

School of Public Policy and Administration
Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies

AP/PPAS 3762 3.00 M
Canada's Labour Market Policy

LABOURING THROUGH COVID

WINTER 2021
THURSDAY 2:30-5:30 PM OVER ZOOM

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As Socrates teaches us, when this happens
– when our own definitions produce results that seem intuitively wrong to us –
it's because we're not aware of what we really think
~ David Graeber (1961-2020)

1. Overview: Why Work?

In the midst of a pandemic you might think having a happy work life is way down your list of priorities. Just finding one when you need to find one tops your list. And you might think what comes after will be what comes after and you will think about the drop when you get to the edge. But actually, you can start planning for that. As a matter of fact, thinking about your future work life now will get you ahead.

You think you have to work. Like everyone else in your life. Non-negotiable. Whatever the job is. You might even think the only reason you are going to York is to get a job later. If not, what's the point, right? Yes, even if you hate your job you will do it. Even if you want out. Everyday. Everyone thinks so, you tell yourself.

Is that all there is in your life? What if work isn't what it seems. What if you could have a choice in deciding what you want to do and what you don't want to do, but you aren't given that choice. What if the way how your work life is structured does not need to be what you think it needs to be. And you just might have a say. You can learn to want to live a happier life. That can start here.

2. Learning Outcomes: How You Can Live a Happier Life

The course is about labour policy in Canada, but it is about a lot more than that. You will learn something about the interactions between the state and the market, in this case the labour market. You will learn how to ask questions to learn more about public policy, in this case labour policy. You will even learn what questions to ask. But more importantly, you will learn what more you can learn.

The learning outcomes could be transformative if students want them to be, no matter what the subject of a course or a course is. Being held hostage in the quagmire of post-truth delusions, we could safeguard a scintilla of hope that whatever that is left of our idealism is not destined for demolition by daring ourselves to ask: does it have to be this way? If students are willing, at the end of our time together, students would be able to ask the tough questions needed in challenging the status quo. If you want to live a happy work life, ask what that might be for you, what you need to do to get that and what more you need to start doing that. You have to decide what your vision for your future will be. In addition, you have to decide what you need to do to get to where you want

to be. Moreover, you have to decide what more you need. University education can't make your decisions for you, but university education can equip you with the capabilities to make informed, responsible decisions for you.

At university you learn to become not only a productive employee but also an informed and responsible citizen. Like university studies in general, the course is designed to develop your capabilities in critical thinking, information literacy, effective communication as well as your sense of your responsibility.

Critical thinking. A big challenge in your daily experience is to live with ambiguity. The world is not neatly organized, and it won't organize itself for you. But you can make sense of what you initially see as disorganization for yourself if you want to. Hopefully this course will give you ample opportunities to learn to face the messy world.

Information literacy. In our society another big challenge is to live with information overload. The massive information flow does not come with navigation manuals or come in handouts or PowerPoint slides. But you can separate the signals from the noises if you want to. Hopefully this course will give you ample opportunities to learn to separate the good from the bad information.

Effective communication. Whether some ideas become entrenched often rests on how they are argued. Agenda setting is cruel as at times the most compelling arguments beat the most sensible ideas. But you can be precise and concise in making your arguments if you want to. Hopefully the course will give you ample opportunities to learn to cut to the chase.

A sense of your responsibility. University education is to enlighten, not to indoctrinate to conform. Sadly, nowadays our society allows university education to become just a big broken promise. But if you want to, you can help make things right by working hard to be responsible – starting as responsible learners – by solving the problems you are asked to solve on your own rather than just giving up and asking others to solve them for you. Hopefully the course will give you ample opportunities to learn to nurture your sense of responsibility.

On how to pursue the above learning outcomes in this course, here are three actionable suggestions:

- **Pay attention.** Once you start paying attention, many seemingly unanswerable questions will end up as decipherable.
- **Prepare relentlessly.** Students are expected to do most of their work outside the classroom both before and after class, and they are expected to demonstrate their outside work with their engagements inside the classroom.
- **Own it.** When you have a problem, look for the solution. Whenever something does not go your way, ask “What have I done wrong and how can I do better?”

Your course grade is just a reflection of your performance in the course. A grade is just a grade. In five years no one will care what you get as a student in this course. But people do care who you are as a human being – whether you care not only about your own self-interests but also about others' well-being.

Students will earn the grades they get and will get the grades they earn. Thus, students are expected to take full responsibilities for studying and keeping up with the fast pace of the course. No special consideration will be given to students who don't get the grades they want due to reasons not required to be considered by university policies. Students shouldn't negotiate for marks they didn't earn, and all academic queries on marks if warranted should be made on an academic basis. For example, claiming that you have worked very hard or you have never

received such a low grade won't be sufficient. By the same token, claiming that you need such a grade to advance to the next level, keep your scholarship or graduate or get a job won't be sufficient either.

3. Course Materials: Here and Now

The course materials reflect what's happening in civil society. They are by and large experimental, i.e. definitely not the usual materials students would expect. The points of departure for the classes are included in the schedule near the end of this outline.

More materials including links to caselaw, academic journal articles, government as well as think tank reports and news stories are slated to be assigned throughout the course to optimize the learning experience of students. The links to content for each class will be posted on eClass shortly before each class.

No one can predict the future accurately but we all could learn from the past to not only understand the present but also make an educated guess about the future. In working through the course materials, students will gain a sense of the convergence of the past, the present and the future.

4. Teaching Approach: Use What It Is to Probe What It Could Be

In the course, you will start learning how to process what it is to get at what it could be – you will work through analyses of labour market norms, comment on current Canadian labour market policies and search for the future of work that you would like to have for everyone.

To encourage open and frank discussion, the course will NOT be recorded in order to try to protect all parties involved. Please note that informed consent is required to record anyone or anything during the course. Given the diverse offerings at York, no doubt students can find a suitable course with recordings that will suit their needs if a course with recordings will work best with their preferred learning styles.

Given the pedagogical design of the course, no class is designed to be missed. Students missing any class will be at their own peril no matter how hard I try to accommodate their absence. For example, students are involved directly and indirectly in deciding what they are learning through in-class discussions. Not all of such info will be available on eClass.

All students are required to use their York University email accounts – perhaps through Outlook – for ALL course correspondences. All emails should be sent to taxlaw@yorku.ca. At times functions follow forms. To give you a sense of this part of the design for the course, the subjects of all your email submissions are required to have “3762-(your last name)-(your first name)-(your student ID)-(the subject of the email depending on the assignment)”. The “.” is a hyphen.

Students are expected to learn to find answers on their own. If after exhausting all avenues you still think you cannot find answers on your own please follow the course email protocol as stated above to send an email to taxlaw@yorku.ca. If you don't get any reply within 48 hours, you should assume that you are expected to be able to find your answer on your own.

I am eager to talk shop all the time. But to make sure that any academic discussion with any student will be shared with all students in the course so all students can benefit from it, please follow course email protocol to email the questions to taxlaw@yorku.ca so I can incorporate your wonderful contributions into the development of our course for all students. I am confident that such an approach is more conducive to learning than, let's say traditional office hours, given the design of the course.

5. Evaluation: Less is more

The evaluation focuses on what students are expected to learn in university studies – information literacy, critical thinking and effective communication as well as responsibility. All students will be graded and ranked in comparison to their peers. Very specific submission and presentation protocols of work done for the course will only be explained in class. Failure to follow the protocols could lead to failures in the course. Feedbacks to students' learning progress will be embedded weekly in class so students can learn from each other. Tentative marks will be posted on eClass by the drop date. A final letter grade for the course will be given to each student at the end of the academic year based on the following components.

- 5.1. Up to 11 in-class online polls (15%). As an attempt to make the course reflect the students and to fit the course to students along the way accordingly, students are asked to participate in online polls on their attitudes toward labour market and related public policy issues in specific time slots in class. Statistical analyses of the data collected will be shared in class. Students can't participate in the polls in any other time. No make-up polls will be available.
- 5.2. Up to 11 very short in-class online quizzes (15%). As an attempt to gauge students' learning progress and to fit the course to students along the way accordingly, students are asked to complete very short in-class quizzes on their knowledge of labour market and related public policy issues covered in prior classes in specific time slots in class. Students can't participate in the quizzes in any other time. No make-up quiz will be available.
- 5.3. Reading diary (35%). As an attempt to help students develop an academic habit, students are asked to read a part of a designated Kindle book and log their work product each day throughout the term. A special Excel spreadsheet is available on eClass as the off-line logbook for the exercise. The designated book will be unveiled in the third class. Logistics including how to compile the reading diary and how to submit the reading diary will be discussed in the third class. The deadline for submission will be 11:59 pm Friday April 9. Very specific submission protocol must be followed. Submissions that do not follow the very specific submission protocol will not be graded. No extension will be granted. All the information will be provided in class only.
- 5.4. Capstone project (35%). As an attempt to encourage students to take notes in class and conduct further research based on their own notes, students are asked to prepare a 1,000-word essay on a designated topic using their own notes. The topic will be unveiled in class near the end of the course. Logistics including how to write the essay and how to submit the essay are discussed after the reveal. The deadline for submission will be 11:59 pm Tuesday April 13. Very specific submission protocol must be followed. Submissions that do not follow the very specific submission protocol will not be graded. No extension will be granted. All the information will be provided in class only.

6. Tentative Schedule: Learning by doing

Students are asked to do the bulk of the work AFTER each class to save students' time. They are asked to only work through the documents listed as tentative points of departure in the schedule below before each class. The full package of research reports and other content will be posted on eClass shortly before each class. Each class is designed to highlight what students should focus on for that class after class. In that way, students can save a lot of time.

Class 1 – Jan. 14: Labouring Through

Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan [<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>]

Work Life: COVID 19 Revealing Inequities in Canada's Labour Market [<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/work-life-covid-19-revealing-inequities-canada's-labour-market>]

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Class 2 – Jan. 21: COVID Times

COVID-19 and Labour Law: Canada [<https://illeg.unibo.it/article/view/10843/10756>]

Information for Government of Canada employees: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) [<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19.html>]

Labour Program and federally regulated workplaces – COVID-19 [<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/notice-covid-19.html>]

COVID-19 (coronavirus) and your employment standards protections [<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-coronavirus-and-your-employment-standards-protections>]

Initial Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Canadian Labour Market [<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/cpp.2020-049>]

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Class 3 – Jan. 28: Structural Problems

Canada's COVID-19 blind spots on race, immigration and labour [<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2020/canadas-covid-19-blind-spots-on-race-immigration-and-labour/>]

The gender wage gap in Canada: 1998 to 2018 [<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-004-m/75-004-m2019004-eng.pdf?st=qg6tAQ5P>]

Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality [<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/canadas-colour-coded-income-inequality>]

Unheeded Warnings: COVID-19 and Migrant Workers in Canada [<https://migrantworkersalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Unheeded-Warnings-COVID19-and-Migrant-Workers.pdf>]

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Class 4 – Feb. 4: After Canada Emergency Response Benefit Ends

After CERB: Transitioning to new benefits [<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/transition.html>]

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Class 5 – Feb. 11: After Canada Emergency Student Benefit Ends

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) [<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/emergency-student-benefit.html>]

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Class 6 – Feb. 25: When Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Ends?

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) [<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy.html>]

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Class 7 – Mar. 4: The You Now

Work After COVID-19 [<https://ppforum.ca/publications/work-after-covid-19/>]

Students in the labour market: Beyond the recession [<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-004-m/75-004-m2018002-eng.pdf?st=xDFGJiAa>]

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Class 8 – Mar. 11: Your Future?

Ahead by a Decade: Employment in 2030 [<https://brookfieldinstitute.ca/report/ahead-by-a-century-employment-in-2030/>]

What kind of jobs? [<https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-bullshit-job-boom>]

How Much Do They Make? [https://lmic-cimt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/LMIC_How-Much-Do-They-Make-Research-Report.pdf]

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Class 9 – Mar. 18: Minimum Wage

Province and feds have no plans to pay low-wage essential workers a living wage [<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/living-wage-coronavirus-1.5564541>]

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Class 10 – Mar. 25: Unions

Unions on COVID-19 [<https://canadianlabour.ca/unions-on-covid-19/>]

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Class 11 – Apr. 1: Redistribution to Level the Playing Field?

Tackling Inequality as Part of Canada's Post-Pandemic Recovery [<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/september-2020/tackling-inequality-as-part-of-canadas-post-pandemic-recovery/>]

Should Canada Have a Wealth Tax? [<https://tax.osgoode.yorku.ca/2020/06/should-canada-have-a-wealth-tax/>]

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Class 12 – Apr. 8: Basic Income

In Pandemic Downturn, Canada's Drive For Guaranteed Basic Income Picks Up Speed [<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/13/921606901/in-pandemic-downturn-canadas-drive-for-guaranteed-basic-income-picks-up-speed>]

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Adapted Standardized Information from York University

Please note that this is a course that depends on remote teaching and learning. There will be no in-person interactions or activities on campus. eClass, Zoom and the university's email network will be used in this course.

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Students shall note that Zoom is hosted on servers in the U.S. This includes recordings done through Zoom. If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session. The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it. Please review the technology requirements and FAQs for eClass [<https://lthelp.yorku.ca/95440-student-faq>].

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In this course, we strive to maintain academic integrity to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing SPARK's Academic Integrity module at the beginning of the course [<https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/>]. Breaches of academic integrity range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate university authorities, and can be punishable according to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty [<https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>].

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All materials prepared for this course at York University are the intellectual property of Professor Thaddeus Hwong unless otherwise stated. This can include but is not limited to the following materials: spoken and written presentations; assignment handouts and instructions. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course. As a student in this course, you may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any of this work without the instructor's express permission. Unauthorized or commercial use of these materials is strictly prohibited. Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website, or online sharing of course material with people outside of the course) may lead to a charge of misconduct under York's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities [<https://oscr.students.yorku.ca/student-conduct>] and the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In addition, you may face legal consequences for any violation of copyright law.

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While all students are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. For more information about this policy, please refer to these guidelines and procedures: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities [<https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-guidelines-procedures-and-definitions/>]. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services [<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca>] to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term. An Accessibility Counsellor will help you establish recommended academic accommodations, which will then need to be communicated to your course instructor(s) as necessary. Please let the course instructor(s) know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation, so that your accommodation needs can be discussed and considered within the context of this course.