PURPOSE
The purpose of this course is to provide an in-depth survey of labor processes and work in a world that is characterized by increasing global interdependencies across multiple scales. This course explores the geographies of labor and work that are constitutive of and by the changing organization of production under advanced capitalism. Given that we live in a world dominated by capitalist social relations, we must first become conversant in the inner workings of capitalism as a process that perpetuates geographically uneven development. We will embark upon our inquiry into capitalism and capitalist social relations through the lens of wage labor by investigating where it locates, why it locates where it does, and why certain groups of workers are sought for specific jobs. We will closely examine the intersection of the spatial organization of production and the location of work by systematically interrogating the popular and simplistic notion that global capitalist expansion is driven by a search for and exploitation of low wage workers and low wage regions.

This course is broken down into six sections. In the first section, we will establish a basic understanding and vocabulary of the geographies of work and capitalism. You will be introduced to a labor market theory; concepts of labor, work, and employment’ and geographical concepts that will provide a basic framework for the remainder of the course. In the remaining sections, we will engage in a more in-depth examination of globalization, production, work, and territory. Section II provides an overarching survey of labor’s response to economic globalization. In Section III we’ll look at labor from the vantage point of the globalization of labor at the upper levels of the labor market. Here, we’ll hone in on the relationship between the geographical movement of workers, social networks, and institutional change and industrial upgrading in Israel, India, the PRC, and Taiwan. Section IV explores in depth accounts of the intersection of gender, politics, and work in the Philippines, Mexico, and United States. In section V we’ll examine a case study unionized workers who stood up for their rights against global capital in a hostile political environment and won. Lastly, in section VI we’ll revisit the
issues of agency and the politics of labor control in an attempt to understand the pervasiveness of anti-union culture among workers in the U.S.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
There are four interrelated objectives to this course:

1. Develop an understanding of contemporary approaches in labor and economic geography.
2. Develop an understanding of the relationship among globalization, production, work, and territory.
3. Gain a substantive understanding of global capitalism and geographical uneven development.
4. Recognize there are a variety of ways to understand social phenomena.
5. Develop your ability to articulate your thoughts and ideas in writing and orally.

REQUIRED READINGS
There are six required books for this course. Additional readings will be available either through e-reserve or electronic books available through the College of Charleston Library. Given the focus of this course on contemporary material, I reserve the right to assign supplemental readings at any point throughout the semester. Supplemental readings will be journalistic writings (newspapers and magazines) that complement the course material. It is expected that all assigned readings will be completed before class and that you will actively participate in discussion.

Although I anticipate presenting and clarifying course material, this is a reading-intensive course. The material is cutting edge, scholarly work. Given the small class size, course meetings will be structured as a seminar. This means that I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss and explore the readings. For the uninitiated, when coming to “seminar” you are expected to arrive on-time, have the readings in-hand, your notes and prepared questions, and ready to comment and/or respond to me or your classmates in the ensuing discussion.


The texts are available at the CofC bookstore, as well as online retailers. If you choose to purchase your books online, I urge you to purchase from an independent bookseller, such as Powell’s Books, St. Mark’s Bookshop, or The Strand. URLs for those bookstores are located below. You may also find inexpensive, used books from independent sellers at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Powell’s: [http://www.powellsunion.com/](http://www.powellsunion.com/)

**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

**Weekly Commentary and Questions (10 x 10 points)**
For most weeks you are expected to comment the readings and provide two to three questions for class discussions. Your commentaries can draw off any aspect of the assigned reading material for that week, such as a quote, point of disagreement, or passage that increased your understanding or reinforced your ideas about a particular process. Your commentaries shall be a brief, yet focused 2 pages. The format shall be 12-point font and double spaced.

The weekly writings are due 24 hours before our Monday meetings and shall be emailed to me as a Microsoft Word .doc attachment. To insure you email does not get misplaced in my inbox, please complete the subject line of your email in the following format &lt;last name_first initial_date_review&gt; and type your name on the document. The purpose to sending them 24 hrs prior to our meeting is to allow me time to read, provide brief comments, and incorporate your questions into the class time. I will return the assignment at the beginning of class on Mondays so that you can draw off them during discussion. This will ensure a more productive learning environment.

There are 11 weeks for which you can submit an assignment. I will only count 10, which gives you some flexibility in deciding which week you would like to forgo the writing assignment penalty free. If you do all 11 assignments, I will drop the lowest grade at the end of the semester. I will not count the 11th assignment as extra credit. Of the 11 assigned readings, I will drop your lowest grade at the end of the semester.

**Due dates:**
1/20 and 1/25
2/1, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22
3/8, 3/15, 3/29
4/5 and 4/19
Grading: Your reviews will be evaluated accordingly:
- Check plus = 10 points, translates as above average to excellent work
- Check = 5 points, translates as satisfactory, but needs more work
- Check minus = 0 points, translates to unsatisfactory and needs significant work. If you receive a check minus, I strongly urge you to come see me.

*Failing to show up to class on Monday despite submitting a weekly review to me via email will result in a check minus.*

Exams (1 x 150 points each)
There will one cumulative final exam. The exam will consist of open book take-home essays that will be distributed on the last day of class and due at 5 p.m. on Monday, May 4th.

Investigative Essay (100 points)
You are required to write an in-depth, investigative essay that explores a concept covered in the readings and class discussions. This is an opportunity for you to examine in more depth and detail a particular issue that you find important or interesting. Examples may include collective bargaining and unionization; the politics of labor legislation; unemployment; union-community alliances; blue-green alliances; the geography of wage differentials; institutions, work practices, and the politics of place; workforce training; labor market segmentation; workforce migration; labor force displacement; or the composition of local employment. The choice is yours. This is not a research paper, but will require you to seek out and review literature on the topic and perhaps engage statistical data.

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct an in-depth exploration of issues pertaining to labor and work in contemporary capitalism. Like a research paper, your essays will have a thesis, question, or argument. However, unlike a research paper, this assignment does not require you to conduct data analysis or arrive to any conclusions.

*Essays are due on Wednesday, April 22nd at 5 p.m.* Essays shall be approximately 15 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins, entail proper citation and bibliography formatting, and stapled.

Book Review (4 x 100 points each)
There are four book reviews due throughout the semester. You have a choice to review any four of the six books we will read in class. As a general rule, book reviews will be due on the last day we are covering material of a specific text. Due dates are listed below. As a general rule, your book review avoids simply summarizing the book. While it is important to communicate to the reader what the text is about, good book reviews critically evaluate the text by drawing on one’s knowledge base of the subject matter and speak to the merits of the text. The review should not exceed 1000 words, be double-spaced, and stapled. To assist you in this exercise, I will provide you with some examples of “model” book reviews.
Author | Review Due Date
---|---
Moody: | January 28
Saxenian: | February 25
McKay: | March 18
Bank Muñoz: | April 1
Erem and Durrenberger: | April 13
Richards: | April 27

NB: All references shall be scholarly, which means they are vetted by recognized experts in a particular field. This excludes Wikipedia.

Extra Credit Opportunities
On Saturday, January 17th, the Avery Research Center is presenting a Civil Rights Film Festival. Films will be shown at McKinley Washington Auditorium, located at 125 Bull Street. There are two films relevant to the course for which you can view and write a review to earn extra credit that will be added to your final grade. You can review both films and receive double extra credit. Each film review holds an extra credit value of up to 5 points.

Like the book review, an analytical film review weaves together the film content and course material. This assignment is not a summary of the film, rather the objective of this assignment is to utilize the theories and concepts to read, interpret, and give meaning to the film. Film reviews should be 2 pages, doubled spaced, and stapled.

The films:
2:30 pm start time: “Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle” (1982) 60 minutes, is about organizing America’s first Black trade union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

6:15 pm start time: “I Am Somebody” (c. 1990s) 30 minutes. Covers the 1969 MUSC Hospital and Charleston County Hospital nurses strike for higher wages, better working conditions, and respect.

Extra credit film reviews are due on Monday, January 26th at 5 p.m.

Late Policy
In fairness to those students who work hard to adhere to the deadlines, no late assignments will be accepted, except in the case of sickness or family emergency. Proof, such as a doctor’s note, must be provided. Unless noted, no assignments will be accepted by email. It is your responsibility to complete, print, staple, and submit assignments in class or my mailbox on the date they are due.

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ATTENDANCE

There is no formal attendance policy for this course. This means I will not take attendance. Nevertheless, you are expected to attend every class and actively participate. As I alluded above, active participation entails attending class, contributing to the discussion by asking questions, seeking clarification, and responding to questions posed by the instructor or your classmates. Disagreement is part of what makes discussion and debate interesting, so long as a high level of respect is upheld. Disruptive behavior, such as interrupting, making inappropriate comments, snickering, using your cell phone, texting, twittering, surfing the web, writing email, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Should such circumstances arise, I will ask you to leave the classroom. Such behavior will be reflected in your final grade.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If you have any kind of special circumstances that I should be aware of, please let me know right away. If you have SNAP accommodations of any kind, please make the appropriate notifications and arrangements with the Center for Students with Disabilities within the first week of class. Alternatively, if you have any sort of undiagnosed learning disability, a physical impairment of any kind that will require special arrangements for exams or papers, if you are an athlete or member of any club or organization that will travel, let me know. I will keep the information you share with me strictly confidential, but in order to create the best environment for your academic success, I need to know if there are circumstances that may interfere with your performance in the course. You are welcome to schedule an appointment with me to talk about any extenuating circumstances.

HONOR CODE

Your enrollment in this course requires you uphold the College of Charleston Honor Code. Honor Code violations are serious offenses. If you violate the Honor Code, you will fail this course. Be aware that plagiarism, defined below, is a violation of the Honor Code.

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are clearly related more to a misunderstanding will handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed by both the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.
Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information stored on a cell phone), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html.

If you have any questions or are unsure what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, ask.

**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

1. Attend class.
2. Complete all assignments.
3. Complete all assigned weekly readings prior to Monday’s class meeting. More often than not, discussions will traverse all assigned readings for that week.
4. If you’re having difficulty with the course material and/or assignments, see me before it is too late. If my office hours do not correspond with your schedule, I am available by appointment.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**SECTION I: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS**

**WEEK 1**

January 12: Introductions and course overview


Chapter 1 – Orientations (pp. 1 – 23)

Chapter 2 – The social relations of labour: working in a capitalist world (pp. 27 – 62)

Appendix: Different approaches to theorizing labour (pp. 268 – 72)
WEEK 2
January 19:   **NO CLASS** – Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King

SECTION II: GLOBALIZATION AND LABOR: LABOR’S RESPONSE

January 21:   Moody: Introduction, Chapters 1 – 4 (pp. 1 – 84)

WEEK 3

January 26:   Moody: Chapter 5 – 8 (pp. 85 – 200)

January 28:

SECTION III: GLOBALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS, ENTREPRENEURISHIP, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 4
February 2:   Saxenian:   Introduction (pp. 1 – 11)
   Chapter 1 – Surprising success (pp. 12 – 47)
   Chapter 2 – Learning the Silicon Valley system (pp. 48 – 81)

February 4:

WEEK 5
February 9:   Saxenian:   Chapter 3 – Creating cross-regional communities (pp. 82 – 121)

February 11   Saxenian:   Chapter 4 – Taiwan as Silicon sibling (pp. 122 – 162)

WEEK 6
February 16:   Saxenian:   Chapter 5 – Taiwan as partner and parent (pp. 163 – 197)

February 18:   Saxenian:   Chapter 6 – Manufacturing in mainland China (pp 197 – 273)

WEEK 7
February 23:   Saxenian   Chapter 7 – IT enclaves in India (pp. 274 – 324)

February 25:   Saxenian:   Chapter 8 – The Argonaut advantage (pp. 325 – 338)

WEEK 8:  **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

SECTION IV: GLOBALIZATION, LABOR AND THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTION
WEEK 9:
March 9: McKay: Chapter 1 – A new politics of production (pp. 1 – 29)
Chapter 2 – Global electronics, Filipino workers, and the regulatory state (pp. 30 – 76)
Chapter 3 – High tech, high performance? The false promise of empowerment (pp. 77 – 131)

March 11:

WEEK 10
March 16: McKay: Chapter 4 – Strategic localization and manufacturing commitment (pp. 132 – 177)
Chapter 5 – Asymmetric agency: The workers respond (pp. 178 – 211)
Chapter 6 – The local and the global (pp. 212 – 227)

March 18:

WEEK 11: No class meetings: AAG Meetings
Reading assignment: All of Bank Muñoz

Chapter 1: The Tortilla Behemoth and Global Production (pp. 1 – 23)
Chapter 2: The Political Economy of Corn and Tortillas (pp. 24 – 37)
Chapter 3: A Tale of Two Countries: Immigration policy and globalization in the United States and Mexico (pp. 38 – 63)
Chapter 4: Hacienda CA: Immigration Regime (64 – 95)
Chapter 5: Hacienda BC: Gender Regime (pp. 96 – 129)
Chapter 6: Fighting Back? Resistance in an Age of Neoliberalism (pp. 130 – 161)
Chapter 7: Shop-floor Politics in the Twenty-First Century (pp. 162 – 175)

WEEK 12
March 30: Discuss Bank Muñoz

April 1:

SECTION V: THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY

WEEK 13
April 6: Erem and Durrenberger: Chapters 1 – 8 (pp. 13 – 110)
April 8: Erem and Durrenberger: Chapters 9 – Afterword (pp. 111 – 200)
WEEK 14
April 13: Guest speaker: ILA Local 1422 President Ken Riley

SECTION VI: THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-UNION CULTURE AMONG U.S. WORKERS

April 15: Richards: Introduction - Part I (pp. 1 – 88)

WEEK 15

April 20: Richards: Part II (pp. 89 – 180)

April 23: Guest speaker: South Carolina AFL-CIO President Donna Dewitt

WEEK 16

April 27: Distribute exam (due Monday, May 4th at 5 pm)