

HIST 3531.60/SOSC 3210.60

Course Director: Professor Jennifer A. Stephen
Office: 129 Founders College
Tel: 416.736.2100 ext. 66930
Email: stephenj@yorku.ca

THE WORKING CLASS IN CANADIAN SOCIETY**Description:**

This course considers the emergence and reconstitution of a working class in Canada over the past 200 years. This process involved the capitalist restructuring that brought a large class of wage-earners into existence, the struggles by Canadian workers to assert their needs and concerns, and the intervention of the state to meet various working-class challenges. The course therefore examines three spheres of working-class life through historical and theoretical perspectives:

1. We look at the conditions that gave rise to permanent wage-labour in industry and the various ways in which that experience has been transformed by recruiting from new pools of labour, re-organizing the labour process, and introducing new technology. Particular attention will be paid to the range of responses wage-earners had to the evolving world of paid work, depending on skill, gender, and ethnicity. Special attention will be paid to the structures and ideologies of various workers' movements. State initiatives in response to wage-earners' struggles are also a major theme.
2. We are also concerned with the changing nature of the working-class household - the gender ideologies that shaped its composition, the standards of living within it, the labour carried out within it, and the forces of social reform and state intervention intended to reconstruct working-class home life.
3. We also consider the social and cultural dimensions of working-class communities and the challenges posed by moral reformers and mass commercial culture. The course attempts to determine the extent of working-class identity that has emerged in Canada and how it has changed.

We approach these issues by considering, first, the formation of a Canadian working-class experience in the nineteenth century and then the remaking of working-class Canada in the twentieth.

Throughout these discussions, we confront a series of persistent questions:

1. Why was wage-labour so limited for so long in Canada, and what implications did limited wage-earning have for the relations between employer and worker?
2. What goes into the making of a working class, and in what ways can it be remade?
3. What are the motivations and impact of managerial and technological change in the workplace?
4. What is the impact of unionization on the workplace and the society more generally?
5. How has the working-class family adapted to the transformations of the wage-earning world?
6. What is the role of working women in industrial capitalist society?
7. What is the impact of wage labour on life off the job?
8. What are the collective aspirations of workers for changes in their status within industrial capitalist society?
9. Is there an independent working-class culture?

EVALUATION

Essay 1 (due in lecture 2 December)	15 per cent
Essay 2 (due in lecture 23 March)	30 per cent
First-Term Test (18 November)	15 per cent
Final Examination (TBA)	25 per cent
Participation	15 per cent

PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to attend class and tutorial regularly, but participation is more than just attending: students can only receive an A for participation if they contribute regularly and meaningfully to class discussions. Your Tutorial Assistant will provide further detail of what is expected of you in tutorial and how your participation mark will be calculated.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES: Extensions can be granted under the following conditions:

- 1) You ask your TA for the extension at least 4 days in advance of the due date;
- 2) You provide a medical note should you be unable to meet a deadline due to a medical emergency or illness;
- 3) You will not be granted an extension beyond 7 days past the due date.

Late paper policy is 2% per day for each day late, including weekends.

If you are handing in late, you can email a copy to your TA to stop the clock ticking, but you must provide a hard copy within 2 working days or else the paper will not be accepted. Your TA MUST have a hard copy in order to grade your paper, and it must match the emailed copy.

GRADING: For a full description of York's grading system, see the York University Undergraduate Calendar: <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2012-2013/academic/grades/>

EMAIL ETIQUETTE: If you have questions that cannot wait for your tutorial, you can email your TA or you can email the Professor, but some general guidelines apply:

- 1) Please provide an appropriate salutation to the person you are addressing (full name/title);
- 2) Identify which course you are enrolled in;
- 3) Write in full sentences;
- 4) Always sign the message using your full name and student number.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Plagiarism is taken very seriously. Violations of the York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty – including submitting work written by someone else or submitted in another course, failing to use quotation marks and citations when using or paraphrasing the printed or electronically-transmitted work of others, collaborating on written assignments, cheating during examinations, and aiding or abetting academic misconduct – will be treated severely. Recent penalties have included failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University, and withholding or rescinding a York degree. For further information, see <http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69>.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Last date to announce components of final grades: September 24, 2015

Last dates to submit term work: December 7, 2015 and April 4, 2016

A WORD ON TUTORIALS: Each week you will meet in small groups with your tutorial leader to discuss some readings and topics in a more in-depth fashion. For most weeks you will therefore be assigned two kinds of readings: some relevant primary source documents and also secondary sources that will help clarify and deepen your understanding of the week's topics. You are expected to have read the materials in advance of the tutorial and to arrive at your meeting prepared to speak about some of the issues and ideas presented. You will be graded not just on attendance but also on your active participation. Your Tutorial Leader will review with you the expectations on the first day of class.

MOODLE

This course has its own Moodle site at www.moodle.yorku.ca. You will need a Passport York account to access the site.

REQUIRED READINGS

Most readings are available through the course's Moodle site. Students will also have to get from the York bookstore a small course kit and these two books:

Gabrielle Roy, *The Tin Flute*. (New Canadian Library).

Katrina Srigley, *Breadwinning Daughters: Young Working Women in a Depression-Era City, 1929-1939* (University of Toronto Press 2010).

FIRST TERM

INTRODUCTION

Week One **September 16**

Lecture: Studying the Working Class

Week Two **September 23**

Lecture: Class, Gender, and Ethnicity in Canadian History and Society

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE MAKING OF WORKING-CLASS CANADA

Week Three **September 30**

Lecture: Working in Pre-Industrial Canada

Week Four **October 7**

Lecture: The New Workplaces of Industrial Capitalism

Week Five **October 14**

Lecture: New Recruits to Industry

Week Six **October 21**

Lecture: Old Jobs, New Experiences

Week Seven **October 28**

No Class

Week Eight **November 4**

Lecture: Family Economies

Week Nine **November 11**

Lecture: The Emergence of Labour Movements

Week Ten **November 18**

TEST (One hour)**Week Eleven November 25**

Lecture: Working-Class Cultures

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE REMAKING OF WORKING-CLASS CANADA**A. CORPORATE CAPITALISM, 1890-1940****Week Twelve December 2**

Lecture: The Rise of Corporate Capitalism

[Essays Due in Lecture]**SECOND TERM****Week One January 6**

Lecture: The New Workplace Regime

Week Two January 13

Lecture: Family Economies

Week Three January 20

Lecture: The Art of Oral History

Week Four January 27

Lecture: Popular Cultures

Week Five February 3

Lecture: New Labour Movements Part 1

B. GLOBAL CAPITALISM, 1940-75**Week Six February 10**

Lecture: The Rise and Fall of the Workers' Revolt

Week Seven February 17**READING WEEK****Week Eight February 24**

Lecture: The Postwar Settlement

Week Nine March 2

Lecture: Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and the Postwar Working Class

C. THE NEW WORLD ORDER, 1975 TO THE PRESENT**Week Ten March 9**

Lecture: New Labour Movements Part 2

Week Eleven March 16

Lecture: Economic Restructuring and New State Policies

Week Twelve March 23

Lecture: Assault on Family Economies [**Essays Due in Lecture**]

Week Thirteen March 30

Lecture: Rebuilding the House of Labour / The Future of the Working Class in Canada

TUTORIALS**FIRST TERM**

(week of)

14 September

Studying The Working Class

Craig Heron, "Harold, Marg, and the Boys: The Relevance of Class in Canadian History." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, V. 20, no. 1, 2009: 1-56.

John Lennon, "Working-Class Hero"

(text attached to course outline)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNCFcDy94xc> (access through Moodle)

21 September

**Class, Gender & Ethnicity in Canadian History & Society:
Pre-Industrial Labour**

Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women in the Fur Trade Society of Western Canada, 1670-1830." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. Vol. 7, no. 3, Women on the Western Frontier (1984): 9-13.

Carolyn Podruchny, "Unfair Masters and Rascally Servants? Labour Relations among Bourgeois, Clerks, and Voyageurs in the Montreal Fur Trade, 1780-1821," *Labour / Le Travail*, Vol. 43, (Spring, 1999): 43-70

28 September

Working in Pre-Industrial Canada: The Transition

Ruth Bleasdale, "Class Conflict on the Canals of Upper Canada in the

1840s,” *Labour/Le Travail*, Vol. 7, (Spring, 1981): 9-39.

Paul Craven and Tom Traves, “Dimensions of Paternalism: Discipline and Culture in Canadian Railway Operations in the 1850s,” from *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada*, Robert Storey and Craig Heron, ed(s)., McGill-Queens University Press, 2008: 47-74.

5 October

The New Workplaces of Industrial Capitalism: Factory Labour

Jeremy Stein, “Time Space, and Social Discipline: Factory Life in Cornwall, Ontario, 1867-1893,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, V. 21, no.3, (July 1995): 278-299.

Eric Tucker, “Making the Workplace ‘Safe’ in Capitalism: The Enforcement of Factory Legislation in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,” *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 21, (Spring 1988): 45-85.

12 October

New Recruits to Industry: Race and Industry

John Lutz, “After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, V. 3, no. 1 (1992): 69-93.

Jin Tan, “Chinese Labour and the Reconstructed Social Order of British Columbia,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, V. 19, no. 3 (1987).

19 October

Old Jobs, New Experiences

Christina Burr, “‘That coming curse—The incompetent compositress’: Class and Gender Relations in the Toronto Typographical Union During the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 74.3 (Sept. 1993): 344-366.

Richard A. Rajala, “The Forest as Factory: Technological Change and Worker Control in the West Coast Logging Industry, 1880-1930,” *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 32, (Fall, 1993): 73-104.

26 October

READING DAYS

2 November

Family Economies & Households

Bettina Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders: Non-Wage Forms of Survival among Montreal Families, 1861-1891," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 14 (Fall 1984): 9-46.

John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 18 (Fall 1986): 163-187.

9 November

The Emergence of Labour Movements

John Battye, "The Nine Hours Pioneers: The Genesis of the Canadian Labour Movement," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 4 (1979): 25-56.

Lynne Marks, "The Knights of Labor and the Salvation Army: Religion and Working-Class Culture in Ontario, 1882-1890," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 28 (Fall 1991): 89-127.

16 November

Working Class Cultures: The Demon Rum

Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working Class Culture and the Tavern, 1860-1889," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 8/9 (Autumn 1981-Spring 1982): 9-40.

Kathryn Harvey, "Amazons and Victims: Resisting Wife Abuse in Working-Class Montreal, 1869-1879," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, V. 2, no. 1 (1991): 131-148.

23 November

ESSAY WORKSHOP

30 November

The Rise of Corporate Capitalism

Margaret McCallum, "Keeping Women in their Place: The Minimum Wage Law in Canada, 1900-1925." *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 17, (Spring 1986): 28-58.

SECOND TERM

4 January

The New Workplace Regime: Scientific Management

Frederick W. Taylor, "The Principles of Scientific Management"

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/taylor/principles/ch02.htm>

- 11 January **Family Economies: Working-Class Women and Economic Depression**
- Gabrielle Roy, *The Tin Flute*
Katrina Srigley, *Breadwinning Daughters*
- 18 January **The Art of Oral History**
- Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review*, V. 3, issue 1 (1994): 86-100. In course pack.
- 25 January **Popular Cultures: Mass Entertainment**
- Steven Ross, "Beyond the Screen: History, Class, and the Movies," in David E. James and Rick Berg, eds., *The Hidden Foundation: Cinema and the Question of Class*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 26-55. In course pack.
- Charlie Chaplin, *The Immigrant* (25 mins.)
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6961048885792851539>
- 1 February **New Labour Movements: Organizing Immigrant Sojourners**
- Robert Harney, "Montreal's King of Italian Labour: A Case Study of Padronism," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 4 (1979): 57-84.
- A. Ross McCormack, "The Industrial Workers of the World in Western Canada, 1905-1914," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers*, V. 10, issue 1 (1975): 167-190.
- 8 February **The Rise and Fall of the Workers' Revolt: The Winnipeg General Strike**
- David Bercuson, "The Winnipeg General Strike," in Irving Abella, ed., *On Strike: Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada, 1919-1949*. (Toronto: J. Lewis and Samuel, 1974): 1-32. In course pack.
- James Naylor and Tom Mitchell, "The Prairies: In the Eye of the Storm," in Craig Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 176-230. In course pack.
- 15 February **READING WEEK**

22 February

The Postwar Era: "Settlement" or Compromise?

Donald M. Wells, "Origins of Canada's Wagner Model of Industrial Relations: The United Auto Workers in Canada and the Suppression of 'Rank and File' Unionism, 1936-1953," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, V. 20, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 193-225.

Julie Guard, "Womanly Innocence and Manly Self-Respect: Gendered Challenges to Labour's Postwar Compromise," in Cy Gonick et al., eds., *Labour Gains, Labour Pains: Fifty Years of PC1003 Socialist Studies*, V. 10 (1995): 119-137. In course pack.

29 February

The Postwar Working Class: Ethnicity, Race and Gender

Agnes Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domestic Workers from the Caribbean: The Domestic Scheme," in Jesse Vorst et al., eds., *Race, Class, Gender: Bonds and Barriers* (Toronto: Garamond Press and Society for Socialist Studies, 1991): 136-168. In course pack.

Pamela Sugiman, "Privilege and Oppression: The Configuration of Race, Gender, and Class in Southern Ontario Auto Plants, 1939 to 1949," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 49 (Spring 2001): 83-113.

7 March

New Labour Movements: Working in Retail

Donica Belisle, "A Labour Force for the Consuming Century: Commodification in Canada's Largest Department Stores, 1890 to 1940," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 58 (Fall 2006): 107-144.

Kendra Coulter, "Unionizing Retail: Lessons from Young Women's Grassroots Organizing in the Greater Toronto Area in the 1900s," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 67 (Spring 2011): 77-93.

14 March

Economic Restructuring and New State Policies

Bryan D. Palmer, "The Rise and Fall of British Columbia's Solidarity," in Bryan D. Palmer, ed., *The Character of Class Struggle: Essays in Working*

Class History: 1850-1985. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986): 176-239. In course pack.

21 March

Assault on Family Economies: Working-Class Feminism

Meg Luxton, "Feminism as a Class Act: Working-Class Feminism and the Women's Movement in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail*, V. 48 (Fall 2001): 63-88.

28 March

Labour Militancy and Nationalism

Joan Sangster, "Remembering Texpack: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Militancy in Canadian Unions in the 1970s," *Studies in Political Economy*, V. 78 (Autumn 2006): 41-66.

[Essays Due in Lecture]

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Essay 1 (10-12 pages) Due 30 November 2015. Worth 15 per cent**

Working-Class Women in the Great Depression

The 1930s were a period of serious economic depression and consequently a difficult period for many Canadian working-class women and their families. Two writers undertook to write about how these women lived through that period. One was a fictional work, *The Tin Flute*, written by the celebrated Canadian novelist Gabrielle Roy. The other is a scholarly study by a Toronto historian, Katrina Srigley, and is based to a great extent on interviews with women who lived through those years.

Your assignment is to compare these books. Specifically,

What similarities and differences can you find in what the two books have to say about the experience of working-class women in Canada in the 1930s?

What are the relative merits of fiction versus oral history in telling the story of those workers?

You should consult *no other sources* in writing this essay **especially not the internet**.

2. **Essay 2 (15-20 pages) Due 23 March 2016. Worth 30 per cent**

You are expected to write a 15-20-page paper that explores the experience of wage-earners in one particular occupational group over the past half century (that is, since the 1940s). You should present an analysis of changing working and living conditions for the kind of worker you select, based on **library and internet research** and at least **TWO interviews** with workers (you are free to do as many more as you would like). A special bibliography is available on the course Moodle site.

In order to get some sense of generational change, you should choose at least one interviewee over age 50 and another under 40. A carefully prepared questionnaire and a tape recorder will be essential. These interviews should be part of the raw material for your analysis, and the paper must involve more than simply narrating the stories of two lives. You should try to integrate **all** aspects of these workers' lives into a coherent analysis and to isolate the main changes that have taken place in the experience of this particular occupational group. You will find it helpful to keep the following categories of analysis in mind, but do not feel restricted to them.

1. Industrial context: what has been the state of the market for the goods or services being produced? How has it changed?
2. labour market: what kind of labour has been needed for this work? How plentiful or scarce has it been? How much competition has there been for the work? Where have most of the workers come from (e.g., city, countryside, other countries, etc.)?
3. Training: at home? In school? On the job? Through apprenticeship?
4. Management: what kind of management policies have governed this work? How tightly have they controlled the worker? How have these policies changed?
5. technology: what kind of tools and/or machinery is used? How has the technology been changing? What kinds of skills are involved? How valuable are these skills and how have they changed?
6. terms of employment: how well paid has the work been? Have wages increased along with the cost of living? Have they kept pace with other workers? What benefits have been received in addition to wages?
7. Working conditions: what hours of work have been expected? What have the health and safety conditions been like? What holidays and vacations have been possible?
8. resistance: what evidence has there been that workers have resisted their employers' goals and tactics on the job? How much state involvement has there been? Is there a union and a collective agreement governing the terms of employment? What differences has unionization (or lack of it) made? how much is the worker involved in his or her union? Have these workers carried any of their concerns into politics?

9. family: what kind of family life have the wage-earners been involved in? What have their domestic responsibilities been and how have they changed? Where have these responsibilities fit into the overall patterns of their life?
10. leisure: how have these workers had fun off the job? With whom have they socialized? Have these patterns changed at all?
11. aspirations: what have these workers wanted out of life? How have they gone about trying to get it?

Possible occupational groups:

They must be wage-earners (or salary-earners), not self-employed professionals or business people or senior managers. Use your imagination and your personal or family connections. For example, autoworkers, steelworkers, clothing workers, packinghouse workers, printers, retail workers, cleaners, machinists, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, farm labourers, domestic servants, miners, loggers, secretaries, librarians, teachers, nurses, etc., etc.

Working Class Hero

by John Lennon

As soon as you're born they make you feel small
 By giving you no time instead of it all
 Till the pain is so big you feel nothing at all
 A working class hero is something to be
 A working class hero is something to be

They hurt you at home and they hit you at school
 They hate you if you're clever and they despise a fool
 Till you're so fucking crazy you can't follow their rules
 A working class hero is something to be
 A working class hero is something to be

When they've tortured and scared you for twenty odd years
 Then they expect you to pick a career
 When you can't really function you're so full of fear
 A working class hero is something to be
 A working class hero is something to be

Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV
 And you think you're so clever and classless and free
 But you're still fucking peasants as far as I can see
 A working class hero is something to be
 A working class hero is something to be

There's room at the top they are telling you still
But first you must learn how to smile as you kill
If you want to be like the folks on the hill
A working class hero is something to be
A working class hero is something to be
If you want to be a hero well just follow me
If you want to be a hero well just follow me