

# SOCIOLOGY 4G03 C01

## Advanced Topics in the Sociology of Health and Illness:

Fall 2019

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Wednesday 2:30-5:20pm KTH B105

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Instructor: Dr. Paul Glavin  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is work stress? Are we exposed to more work stress than previous generations of workers, and if so, why? How can organizations and workers better deal with work stress? Throughout this course, we will seek to answer these questions by examining the different sources and consequences of work stress in the contemporary Canadian economy. We will first ask what constitutes an unhealthy work experience and review the dominant social-psychological theories of work stress. We then move beyond these explanations and consider how stressful work experiences are created not solely by the characteristics of jobs, but also by occupations, organizations and labour markets. In the second part of the course we will engage with several ongoing debates about work stress, including: the deleterious effects of precarious employment, migrant worker exploitation, and work intensification.

This course has several objectives. By the end of the course, you will:

- understand historical and contemporary economic and labour market trends shaping Canadians' exposure to work stress.
- evaluate and critique the major theoretical perspectives on stress and work stress.
- investigate the influence of gender, race, and class in shaping Canadians' exposure to unhealthy work experiences.
- apply empirical and theoretical research from the sociology of work and organizations in order to devise solutions designed for alleviating work stress.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### Grade Breakdown:

Attendance and participation	20%
Seminar presentation	25%
Critical Response Paper	30%
Midterm Exam	25%

**Weekly reading and participation (20%):** Students are expected to attend every class meeting having thoughtfully completed the readings and be prepared to participate actively in discussion.

**Seminar presentation (25%):** The first half of the class will be led by a group of students. This will involve a presentation that briefly summarizes the major points of the readings for that week, and raises issues/debates for discussion during class.

**Critical Response Paper (30%):** You will write a short analysis (8-page maximum) of one of the following topics covered in class: 'Precarious work,' 'Emotional Labour,' or 'Solutions.' Your paper should critically engage with the assigned readings for the particular topic week, synthesizing the current state of knowledge and suggesting future avenues for inquiry and debate. As part of your analysis, you must include discussion of a contemporary piece of research or journalism that is relevant to your topic (not covered in the readings). The paper is due at the beginning of class for the particular week the topic is assigned. More details will be provided during class.

### **Midterm exam (25%)**

### **Required Readings**

The following are the required readings for the course:

- 1) Sociology 4G03 - Custom Courseware Book
- 2) Required on-line readings as indicated below
- 3) All lecture content and films presented in class or posted on Avenue to Learn

### **COURSE POLICIES**

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

**Late Assignments:** The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 5 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office).

You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence. In the absence of a vetted excuse, late assignments will be marked down 5 percentage points for each day late.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained (not giving proper credit to your sources).
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

**Departmental/ University Policies:** Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

Students should check the web and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

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.

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 SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

### **1) Sept 4: Introduction**

Introduction to content and structure of course.

### **2) Sep 11: Work and the Individual**

R. Hodson. Dignity at Work, Chapter 2 (pp 23-40).

Work and Mental Health in Social Context. Chapter 1: Job Stress and Where It Comes from

Workplace Stressors and Health Outcomes: Health Policy for the Workplace  
(<https://behavioralpolicy.org/article/workplace-stressors-health-outcomes/>)

### 3) Sep 18: Theories of Stress

Work and Mental Health in Social Context. Chapter 2. Job Structures, Job Stress and Mental Health.

Wheaton, B., Young, M., Montazer, S., & Stuart-Lahman, K. (2013). Social Stress in the Twenty-First Century. *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 299-323.

Karasek, R.A. 1998 "Demand/Control Model: a social, emotional, and physiological approach to stress risk and active behaviour development", in Stellman, J.M. (Eds), *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health And Safety*, ILO, Geneva, pp.34.06-34.14.

### 4) Sep 25: Organizational Change I: Work Structures

Work and Mental Health in Social Context. Chapter 3. Organizational Determinants of Job Stressors. pp

Luxton, M., & Corman, J. S. (2001). *Getting by in hard times: Gendered labour at home and on the job*. University of Toronto Press. Chapter 4. Restructuring Hilton Works.

Barker, J. R. (1993). Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 408–437.

### 5) Oct 2: Organizational Change II: Technology

V. Shalla. 1997. Technology and the Deskilling of Work: The Case of Passenger Agents at Air Canada.

Planet Money Podcast: *The Future Of Work Looks Like A UPS Truck*  
<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=481295201>

*A Machine May Not Take Your Job, but One Could Become Your Boss*  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/23/technology/artificial-intelligence-ai-workplace.html>

*Inside an Amazon Warehouse, Robots' Ways Rub Off on Humans*  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/03/business/economy/amazon-warehouse-labor-robots.html>

*Artificial intelligence closes in on the work of junior lawyers*  
<https://www.ft.com/content/f809870c-26a1-11e7-8691-d5f7e0cd0a16>

### 6) Oct 9: Precarious work

Kalleberg, Arne. 2009. "Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition." *American Sociological Review* 74: 1-22.

Rogers, J.K. 1995. "Just a temp: Experience and Structure of Alienation in Temporary Clerical

Employment" *Work and Occupations* 22:137-166.

Elcioglu, Emine Fidan. 2010. "Producing Precarity: The Temporary Staffing Agency in the Labor Market." *Qualitative Sociology* 33(2):117-136.

Undercover in the Temp nation <http://projects.thestar.com/temp-employment-agencies/index.html>

**7) Oct 16: Break – no class**

**8) Oct 23: "Gig" Work**

Donovan and Bradley. 2016. What Does the Gig Economy Mean for Workers?

<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44365.pdf>

Wood, A. J., Graham, M., Lehdonvirta, V., & Hjorth, I. (2019). Good gig, bad gig: autonomy and algorithmic control in the global gig economy. *Work, Employment and Society*, 33(1), 56-75.

Planet Money Podcast: The People Inside Your Machine

**9) Oct 30: Service Work and Emotional Labour**

Arlie Hochschild, "Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses." In, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* Pp 89-136 (Berkeley 1983).

Grandey, Alicia A., Deborah Rupp, and William N. Brice. "Emotional labor threatens decent work: A proposal to eradicate emotional display rules." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 36.6 (2015): 770-785.

Singh, D., & Glavin, P. (2017). An occupational portrait of emotional labor requirements and their health consequences for workers. *Work and occupations*, 44(4), 424-466.

**10) Nov 6: Midterm**

**11) Nov 13: Migrant Workers I**

Parreñas, R.S. 2000. "Migrant Filipina domestic workers and the international division of reproductive labor." *Gender & Society* 14:560-580.

<http://www.cmaj.ca/content/183/9/1033> Temporary migration, chronic effects: the health of international migrant workers in Canada. 2011.

Documentary: Chain of Love

**12) Nov 20: Migrant Workers II**

Basok, Tanya. 2002. Captive Labor. In *Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada*, pp.106-128.

Documentary: El Contrato

### **13) Nov 27: Solutions**

Moen, P., E.L. Kelly, E. Tranby, and Q. Huang. 2011. "Changing Work, Changing Health." *Journal of health and social behavior* 52:404-429.

Bostock, Sophie, et al. "Mindfulness on-the-go: Effects of a mindfulness meditation app on work stress and well-being." *Journal of occupational health psychology* (2018).

Corporate mindfulness is bullsh\*t: Zen or no Zen, you're working harder and being paid less  
[https://www.salon.com/2015/09/27/corporate\\_mindfulness\\_is\\_bullsht\\_zen\\_or\\_no\\_zen\\_youre\\_working\\_harder\\_and\\_being\\_paid\\_less/](https://www.salon.com/2015/09/27/corporate_mindfulness_is_bullsht_zen_or_no_zen_youre_working_harder_and_being_paid_less/)

### **14) Dec 4<sup>th</sup>: Final Meeting**