

Syllabus
Work and Labor in the Global Economy
LER 475H and GEO 475H

Course Instructors

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Course Information

Fall 2012

Wednesdays, 9am – 12pm

502 Keller

Taught via videoconferencing (Sept. 12 – Oct. 17) with:

Dr Bridget Kenny (Bridget.Kenny@wits.ac.za)

Department of Sociology

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Course description

This course is taught in coordination with a similar course at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa via teleconferencing. It examines contemporary processes of global economic restructuring and their impact on the workplace and on labor as a collective actor. Drawing on theoretical debates as well as recent case studies from around the world, the limits and possibilities for labor's collective mobilization are examined. Specific country cases (including China, South Africa, and the United States) and economic sectors (apparel, informal sector, electronics, among others) will be explored, as well as perspectives for cross-border labor activism.

Questions we will explore

1. How do we theoretically explain the link between economic structural transformation, the work process, and collective labor mobilization?
2. How does globalization affect workers in different economic sectors and different regions of the world?
3. What are the prospects for labor mobilization in today's global economy?

Course goal

At the end of the course, students will have a broad understanding of how processes of globalization and work restructuring are affecting workers; be able to think

critically and theoretically about workplace restructuring, its implications for class relations; and be able to debate at a level of complexity the possibilities and contradictions facing workers, their movements and organizations to build alternatives.

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. The course consists of two main components. One component introduces participants to theoretical literatures that help to frame debate around changes to global political economies, changing class relations, and changing collective mobilization of workers. The second component consists of a series of case studies of different sectors and/or different geographies, which bring out in detail the complexities outlined through the theoretical discussions. In these case studies, we will also examine and compare specific arguments for worker mobilization and organization. The joint sessions with Dr. Kenny and the students at Wits University will focus on these case studies and will take place from 10am to 11am via teleconferencing during the first half of the course.

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 Tuesdays. Students should read all memos prior to class.
2. Take-home essay exam (35%): After finishing our joint sessions with the University of the Witwatersrand, 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 Oct. 15 and is due back on Oct. 20.
3. 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 Tuesday, Nov. 10. The final paper is due on Dec. 16.

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.

Week 1: August 29, Introduction (No joint session)

- Introduction and discussion of syllabus.
Brief presentation of work by Professors Anner and Hawkins; Student
Discussion of recent police slaying of striking miners in South Africa and its
association with reconfigurations in the global economy (with short video).
Discussion of the “robotization” of productive work (NYT article/short
video).
Discussion of the apparel workers’ protest in Bangladesh (NYT article).

Week 2: Sept. 5, Shifts and Crisis in the Global Economy [No joint session]

1. Arrighi, G. 1990. “Marxist Century, American century: The making and remaking of the world labour movement”. S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A.G. Frank & I. Wallerstein (Eds), *Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements & the World System*. New York: Monthly Review Press, chapter two.
2. Webster, E., R. Lambert, and A. Bezuidenhout. 2008. “Chapter 3: The Return of Market Despotism.” *Grounding Globalization: Labour in the Age of Insecurity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
3. Panitch, L. & Konings, M. 2009. “Myths of neoliberal deregulation”. *New Left Review* 57, May-June. 67-83.
4. Panitch, L. 2009. “Thoroughly modernizing Marx”. *Foreign Policy*. 15 April.

Week 3: Sept. 12, Clothing & Textiles [joint session]

1. Gereffi, Gary. 1994. “The organization of buyer-driven commodity chains: How the US retailers shape overseas production networks” in *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*, ed. Gereffi and Kornzeniewicz, pp. 95-122.
2. Roberts, S. and Thoburn, J. T. (2004), Globalization and the South African textiles industry: impacts on firms and workers. *Journal of International Development*, 16: 125–139.

Joint part of session

3. Collins, Jane. 2006. “Redefining the boundaries of work: Apparel workers and community unionism in the global economy”. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Vol. 13: 9-31. (WITS).
4. Bezuidenhout, A., Khunou, G., Mosoetsa, S., Sutherland, K. and Thoburn, J. (2007), Globalisation and poverty: impacts on households of employment

and restructuring in the textiles industry of South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 19: 545–565. (PSU)

Week 4: September 19, China [joint session]

1. Silver, B. 2003. Chapter 3. *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 75-123.

Joint session

2. Lee, Ching Kwan. 2007. "Chapter 3: The Unmaking of Mao's Working Class in the Rustbelt." *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 169-122. (WITS)
3. Lee, Ching Kwan. 2007. "Chapter 5: The Making of New Labor in the Sunbelt." *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 157-203. (PSU)

Week 5: September 26, Wal-Mart [joint session]

1. Rose, Ellen Israel. 2006. "How to squeeze more out of a penny". Nelson Lichtenstein (Ed.), *Wal-Mart The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism*. New York/London: The New Press, pp.243-260.

Joint session

2. Chan, Anita and Kaxton Siu. 2011 "Made in China: Work and Wages in Walmart Supplier Factories" in *Walmart in China*, ed. Anita Chan. Ithaca and London: ILR Press, pp. 71-94. (WITS)
3. Myers, Scott E. and Anita Chan. 2011. "Practicing Cheer: The diary of a low-level supervisor at a Walmart China Store" in *Walmart in China*, ed. Anita Chan. Ithaca and London: ILR Press, pp. 151-172. (PSU)

Week 6: Oct. 3, Gender & Care Work—Domestic Work [joint session]

1. Tomei, M, and P. Belser, 2011. "New ILO standards on decent work for domestic workers." *International Labour Review*, 150(3-4): 431-438.

Joint session

2. Ehrenreich, Barbara and Arlie Russell Hochschild. 2003. "Introduction." *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York: Metropolitan Books. 1-13. (PSU)
3. Boris, Eileen and Premilla Nadasen. 2008. "Domestic Workers Organize!" in *Working USA*. Vol. 11, pp. 413-437. (WITS)

After the joint session

4. Ally, Shireen. 2009. "Conclusion: Formalization of Paid Domestic Work versus Socialization of Reproduction?" in *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State*. Ithaca: ILR Press, pp. 184-194.

Week 7: Oct. 10, [Joint Session] Organizing workers in the informal economy

1. Theron, J. (2010) "Informalization from above, informalization from below: the options for organization". *Africa Studies Quarterly* Vol. II (2-3). Pp.87.105.

Joint session

2. Fine, Janice. 2007. "Worker Centers and Immigrant Women" in *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor* Dorothy Sue Cobble (ed.) Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. Pp. 211-230. (WITS)
3. Rathke, W. 2011. "The Maharashtra model. Organizing informal workers by combining power, protection, and politics". *Social Policy* (Spring). 27-36. (PSU)

Week 8: Oct. 17, International Labor and Consumer Campaigns [Joint Session]

Special session with Prof. Emeritus, Edward Webster, WITS University, Johannesburg, South Africa
Plus: Informal Work and The Informal Economy [joint session]

Webster, "Unionism in the era of globalization: paths to revitalization".

Readings

1. Webster, E., S. Buhlungu. 2004. "Between marginalization and revitalization? The state of trade unionism in South Africa". *Review of African Political Economy* (100). Pp.229-245.

2. Burawoy, Michael. 2010. "From Polanyi to Pollyanna: The false optimism of global labour studies" in *Global Labour Journal*, Vol. 1(2): 301-313.

Joint session

3. Anner, Mark, et al. 2006. "The industrial determinants of transnational solidarity: Global interunion politics in three sectors." *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 12 (1): 7-27. (WITS)
4. Seidman, Gay. 2007. Selected chapters from *Beyond the Boycott*. New York: Russell Sage. (PSU)

[Receive take-home essay exam.]

[Essay exam due Sunday, Oct. 21; drop box]

[End of Joint Sessions with Wits University]

Week 9: Oct. 24, Informal Work and The Informal Economy: Theoretical and conceptual understandings

1. Bayat, Asef. 2000. "From 'dangerous classes' to 'quiet rebels'". *International Sociology*. September 15 (3). 533-557.
2. Centeno, M.A., A. Portes. 2006. "The informal economy in the shadow of the state". Patricia-Fernandez-Kelly & Jon Shefner (Eds.) *Out of the Shadows: Political Action & the Informal Economy in Latin America*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press. 23-48.
3. Cross, J.C., S. Pena. 2006. "Risk and regulation in informal and illegal markets". Patricia-Fernandez-Kelly & Jon Shefner (Eds.) *Out of the Shadows: Political Action & the Informal Economy in Latin America*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press. 49-80.

Week 10: Oct. 31, The Precariat

1. Standing, Guy. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London/New York: Bloomsbury, chapters 1-2; 4-5.

Week 11: Nov. 7, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and worker rights

1. Moura-Leite, Rosamaria C. & Robert C. Padgett. 2011. "Historical background of corporate social responsibility". *Social Responsibility Journal*, Vol.7 (4), pp.528-539.
2. Lee, Fang Cook & Quiaoling He. 2010. "Corporate social responsibility and HRM in China: a study of textile and apparel enterprises. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, Vol.16 (3) July, pp.355-376.
3. Anner, Mark. 2012. "Social responsibility and global workers' rights: Corporations' precarious quest for legitimacy with labor control", in: *Politics & Society*, in print as of time of class, pp.1-36.

Week 12: Nov. 14, Workers' Movements in Latin America

1. Levitsky, S., S. Mainwaring. 2006. "Organized labor and democracy in Latin America". *Comparative Politics*. Vol.39 (1). October. 21-42.
2. Murillo, V. A. Schrank. 2005. "With a little help from my friends... Partisan politics, transnational alliances and labor rights in Latin America".
3. Burgess, K. 2010. "Global pressures, national policies, and labor rights in Latin America." *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Vol.45. May. 198-224.

November 21: NO CLASS, Fall Break

Week 13: Nov. 28, Free Trade Agreements and Labor Rights

1. Bieler, Andreas. 2012. "The EU, global Europe, and processes of uneven and combined development: The problem of transnational labour solidarity". *Review of International Studies*, Vol.38 (9), pp.1-23.
2. Polaski, Sandra. 2004. "Protecting labor rights through trade agreements: An analytical guide". *Journal of International Law & Policy*, July 14.
3. Doumbia-Henry, Cleopatra & Eric Gravel. 2006. "Free trade agreements and labour rights: Recent developments". *International Labour Review*, Vol.145 (3), pp.185-206.

Week 14: Dec. 5, Child Labor & Labor Rights as Human Rights

1. Report of the Director General of the ILO. 2006. "The end of child labour within reach", *International Labour Conference, 95th Session*, Report IB.
2. Brooks, Ethel C. 2007. "Children, schools and labored questions". In: *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing & Women's Work*, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.2-25.

3. Lawrance, Benjamin N. 2010. "From child labor 'problem' to human trafficking 'crisis': Child advocacy and anti-trafficking legislation in Ghana". In: *International Labor & Working-Class History*, No.78, pp.63-88.

Week 15: Dec. 12, Student Presentations of research paper topics.

Dec. 19: Final Paper Due.

Academic Dishonesty

Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all of the community is required to subscribe. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity. Any instance of academic dishonesty (as defined in the student handbook, including cheating on exams, plagiarism, or collaboration on written assignments) will result in failure of the course. Violations will also be reported to the appropriate University authorities for further action. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

In this course we may be using a tool, Turnitin.com, to confirm that you have used sources accurately in your papers. If you have any questions about how to cite your sources, please review the materials available on the [Plagiarism Tutorial for Students page](#) or the [iStudy module on Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Copyright](#). Students are responsible for ensuring that their work is consistent with Penn State's expectations about academic integrity. Additional information about the Turnitin plagiarism prevention tool is available on the [Turnitin site](#) and on the [Information for Students](#) page.

Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-

863-1807 (V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>.

In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation (see the documentation guidelines at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/guidelines/documentation-guidelines>). If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments with your instructor as early in the course as possible. You must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of each semester.