

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

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

**LIVE YOUR OWN TRUTH IN YOUR FUTURE WORK LIFE**

Winter 2024  
Thursday 2:30-5:30 pm  
CLH 110

[Thaddeus Hwong](#)

*Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.*  
~ Frederick Douglass

*Ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.*  
~ James Baldwin

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**\*\* Adapted Standardized Information from York University \*\***

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region ([LA&PS Land Acknowledgement](#)). For video, see [Understanding the Land Acknowledgement](#).

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**1. Overview: hate your job, eh?**

I bet you will. But is it the way it should be? Do you have a say? Will you be heard? Can you change it? We will find out more in our time together.

You will find that the course is very different from any course you have taken before. In a way that is likely not to be expected by you, the course would cover how government policies and programs concerning labour supply and demand could form and shape your life as a worker through the lens of the collective power of all workers.

The labour justice issues the course aims to cover include employment, unemployment and underemployment; gender pay gap, systemic discrimination and class stratification; minimum wage, living wage and guaranteed basic income; as well as collective bargaining, industrial action and the rights of workers. Flowing from the exploration is the unveiling of obstacles to the pursuit of labour justice such as the mistreatment of not only persons with disabilities and recent immigrants but also you as a worker along with the mishandling of not only executive compensation of executives but also your well-being.

Here's the synopsis of the course on my university academic page: "The Winter 2024 course of Canada's Labour Market Policy would take on the arrogance for cruelty in public policy agenda setting. The routine of first flashing hopes that no one would be left behind and then crushing them is cruel. The practice of defending that by saying it's for the best is arrogant. Is meritocracy the culprit?" For my teaching philosophy, see <https://profiles.laps.yorku.ca/profiles/thwong/>.

If you read my academic page and maybe even my twitter feed, you will find that I have a particular point of view. Of course, please feel free to decide whether you agree or disagree with it or not. If you agree with it, I would very much hope that you will enjoy learning how to put theory to practice. More importantly, if you disagree with it, I would very much hope that you will enjoy learning how to learn from a point of view that is different from yours. After all, that's what university is for.

To protect the privacy of all so students are free to speak their minds and to make the most of the unique design of the course, no class will be recorded.

## **2. Learning outcomes: happier life?**

You might think having a happy work life is way down your list of priorities. You think you have to work. Like everyone else. 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. E.V.E.R.Y.D.A.Y. 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. You can have a say. You can learn to want to live a happier life. You can start here.

The course is about labour market 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. You will learn how to ask questions to learn more about public policy. You will even learn what kind of questions to ask. But more importantly, you will learn what more you can learn.

The learning outcomes could be transformative if you want them to be. Being held hostage in the quagmire of post-truth delusions, we could safeguard a scintilla of hope that whatever left of our idealism is not destined for demolition by daring ourselves to ask: does it have to be this way? If you are willing, at the end of our time together, you would be able to ask the tough questions needed in challenging the status quo.

Like university studies in general, the course is designed to develop your capabilities in critical thinking, information literacy, effective communication as well as a 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 if you want to. Hopefully this course will give you plenty of opportunities to learn to face the messy world.

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

*Effective communication.* Whether some ideas become entrenched often rests on how they are argued. At times unfortunately 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 plenty of opportunities to learn to cut to the chase.

*A sense of your responsibility.* University education is to enlighten, not to indoctrinate to conform. It incurs opportunity costs for not just you but also our society. Sadly, nowadays our society allows university education to become just a big broken promise that mutates into a gigantic opportunity loss. But if you want to you can help make things right by learning to be responsible. As responsible students, you would solve 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 plenty of opportunities to learn to nurture your identity of responsibility.

On how to learn in this course, here are three actionable suggestions:

- *Pay attention.* Once you start paying attention many seemingly unsolvable mysteries will end up as information that you can simply look up.

- *Prepare relentlessly.* Students are expected to do most of their work outside the classroom, and they are expected to demonstrate their outside work with their level of engagements inside the classroom.
- *Own it.* When you think you have run into a problem, look for the solution yourself. Whenever something does not go your way, ask yourself: "What have I done wrong and how can I do better?"

At university you learn to become not only a productive employee but also an informed and responsible citizen. If you learn to think about labour justice in a way to appreciate its important role in society, you will have achieved something in this course.

Your course grade is just a reflection of your performance in the course, but you are the only one who really knows whether you are making any progress in learning to become a lifelong learner. 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.

### **3. Course materials: here and now**

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 of labour justice in Canada.

The design of the course content is to balance between the need to stay as current as possible and the hope to keep students engaged. The course materials are by and large experimental, i.e. definitely not the usual materials students would expect.

You would have a say. As stated in Section 5.1 of this outline, you could help form and shape the content of course.

Given the learning trajectory of the students as shown in their work, an evolving set of materials including links to news stories, academic journal articles, polls, government as well as think tank reports would be assigned throughout the course to optimize the learning experience of students.

The key question you are required to ask yourself concerning the content of each class is this: what do you think the governments should do for not only you but also for all? Delving into quantitative data (statistical snapshots, polls) and qualitative data (news stories, op-eds) along with contextual analyses (think tank reports, government papers, academic journal articles), you will have the opportunity to decide what you want to learn and how you want to learn it within the confines of the pedagogical design of the course.

#### 4. Teaching approach: what it could be

Each of us is unique, and one rationale behind the course design is to give each of us a chance to find happiness in work life, no matter how different each of us is compared to each other. Indeed, the course is likely to be different compared to other courses you have taken before because it enables you to immerse in an environment in which you are encouraged to learn what you want to learn in the way you want to learn it within the confines of the design of the course. The set of issues planned to be covered in the tentative schedule at the back of this outline will be reviewed as a cohesive set in the first class. As no class is designed to be missed, students are advised to attend all classes in full.

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 are deemed to suit their preferred learning styles.

For security purposes, for all course correspondences all students are required to use their York University email accounts – perhaps through Outlook as MS Office is available for all students to download at <https://www.yorku.ca/uit/student-services/software/free-microsoft-office-365-education-software/>. All such emails should be sent to [taxlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca) with “3762” at the start of the subject line.

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](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca). Instead of individual replies, the subject matter of the questions, if warranted, will likely be brought up in class.

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](mailto: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 pedagogical design of the course.

## 5. Evaluation: becoming a lifelong learner

The evaluation focuses on what would help develop students into lifelong learners – information literacy, critical thinking and effective communication as well as responsibility. All students will be graded and ranked in comparison to their peers.

That is, for example, at the end of the term students who have attended more classes than others will likely have advantages over those who attended fewer classes. The reason is not about attendance. The reason is that the former students have likely learnt more than the latter, and their learning outcomes would likely show up in their work done for the course. A letter grade for the course will be given to each student at the end of the academic year based on the following components. On grading schemes, see <https://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2023-2024/grades-and-grading-schemes>.

Please consider everything said in class as feedback to your work. The marks for the Reading Diary – 40% of the course grade – would be posted on eClass before the drop date.

*\*\* Adapted Standardized Information from York University \*\**

*Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).*

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### **5.1. At least five articles proposed by each student for use in the course deemed to be acceptable to be linked to for uses in class on eClass (20%).**

As you can see in the class schedule near the end of the course outline, no readings are listed under the topic of each class. To give you the opportunity to form and shape the content of the course, in each class a discussion of the topic for the following class will be held for students to gain a sense of what the following class could be about. Students are required to make at least five acceptable submissions with links to articles following specific email submission protocol starting after Class 3. Students with a link to an article accepted for use in the course will be engaged in a conversation about the proposed article in class.

Students are encouraged to go beyond just googling for items that look like they might fit the class in light of the topic of the class and the learning outcomes of the course. In each submission email, students are expected to explain in no more than three sentences why the

article proposed is timely, relevant and thoughtful based on the discussion of the topic of the prior class in the spirit of the learning outcomes. Students should not summarize the article. Please do not attach anything to the email.

Each student will have until 7 am EST in the morning of the Tuesday before the class on Thursday to submit a link to a proposed article to [taxlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca) from a York University student email account with the following subject line: 3762-5.1-X [X refers to a class number]. For example, students who elect to make a 5.1 submission about the topic to be discussed in Class 4 will make a submission by the Tuesday before Class 4 with an email subject line: 3762-5.1-4.

One student can only make one submission for each class. Not all submissions will be used in class. Students will find out whether their articles are accepted or not on eClass when the package for the class is posted on eClass before class. Proposed articles not used will not be counted as submissions for the 20% of course grade. As students have plenty of opportunities to file, no late submission will be accepted.

## **5.2. Reading Diary of reading a part of an assigned book every day before the submission deadline (40%).**

To develop a reading habit, students are required to read a part of an assigned Kindle book every day starting on the day of Class 3 through the day before Class 7 and log what they read each day in an Excel spreadsheet provided in the Outline+ folder on eClass. Every day means every day. Each day's entry should reflect the learning trajectory of each student at that point in time in light of all the issues emerging in classes so far and the learning outcomes of the course. No two entries of students should be similar as each student is unique. The maximum length of each entry is 280 characters.

The assigned book will be revealed in Class 3 along with information on how to prepare the Reading Diary using the special Excel template. Also, details on the filing of Reading Diary in progress each week and the final version in January along with late submission penalties will be discussed in Class 3.

Students are expected to start logging their daily reading after Class 3. Every week students are required to use their York University email account to submit the provided Reading Diary MS Excel file to [taxlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca) with the following subject line before class. The format of the subject line is: 3762-5.2-X [X refers to the class number in the class schedule at the back of this outline]. For example, the weekly diary for days between Class 3 and Class 4 with the subject line 3762-5.2-4 is expected to be submitted by the start of Class 4. The Diary filed each week is required to contain an entry for every day, and every week's submission is required to contain all the entries by the time when the submission is made.

In short, students are required to make a 5.2 submission in the form of the Excel template by the start of Class 4, Class 5, Class 6 and Class 7. Each week's entries should be appended to those from the previous weeks so the Class 7 submission should have all the entries. In total, four submissions are required. No other file format such as MS Word, PDF, Pages or Numbers will be accepted.

As the design of the Reading Diary is for students to read every day, no late submission will be accepted. Students should simply submit their entire Diary in Excel on the day of Class 7 – the deadline for the final Reading Diary submission is 11:59 pm EST on February 29.

### **5.3. Capstone Project based on your notes of the course (40%).**

One feature of the course is the Capstone Project, which requires students to use what they have learnt in the course to prepare an original document about Canada's labour market policy as if they were asked to prepare that for an internship application to an international organization. In Class 1, students will be given a list of internships for them to choose from.

The Capstone Project exercise comprises of two parts – the preparation of notes of classes using a MS Word template provided in the Outline+ folder on eClass and the compilation of a document based on the notes.

In Class 1, students will be introduced to the parameters of the Capstone Project. In Class 9 if not earlier, the assigned topic will be discussed.

As part of the Capstone Project exercise, all students are required to use the notes template to prepare notes after each class as students are required to only cite their notes in the Capstone Project. The specific requirements of the notes are slated to be discussed in Class 3.

Starting after Class 4, all students are required to submit their notes of the previous class by the start of a class to [taxlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca) using their university email accounts following specific submission protocol. Each 5.3 submission email should have only one notes file in PDF – not in MS Word – attached. The email subject line for the 5.3 submission email should be 3762-5.3-X [X refers to a class number]. For example, the 5.3 submission for the notes on Class 3 is required to be made by the start of Class 4 with the email subject line: 3762-5.3-4. In total, nine submissions of notes with one each flowing from the contents of each of Class 3 to Class 11 are required.

Again, students are required to cite only their notes and nothing else to compile their Capstone Project documents in tackling the assigned topic. The deadline for the submission of the Capstone Project document to [taxlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:taxlaw@yorku.ca) following very specific submission protocol will be 11:59 pm EST April 11, 2024.

## 6. Tentative Schedule: Learning by Doing

The full package of the materials of a class will be posted on eClass shortly before that class.

Module I: Contextualized Highlights		
Jan. 11	Class 1	The rat race: are you just trying to keep up with the Jones?
Jan. 18	Class 2	Freedom: well, you have to punch in and punch out, so?
Jan. 25	Class 3	Work: isn't it mind-numbing?
Feb. 1	Class 4	Unemployment: you know EI can't pay the rent, right?
Module II: Deep Structure		
Feb. 8	Class 5	Class: you feel like you can't escape from the economic class you are condemned to?
Feb. 15	Class 6	Race: is systemic racism haunting you?
Feb. 29	Class 7	Gender: you see that it's not just race as gender discrimination is everywhere too?
Mar. 7	Class 8	Power: as a worker you think you have any?
Module III: Fundamental Challenges		
Mar. 14	Class 9	Income inequality: why should the fat cats make x times more than you make?
Mar. 21	Class 10	Wealth inequality: why should the fat cats have a net worth that make yours look nonexistent?
Mar. 28	Class 11	Political inequality: just because they can pull it off?
Apr. 4	Class 12	Labour justice: are you willing to just take it or do something about it?

**[ADDITIONAL CONTENT PROVIDED BY UNIVERSITY]**

## Additional Adapted Standardized Information from York University

**\*\* Academic Integrity \*\***

As a student at York University, you have a responsibility to both understand and uphold the integrity of the academic experience. The Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies supports the International Center for Academic Integrity's [definition of academic integrity](#). That is, you will be committed to acting in all academic matters, even in the face of adversity, with honesty, trust, fairness, courage, respect and responsibility. Here is how you can demonstrate academic integrity in the completion of this course:

- Respect the ideas of others: Your course work should represent your own knowledge and ideas. [You should not falsely claim credit for ideas that are not your own, by presenting another's work as yours](#). If you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person's work in order to support your own ideas, identify the work and the author through proper citation practices. For more information about how to cite properly, use the [Student Papers and Academic Research Kit](#) (SPARK). You can improve your writing, research, and personal learning abilities through the [Learning Commons](#), or by visiting the [Writing Centre](#) or [ESL Open Learning Centre](#).
- Respect your peers: [Know when you are allowed to collaborate](#). Ask your instructor about what group work entails when it comes to the [sharing of work](#). In test situations and assignments, don't steal or give answers to your peers, whether in-person or online (e.g., in group chats and/or on [third-party content-sharing websites](#), such as Chegg, Course Hero, etc.). Both cheating and aiding in a breach of academic honesty are violations of York University's academic honesty policy.
- Respect your course instructor(s): Understand what your instructors are asking of you in class, as well as on assignments, tests and/or exams. If you are unsure, ask your professor or teaching assistant. They are committed to making you feel supported and want to assess you fairly and with integrity. Please do not submit the same piece of work for more than one course without your instructor's permission. That can be considered an act of cheating.
- Respect yourself: When you act with integrity, you know that your work is yours and yours alone. You do not allow others to take tests for you. [You do not buy or otherwise obtain term papers or assignments](#). You do the work. As a result, you know that you earned the grades that you receive, so you can be proud of your York degree. By acting with integrity in your course work, you are also practising a valuable professional skill that is important in all workplaces.
- Take responsibility: If you have acted in an academically dishonest way, you can demonstrate courage and take responsibility for your mistake. You can admit your mistake to your course instructor as soon as possible.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty can be subject to disciplinary action under the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). Your lack of familiarity with the Senate Policy does not constitute a defense against its application. Some academic offences can also constitute offences under the [Criminal Code of Canada](#), which means that you may also be subject to criminal charges.

**\*\* Intellectual Property \*\***

Course materials are designed for use as part of PPAS 4130A at York University and are the intellectual property of Professor Thaddeus Hwong unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course. Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

**\*\* Student Support and Resources \*\***

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.
- For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).

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