of worker repression: moving between economic thrusts and cultural-political tugs

1. Barrientos, Stephanie; Gary Gerrefi & Adrianna Rossi. 2011. "Economic and social upgrading in global production networks: A new paradigm for a changing world", in: *International Labour Review*, 150 (3/4), pp.319-340
2. Hough, Phillip A. 2012. "A race to the bottom? Globalization, labor repression and development by dispossession in Latin America's banana industry", in: *Global Labour Journal*, Vol.3 (2), pp.237-264
3. Sinaga, Hariati & Christoph Scherrer. 2012. "Core labor rights: Competitive pressures and non-compliance". *ICDD Working Papers*, No.41, January

Week thirteen: April 9 & April 11, Migrant workers and rights: between repression and empowerment

1. Standing, Guy. 2011. "Migrants: victims, villains or heroes?", in: *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London/New York: Bloomsbury, chapter 4
2. (Op-ed) Anonymous. 2008. "Citizenship, political rights, and labor rights", in: *Dollars & Sense*, Sep/Oct, p.23
3. (Op-ed) Vinluan, Felix Q. 2009. "Labor rights of the undocumented", in: *The Filipino Express*, Jersey City, 22 May, pp.11-14

Week fourteen: April 16 & April 18, Labor unions and worker responses: Pushing against the grain or splintering unity of action?

1. Munck, Ronaldo. 2010. "Globalization and the Labour Movement: Challenges and Responses", In: *Global Labour Column*, Vol. 1 (2)
2. Milkman, Ruth. 2006. "Organizing the 'unorganizable': immigrant unionization and labor revitalization in the 1990s", chapter 3, *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers & The Future of the U.S. Labor Movement*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp.114-144
3. Anner, Mark. 2007. "Forging new labor activism in global commodity chains in Latin America", in: *International Labor & Working Class History*, No.72, Fall, pp.18-41

Week fifteen: April 23 & April 25,

Student presentations of research papers

Week sixteen:

EXAMS