

**GLOBAL LABOR RIGHTS**  
**Rutgers University - 38:578:603:90**  
**Fall 2026**  
**SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:** Luis Enrique Mendoza Choque  
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**Office:** Janice Levin Building, Room 217B  
**Class Location:** Online Asynchronous.

**Virtual Office Hours:** by appointment.  
**Joint session:** November 4 & December 2, at 9:00 am (EST).

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines public international law relating to International Labor Standards (ILS) as established by the International Labour Organization (ILO), alongside decentralized transnational labor law frameworks. It also provides an overview of a decentralized global network - also known as a Transnational Labor Law- of international, national, and private efforts to promote labor rights beyond the ILO.

Throughout the term, we will unpack the ILO's core principles, from freedom of association to safe working environments. Crucially, we'll examine the decisive role of organized labor in shaping international labor standards and driving their enforcement. Through in-depth analysis of key legal cases, you will discover how unions and labor movements actively advocate for worker protections and hold institutions accountable.

Students will investigate labor provisions in trade agreements like the USMCA, the enforcement of labor rights for workers in informal employment, and worker-driven initiatives. You will build hands-on skills in researching case law, navigating ILO databases, and crafting legal strategies for real-world violations.

The course culminates in a joint presentation with GLU students from UNICAMP-Brazil, where students will present original research, applying global labor governance concepts to pressing workplace issues.

## **II. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- I. Develop the ability to speak and write critically about the ILO's constitutional principles, international labor standard-setting processes, and supervisory mechanisms to develop practical skill in evaluating regular and special supervisory reports, addressing labor rights violations in international and home-town contexts, and utilizing ILO databases.
- II. Demonstrate improved ability to researching and analyzing international and national case law to apply the legal meanings and practical applications of the ILO's five fundamental principles and rights at work—Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, Elimination of Forced Labor, Abolition of Child Labor, Elimination of Discrimination, and a Safe and Healthy Working Environment—to labor disputes in global forums and student hometowns.
- III. Recognize and interpret how labor provisions in international trade agreements have evolved—from standard state-to-state dispute clauses to facility-specific mechanisms like the USMCA—to develop practical skills in analyzing legal precedents, evaluating complaint procedures, and reviewing free trade treaties signed by students' home countries.

- IV. Differentiate between diverse transnational labor governance frameworks and strategic litigation tools to develop practical skills in analyzing emerging international labor disputes, constructing local and global legal strategies, and present original research on local and international cases during a collaborative GLU cross-campus collaboration.

### III. COURSE DELIVERY FORMAT

This course runs from September 1 through December 15. It is delivered entirely online through the Learning Management System, Canvas. There will be no Face-to-Face, in-person classroom sessions, except for an optional live Zoom "meet your professor and classmates" session.

#### EXCEPTION

There will be 2 synchronous/live class sessions via Zoom. During these sessions, you will present your country report assignment. Details are in the Country Report assignment portals. Your attendance is required.

The 2 synchronous/live sessions will be on **November 4 and December 2. At 9 AM (EST)**

### IV. ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING STRUCTURE

Your successful completion of this course will be based on the following activities:

- **Discussions** - active participation in all the Discussion Forums.
- **Country Report Presentations** – GLU Cross Campus Collaborations: 2 synchronous sessions via Zoom. Participation is required.
- **A ILO Knowledge Check** - this is a quiz to check your understanding of topics covered.
- **Final Global Labor Rights Paper** - a culmination of what you have completed in your country report, and what you have learned throughout the semester.

Your final grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

| Grading Components                                                  | % of Final Grade |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Discussion Forum Participation                                      | 40%              |
| Presentation Country Report 1 (Synchronous) (Modules 10)            | 15%              |
| ILO Knowledge Check (Quiz) (Module 7)                               | 10%              |
| Presentation Country Report 2 (Synchronous) (Module 13)             | 15%              |
| Final Report Global Labor Rights in Country (Modules 8, 11, and 14) | 20%              |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        | <b>100%</b>      |

## V. CONTENT

| Required Readings <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Assignments <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <b>Module 1 (Sept. 2-8): Welcome, introduction and Course Overview</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) Global Labor Rights – Syllabus. (2) The poem <a href="#">“A Worker Reads History”</a> by Bertolt Brecht, 1935. (MLOs 1.2). (3) <a href="#">ILO Constitution (Preamble) and the Declaration of Philadelphia</a> (MLO 1.2). (4) <a href="#">Loomis. The Eight-Hour-Day Strikes. pp. 49-69.</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Discuss why studying labor rights from an international perspective is important?                                                                                                      |
| <b>Module 2 (Sept. 9-15): Why International Labor Standards (ILS)?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) <a href="#">Sengenberger. International labour standards in the globalized economy</a> (Sengenberger, 2006, pp. 331-355). (2) <a href="#">Rules of the Game</a> (ILO, 2019, pp. 6-17). (3) <a href="#">The Berne Convention of 1906 “Phossy jaw was utterly horrific.”</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Discuss how arguments for and against ILS have evolved in your home country (or a chosen target country) in recent years.                                                              |
| <b>Module 3 (Sept. 16-22): International Labour Organization (ILO): Origin and structure</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) <a href="#">ILO Constitution Chapter 1.</a> (2) <a href="#">The ILO at Work.</a> (3) <a href="#">ILO. Rules of the Game pp. 18-30.</a> (4) <a href="#">Kott. ILO: Social Justice in a Global World? A History in Tension.</a> (5) <a href="#">Yusifli&amp;Fenwick. Workers’ rights and human rights: toward a new fundamental principle?</a> (6) <a href="#">Trade Union participation in the process of elaboration and adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention, C 190 and the Submission. pp.39-43 and 78-83.</a> (7) Read ILO Conventions 155 and 187 at <a href="#">NORMLEX</a> . | Discuss the extent to which the ILO tripartite structure both strengthens and limits its capacity to formulate, ratify, and enforce.                                                   |
| <b>Module 4 (Sept. 23-29): ILO Supervisory System</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) <a href="#">ILO Constitution Chapter II.</a> (2) <a href="#">Rules of the Game. pp.104-123.</a> (3) <a href="#">Beaudonnet. How domestic jurisdictions use universal sources of international law.</a> (4) <a href="#">Ledesma. Domestic Courts and Recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association of the ILO.</a> Besides the readings review this ILO site: <a href="#">ILO-ILO Compendium of Court Decisions</a>                                                                                                                                                                  | Discuss the extent to which domestic courts in your country or region incorporate, apply, or ignore interpretations provided by ILO supervisory bodies.                                |
| <b>Module 5 (Sept. 30-Oct. 6): Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (I)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) ILO Conventions: 87, 98, 100 and 111 at <a href="#">NORMLEX</a> . (2) <a href="#">ILO. ILO 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up.</a> (3) <a href="#">Gernigon. ILO principles concerning collective bargaining.</a> (4) <a href="#">International Court of Justice-Advisory Opinion. Right to Strike under ILO Conventions. pp. 19-41.</a> (5) <a href="#">Equal Pay - An introductory guide. pp. 1-22.</a>                                                                                                                                           | Discuss the extent to which the right to strike is protected by the legislation and how familiar are you now with the concept of remuneration for work of equal value.                 |
| <b>Module 6 (Oct. 7-13): Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (II)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) ILO Conventions: 29, 105, 138, 182 and ILO Protocol 29 at <a href="#">NORMLEX</a> . (2) <a href="#">Global Estimates on Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. pp. 1-58.</a> Choose one of the following two cases. (3.A) Case H-2 Visa Program. <a href="#">Woodmansee. Invisible Hands: Forced Labor in the United States and the H-2 Temporary Worker Visa Program.</a> (3.B) Case Myanmar <a href="#">Langille. The curious incident of the ILO, Myanmar and forced labour.</a> (4) <a href="#">2024 Global Estimates of Child Labour: Frequently asked questions.</a>           | Discuss what structural factors (e.g., poverty, supply chain opacity, weak legal enforcement) prevent the eradication of child and forced labor?                                       |
| <b>Module 7 (Oct. 14-20): Labor clauses under Trade Agreements (I)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1) <a href="#">Polaski. The strategy and politics of linking trade and labor standards: an overview of issues and approaches.</a> (2) <a href="#">Compa, Vogt, Gottwald. Wrong Turn for Workers’ Rights: The U. S. - Guatemala CAFTA Labor Arbitration Ruling – And What to do</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Knowledge Check (Quiz)</li> <li>• Discuss why did trade negotiators start including labor chapters in FTAs in the first place?</li> </ul> |

<sup>1</sup> Students are advised to refer to Canvas for comprehensive and precise details regarding course required readings and videos.

<sup>2</sup> Students are advised to refer to Canvas for comprehensive and precise details regarding course assignments.

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| <a href="#">About it.</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Module 8 (Oct. 21-27): Labor clauses under Trade Agreements (II)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| (1) <a href="#">Erne, Anner, Ford, Kay&amp;Maccarrone. Regional integration: a promising tool to advance the international decent work agenda?</a> (2) <a href="#">Anner. Case Study 2. Addressing Worker Voice Gaps in Global Supply Chains through Regional Trade Agreements: The Facility-Specific Rapid Response Labor Mechanism in the USMCA.pp. 29-42.</a>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper Topic Due Tuesday 27.</li> <li>• Contrast the traditional model (CAFTA-DR Chapter 16) with the modern standard (USMCA Chapter 23 &amp; Annex 31-A). Highlight two key structural changes.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Module 9 (Oct. 28-Nov. 3): The UN, OECD guidelines, and Mandatory Due Diligence</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| (1) <a href="#">Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights : Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework.</a> (2) <a href="#">OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. pp. 9-32.</a> (3) <a href="#">Sinning&amp;Zetzsche. The EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive: From Disclosure to Mandatory Prevention of Adverse Sustainability Impacts in Supply Chains.</a> | Critically discuss the structural limitations of voluntary frameworks like the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.                                                                                     |
| <b>Module 10 (Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am EST): Dialogue by GLU UNICAMP Students</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Presentation:</b> Country report 1: "Your country under the ILO supervisory mechanism," and "Your country labor provisions under FTAs."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Module 11 (Nov. 11-17): Promoting ILS through strategic research and Litigation.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| (1) <a href="#">Anner. Abandoned? The Impact of Covid-19 on Workers and Businesses at the Bottom of Global Garment Supply Chains.</a> (2) <a href="#">Anner. Worker-Driven Co-Research in Global Supply Chains: Three Studies from Latin America.</a> (3) <a href="#">Corporate Accountability Lab (CAL) v. Hershey.</a>                                                                                                     | Discuss the role that strategic corporate research and strategic litigation could play to promote ILS.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Module 12 (Nov. 18-24): Informal employment, the future of work and ILS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| (1) ILO Convention 193 at <a href="#">NOMRLEX.</a> (2) <a href="#">Supiot. The tasks ahead of the ILO at its centenary.</a> (3) <a href="#">Ceretelli. Decent Work in the Gig Economy: An Appraisal of the EU and ILO Regulation of Digital Labour Platforms.</a> (4) <a href="#">Xhafa &amp;Serrano. Collective representation of precarious workers: what has the Decent Work Agenda got to do with it?</a>                | Discuss the main structural barriers to organizing informal workers and extending legal labor protections to them.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Module 13 (Dec. 2nd at 9am EST): Dialogue by GLU UNICAMP Students</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Presentation:</b> Income inequalities and wealth concentration from a labor perspective. Country report 2: "Labor markets inequalities. Concentration of wealth as a threat to democracy."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Module 14 (Dec. 9-15): Final paper.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Individual research paper on a topic of students choosing related to International Labor Law. The paper will be focused on the analysis of at least ONE international labor standard, ILO jurisprudence and case law, or public labor policy related to that standard in a specific country.                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## VI. COMMUNICATION

To help create a positive and inclusive learning environment, all students are expected to engage in the course with professionalism, respect, and courtesy. We value diverse perspectives and encourage thoughtful, constructive contributions to our shared learning experience.

Please keep the following in mind:

- Use respectful and inclusive language in all communications, including discussion posts, messages to classmates, and emails to the instructor.
- Avoid posting any content (e.g., videos, images, or links) that is unrelated to the course or could make others feel uncomfortable or excluded.
- Harassment, offensive language, or any behavior that disrupts a supportive learning environment will not be accepted.

When participating in discussions or other collaborative activities, please refer to the [Discussion Post Guidelines](#) to help guide your tone and contributions.

Let's work together to make this an engaging and respectful space for everyone.

Students are expected to check their Rutgers email accounts regularly for class announcements.

All official communications, updates, and announcements issued by the instructor are the student's sole responsibility.

Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. Expect a response within approximately 24 hours. Since the instructor is also the GLU Program Coordinator, when emailing the instructor, always include "Global Labor Rights" in the subject line.

## VII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

While I encourage students to work together to understand theories and concepts, all written work must be your own. If you cite an author or use his/her ideas, please cite properly.

Plagiarized assignments or evidence of cheating will result in a failing grade in the assignment and possibly in the course, and may result in disciplinary action by the university.

Be sure to review and abide by the [Rutgers Academic Integrity](#)

## VIII. TURNITIN STATEMENT

Students (You) agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **Turnitin.com** (via Canvas Assignments Portal) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the [Usage Policy](#) posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If you do not agree please contact me immediately

## IX. ACCOMMODATIONS

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where they are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation ([See Documentation Guidelines](#)[Links to an external site.](#)). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you and your instructor with a Letter of Accommodations. Please discuss the accommodations with your instructors as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the [registration form](#). I am happy to facilitate the process if you need me to. Just let me know.

**Office of Disability Services contact and address**

**Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045.**

- E-mail Address: [dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu)
- Phone: (848) 445-6800 • Fax: (732) 445-3388
- [Office of Disability Website](#)

## **X. COMPUTER AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

- Access to the internet
- Reliable computer
- Headphones/Headsets - recommended
- Webcam - optional
- Microsoft Word
- [Basic Computer Specifications for Canvas](#)

For convenience, you can also download/install the Canvas Student App for Android or iOS devices. Follow the instructions on the respective app centers:

- [Canvas Student App for Android \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Canvas Student App for iOS](#)

## **XI. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Helpdesk:** Rutgers Office of Information and Technology.

**Email:** <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support>

**Call:** 833-OIT-HELP