



Political Science  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
MISSISSAUGA

**POL 414H5S: The Future of Work**

**Winter 2024**

**Mondays, 1-3 p.m.**

**Maanjiwe nendamowinan 2210**

**Instructor Information:**

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Office hours: Mondays, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (in person), and by appt.

**Course Description and Goals:**

This course focuses on an important political problem for all 21<sup>st</sup>-century global citizens: Is capitalism a system that promotes human freedom and emancipation? Or is it a system that depends on and perpetuates inequality and exploitation?

In this advanced political theory seminar, we will think about these questions together focusing on one particular issue: the nature, value, and meaning of work and labour. Together, we will discuss some questions that thinking about labour generates: What activities count as work? Is a capacity for labour an important part of what it means to be human? Does labour have to be self-directed to be meaningful? What does it mean to extract labour from others? How much control should we have over the products of our labour? What does it mean to work for a wage? How do labour relations shape our politics and culture? Does working colonize our time? What would it mean to emancipate ourselves from labour? Do we want to?

This course has **two related learning goals**. First, one main purpose of the course is to familiarize you with different perspectives on labour and work in the history of political thought, with a special focus on the Western tradition. This will include extensive engagement with classic works, such as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Karl Marx's *Capital*, but we will read and discuss a very broad range of materials beyond these. We will think deeply about labour and work by analyzing how writers from a range of time periods and moral and political perspectives have thought about it. The second goal of this course is to encourage you to use your growing knowledge of the history of debates about labour and work to think critically about your own participation in a culture of work and labour—in school, in your jobs, in your homes, and in your communities. What do you want the future of work to be?

## Student Learning Outcomes:

In our class, you will learn to

- Assess political theory as a tradition of thinking, debating, and writing about human problems (e.g., labour and work)
- Critically engage some of the best-known works in the history of political thought and political economy that focus on labour and work
- Develop your own arguments and perspectives about what you think the proper human relationship to work should be
- Refine and improve your critical reading, discussion, and writing skills

## Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

This course has four major graded components

- (a) **Seminar attendance and participation:** 20%
- (b) **Bi-weekly reading response papers:** 4% each, for 20% total (Credit/no credit)
- (c) **Film Club Essay Assignment:** 25%
- (d) **Final Portfolio Project.:** 35%
  - a. **Final Project Proposal Meeting:** 2% (Credit/no credit)
  - b. **Final Project Proposal:** 2% (Credit/no credit)
  - c. **Final Project and Related Essay:** 30%
  - d. **Reflective Essay:** 1% (Credit/no credit)

## In-Class Work and Related Policies

### Class Participation and Absence Policy

I expect you to attend and participate actively in our weekly seminar meetings, and this will be the basis of your participation mark for the class. Please read, watch, and listen to all materials in advance of our meetings and bring your texts and notes with you. I will consider **four major factors** when I determine your participation grade: (1) how prepared you are for the seminar; (2) the quality of your comments and contributions to our conversation; (3) your respectful listening to and engagement with your peers' contributions; and (4) your regular attendance.

Please note that weekly attendance is mandatory. That said, I understand that sometimes emergencies or illness will prevent you from attending every week. You will have one free absence for the term, no questions asked.

If you need more than this one free absence, please note the UTM absence policy: Students who miss an academic obligation during the term (i.e., in-class assessment, quiz, paper or lab report) may use the [ACORN Absence Declaration Tool \(AD\)](#) to record an absence in one or more courses. Students may utilize this option once per term for a single absence period of up to seven consecutive days. The declaration period must include the day of declaration and may include past and/or future dates, for a total of up to 7 calendar days

## Assignments and Related Policies

### Short Response Papers

You must complete a 1-page, single-spaced response paper five times this term. On the first day of class, I will divide you into two groups (A & B) and you'll write response papers for the weeks designated for your group on the syllabus. These papers are due by **5:00 p.m. the evening before our class meeting (Sunday evenings by 5pm)**. **Note:** There will be no opportunity to make up these assignments if you miss a deadline. They are credit/no credit assignments.

These response papers have no strict guidelines except one: *Please do not summarize the materials*. You can assume that your reader has also reviewed the materials has a working understanding of their major points and arguments. Instead, use these papers as opportunities to raise an interesting question, puzzle, or criticism about the week's materials. I may refer to your response paper to guide our class discussion the next day, too, so think of this as a chance to help set our agenda!

### Film Club Essay Assignment

For your mid-term assignment, you are required to watch one of the following films on your own time:

- *9 to 5* (1980, dir. Colin Higgins)
- *American Factory* (2019, dir. Steven Bognar and Julie Reichart)
- *The Killing Floor* (1984, dir. Bill Duke)
- *Modern Times* (1936, dir. Charles Chaplin)
- *Parasite* (2019, dir. Bong Joon-ho)
- *Pride* (2014, dir. Matthew Warchus)

After watching your chosen film, you will write an **analytic paper applying at least two course readings to the film**. Your critical analysis should be between 1800-2400 words (6-8 double-spaced pages). Full instructions are posted on Quercus. Your essay will be due on **Monday, February 26 by 12 p.m.** In class that day, we will dedicate the full seminar session to a group discussion of the films you watched and your essays' arguments.

### Final Project Portfolio Assignment

Your final assignment for this class will be a multi-part creative portfolio that focuses on the problem of work and labour. One central question for this course is "What is the meaning and value of work?" Together we are looking at different philosophical and political responses to this question; thinking about different kinds of work in different settings; and critically examining different attitudes and orientations to determining about just how important work is and should be in our lives. For your final project, your task is to think about this question for yourself and to produce a scholarly and creative portfolio that reflects what you have discovered and learned this term.

These are the five components of your portfolio project, with due dates:

- **Final project abstract.** This is a 100-word description of your final project. It should include a one-paragraph description of what you plan to do for your final project and should highlight which themes or concepts from the course have inspired your plan. It should also list four course readings that you think are relevant to your project. **This abstract is due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 22.**
- **Final project consultation meeting.** You'll schedule a 15-minute meeting with Professor Nacol the week of **March 25-29** to talk over your plan for the project and make arrangements for submission if you choose a creative project that can't be uploaded to Quercus.
- **Final project.** Your final project should answer the question, "What is the meaning and value of work?" The form the final project takes is entirely up to you and it can be as creative as you would like. Possible submissions include but are not limited to short films; poems or short stories; a piece of visual artwork like a collage or a painting; a piece of music; an op-ed piece; a critical review of a fiction or non-fiction book; or a series of interviews you conduct and compile. The choice is entirely up to you, but whatever you create must answer the question directly and show engagement with our course materials and discussions. **Your project is due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 5.**
- **Explanatory essay.** Write an academic essay of 1800-2400 words (6-8 pages, double-spaced) that connects the themes of your final project to the course materials. It must answer the question "What is the meaning and value of work?" with a thesis and an argument that engages at least four sources from our course syllabus. It should also address the themes and concepts that were central to your final project. You do not need to do any additional research for this paper. Its purpose is to give a scholarly take on what you express more creatively in your project. **This essay is due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 5.**
- **Reflective essay.** Write a one-page, single-spaced reflection paper explaining how your thinking about labour and work has changed (or not changed!) since the first day of class and why you think this is the case. **This is due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 5.**

Full instructions for the portfolio are posted on Quercus.

### How to Submit Writing Assignments

Please submit a final copy of each of your writing assignments at the designated point on Quercus, which will automatically run your assignment through plagiarism detection software.

UTM policy states:

*Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).*

For alternative arrangements, please get in touch with me two weeks in advance of the assignment deadline. Alternatives might include submitting rough drafts, outlines, and notes for your essay; or having a meeting with one me to discuss your arguments.

### Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are unacceptable, and I report all suspected cases via the process outlined on the last page of this course outline. If you are not sure whether something counts as plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please don't hesitate to ask me. I am always happy to answer these types of questions! I will also post a guide to citations and bibliography on Quercus to help you with your writing assignments.

### Policy for Late Work and Extensions

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of **5% per day** (including weekends) of the total marks for the assignment. **Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero.** Assignments handed in after the work has been returned to the class cannot be marked for credit.

If you are unable to meet the deadline of an assignment or paper due to unforeseen circumstances, you may apply for an extension of time using the [UTM Special Consideration Request \[Pilot\] application](https://uoft.service-now.com/utm_scr) ([https://uoft.service-now.com/utm\\_scr](https://uoft.service-now.com/utm_scr)). This request must be submitted **within 3 days** of the missed deadline. Your request must explain the reason for missing the deadline and include appropriate documentation, e.g. form. Each request for special consideration is carefully reviewed by the department/course instructor based on the information provided and approval is not guaranteed.

### **Student Resources and Support**

Your success in this course is very important to me. Here are some resources I hope you will use if ever you need them:

#### Academic Support

UTM provides academic support to students through the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of their excellent resources:

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc>.

#### Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodation, please approach me /or the AccessAbility Resource Centre as soon as possible. The sooner you let me know what you need, the sooner we can work together to help you achieve your learning goals in this course.

AccessAbility staff (Located in Rm 2047, South Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please call 905-569-4600 or email [access.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:access.utm@utoronto.ca).

#### Health Support

This has been an unusually hard few years for many of us. If you are experiencing illness or distress that is affecting your academic work, please reach out to me right away. I am not a health care professional, but I can connect you to someone on- or off-campus who can help you. I am willing to do this at *any time*; your well-being is important to me. We will work together to keep you on track academically, while helping you find good resources to take care of yourself.

For a start, here is contact information for UTM's health and counseling centre: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/health/health-counselling-centre/contact-us>

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

This is your weekly schedule for the term. Before you come to seminar on Mondays, please complete the required readings and listen to or watch the required audio or visual materials. If it is your assigned week, please remember to submit your one-page response paper on Quercus by 5 p.m. the night before seminar. Bring your materials and notes to every class since we will work from them.

Readings for this course will be available on Quercus or through the UTM library for you to download and read. I have ordered copies of one text for you at the UTM Bookstore:

- Sarah Jaffe, *Work Won't Love You Back* (Bold Type Books, 2021)

Sometimes there will be optional materials listed on the schedule, and it is totally up to you to decide whether to read, watch, or listen to those.

### **January 8: Introduction to the course**

Read:

- (a) POL 414 Syllabus
- (b) Matthew B. Crawford, "The Case for Working with Your Hands," *New York Times* (May 21, 2009).

### **January 15: Labour as an Embodied Social Value (Group A)**

Read:

- (a) John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, ch. 5 ("Of Property") in *Political Writings*, ed. D. Wootton (Hackett, 2003), pp. 272-286.
- (b) John Locke, "Labour," in *Political Writings*, ed. D. Wootton, (Hackett, 2003), pp. 440-442.
- (c) John Locke, "Draft of a Representation Containing a Scheme of Methods for the Employment of the Poor," in *Political Writings*, ed. D. Wootton (Hackett, 2003), pp. 446-461.
- (d) Tracy Smith-Carrier, "Implementing a Basic Income Means Overcoming Myths about the 'Undeserving Poor,'" *The Conversation* (December 4, 2023).

(Optional) Listen:

(e) Podcast: “The English Poor Laws,” *In Our Time*, BBC. (50 minutes)

### **January 22: The Significance of Wage Labour (Group B)**

Read:

- (a) Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (vol. 1), eds. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), Book 1.8 and Book 2.3, pp. 82-104 and 330-349.
- (b) Karl Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital,” in *The Marx Engels Reader*, ed. R. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 203-217.

### **January 29: Alienation and the Meaning of Work (Group A)**

Read:

- (a) Karl Marx, “The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in *The Marx Engels Reader*, ed. R. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 67-81.
- (b) David Harvey, “Contradiction 17: The Revolt of Human Nature: Universal Alienation,” in *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (Oxford UP, 2015), pp. 264-281.

Listen:

- (c) Podcast: “Jonathan Wolff on Marx on Alienation,” *Philosophy Bites* (15 minutes)

### **February 5: Labour and the Struggle for Time (Group B)**

Read:

- (a) Marx, *Capital*, ch. 10 (The Working-Day), in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 361-376.
- (b) E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past & Present*, No. 38 (1967), pp. 56-97.
- (c) Nichole Shippen, “Criticizing after Dinner: Marx and the Fight for Time in Human Development,” in *Decolonizing Time: Work, Leisure, and Freedom* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 39-71.

(Optional) Read:

- (d) *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 302-361.

### **February 12: Labour Organization and Resistance (Group A)**

Read:

- (a) Alex Gourevitch, “The Right to Strike: A Radical View” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (November 2018), pp. 905-917.

- (b) Philip Dray, “We Mean to Have Eight Hours,” *There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America*, ch. 3, (Doubleday, 2010), pp. 122-166.

**February 19: Family Day/Reading Week. No class meeting this week!**

**February 26: Film Club Discussion Day**

**March 4: Work, Leisure, and Free Time (Group B)**

Read:

- (a) Bertrand Russell, “In Praise of Idleness,” *Harper’s Magazine* (October 1932).
- (b) John Maynard Keynes, “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren,” in *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932), pp. 358-373.
- (c) Kathi Weeks, “‘Hours for What We Will:’ Work, Family, and the Demand for Shorter Hours,” in *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 151-174.

**March 11: Housework (Group A)**

Read:

- (a) Silvia Federici, “Wages Against Housework (1975),” in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (PM Press, 2012).
- (b) Angela Davis, “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working Class Perspective,” in *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981).
- (c) Selma James, “Women’s Unwaged Work: The Heart of the Informal Sector,” in *Race, Sex, and Class—The Perspective of Winning: A Selection of Writings, 1952-2011* (Common Notions/PM Press, 2012).

(Optional) Read:

- (d) Silvia Federici and Jill Richards, “Every Woman is a Working Woman,” *Boston Review* (December 2018)

**March 18: Carework in the Global Economy (Group B)**

Read:

- (a) Arlie Russell Hochschild, “Love and Gold,” in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (Henry Holt & Co., 2004), pp. 15-30.
- (b) Ethel Tungohan, “Reconceptualizing Motherhood, Reconceptualizing Resistance: Migrant Domestic Workers, Transnational Hyper-Maternalism, and Activism,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15.1 (March 2013), pp. 39-57.
- (c) Lauren Hilgers, “The New Labor Movement: Fighting for Domestic Workers’ Rights” *The New York Times* (21 February 2019).
- (d) Zadie Smith, “The Embassy of Cambodia,” *New Yorker* (February 3, 2013).

Listen:



- (e) Podcast: “Who are the Women Who’ve Looked After Canada’s Children?,” *The Secret Life of Canada*, CBC (~42 minutes)

### **March 25: Emotional Labour and Service Work (Group A)**

Read:

- (a) Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (University of California Press, 2013), ch. 1, 6, and Afterword, pp. 18-30, 68-95, and 134-138.
- (b) Rachel Sherman, “‘Better than Your Mother:’ The Luxury Product,” in *Class Acts: Service and Inequality in Luxury Hotels* (University of California Press, 2007), pp. 24-48.
- (c) Elif Batuman, “Japan’s Rent-a-Family Industry,” *New Yorker* (23 April 2018).

### **April 1: Work, a Love Story? (Group B)**

Read:

- (a) Sarah Jaffe, *Work Won’t Love You Back* (Bold Type Books, 2021), selections

### **Important Dates to Remember:**

- **Response paper 1:**
- **Response paper 2:**
- **Response paper 3:**
- **Response paper 4:**
- **Response paper 5:**
- **Film club assignment:** Monday, February 26, 12 p.m.
- **Last Day to Drop the Course without Penalty:** Monday, March 11
- **Final Project Abstract:** Friday, March 22, 11:59 p.m.
- **Final Project Meeting:** Week of March 22-26
- **Final Project Portfolio:** Friday, April 5, 11:59 p.m.

## Syllabus Statement on Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto Mississauga is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, UTM treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

[The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the process for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

### In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

***Please note:*** *The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course writing assignments. This includes ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence writing and coding assistants. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of cheating.*

### In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined [in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other [institutional resources](#).