

Labor and the Global Economy

Labor Studies and Employment Relations 575:363:01
Fall 2017

Instructor:
Pablo Gastón
Labor Education Center
Room 136A

Class Meetings:
Wednesdays, 9:15-12:15
Cook-Douglass Lecture Hall
Room 102

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-3:10

Please sign up for office hours here:

<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/qplmx>

Course Overview

Where and how we work are central to our identities and social status, and are critical determinants of our wellbeing and quality of life. Changes in the organization of work, therefore, have great ramifications. As our economy has become increasingly integrated with those of other countries—what we call “globalization”—the organization of work is intimately tied to trends in global trade and regulation.

This course examines how globalization has affected the location and quality of work in different parts of the world. We will examine how technological, political, and economic processes have shaped the process of globalization, and the implications of these factors on how work is organized. The course is divided into three parts. In Part I, we unpack what “globalization” means in the contemporary world, and how it might differ from earlier patterns of international trade. In Part II, we look at how globalization has affected the distribution of jobs, job quality in the Global North and the Global South, and the balance of power between employers and workers. In Part III, we examine how globalization has affected how workers and unions protest and exercise power.

Learning Objectives:

The student is able to...

21C Core Curriculum:

- Analyze contemporary issues of social justice. (Goal d).

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (Goal 8).

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).

Additional goals from the instructor:

- Analyze the tensions between global capitalism and democratic governance.
- Apply different theories of globalization to specific problems.

- Improve professional competencies such as critical thinking; verbal and written communication; presentation skills.

Course requirements:

Class participation:	35% of final grade
In-class mid-term exam:	30% of final grade
Take-home final exam:	35% of final grade

Participation:

I expect students to participate in class, including in full-group discussions, small-group activities, and quizzes. Your ability to learn and do well on the exams will depend on consistent participation. Our learning and engagement with the texts will depend on how seriously each of you takes reading and discussion. I expect you to come to class having read and reflected upon the week's readings, and prepared to learn from each other. I expect you to come to class armed with questions about the texts, points of agreement, and thoughtful criticism. This will require preparation time on your part, as well as empathy and patience with the thoughts and ideas of your colleagues.

There will be three short quizzes throughout the semester, which will constitute part of your participation grade. If you do the reading for class that day, you will have no problem doing well on the quizzes. They are designed to help you engage with the readings and stimulate class discussion.

To earn full credit for class participation, you will need to show:

- Consistent and punctual attendance
- Thoughtful engagement with the readings
- Openness to discussing the readings in class
- Consistent participation in class activities
- Completion of three short, unannounced in-class quizzes

Exams:

There will be one in-class mid-term exam and one take-home final exam. The mid-term will cover material from the first eight weeks of the course, and will be closed-book; the final will cover material from the full semester, and will be open-book. Both exams will involve several short-answer questions and essay questions. A week before both exams, I will provide you with a study guide, which I encourage you to take seriously.

For the exams, you will be responsible for material in the readings, as well as material covered in class. I will do my best to promptly post handouts and slides from class onto Sakai.

Communications outside of class:

I strongly encourage you to take advantage of office hours, either alone or in groups. To sign up for office hours, please use the following website:

<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/qplmx>

Students are expected to check their Rutgers email accounts regularly for class announcements. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the class instructor. You can contact me via email with questions or concerns about the course—I will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week. When emailing, please include “Labor and the Global Economy” in the subject line.

Disabilities and accommodations:

If you require accommodations for a disability, please let me know as early as you can. I will work with you to make sure you get the support you need in this class.

Citations and academic integrity:

While I encourage you to work together to learn the material and to understand theories and concepts, all written work you submit must be your own. If you cite another author or use her ideas, please cite properly, with a standard citation style. For example, to cite a quote from page 22 of Dani Rodrik’s 1997 book, you might cite it like this: (Rodrik 1997:22). For more information about citation styles and reference management tools, see <http://libguides.rutgers.edu/writing>

Plagiarized assignments or evidence of cheating is a serious problem, and will result in a failing grade on the assignment or the exam and possibly in the course, and may result in disciplinary action by the university. If you have any questions about academic integrity policies at Rutgers, please review the policies here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Course readings:

All readings will be made available on Sakai. All readings should be completed in advance of the class in which we discuss them (i.e., before the date they are listed on the syllabus). I expect you to read these carefully, and to take notes as you go. I encourage you to print out the readings and to bring them to class.

I may make adjustments to the reading assignments contained here, but if I do, I will give ample notification.

Doing the reading on time is the foundation for effective participation and a positive class experience for you and your colleagues. I have kept the total pages of reading limited so that you can do them all. You will have to do about 800 pages of reading over the course of the semester, which averages out to about 65 pages of reading for each week of discussions. But, the reading sometimes comes in clumps, so some weeks I will ask you to do more than this amount. Please plan ahead in order to keep up.

As you read, I encourage you to keep these questions in mind:

- What is the main argument (thesis) that the author is advancing?
- How does this argument fit within the broader themes of the course, and how does it relate to earlier readings?
- What evidence does the author use to make her case?
- Do you find this evidence compelling? Why, or why not?
- Do you find this argument compelling? Why, or why not?

Class Schedule:

September 6: Introduction to Labor and the Global Economy

Part I: Understanding globalization

September 13: What is globalization?

Hite, A. B., J. Timmons Roberts, and N. Chorev. 2014. "Globalization and Development: Recurring Themes." In *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change*. Pp. 1-18.

Rodrik, Dani. 1997. *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* Washington, D.C: Peterson Institute for International Economics. Pp. 1-28.

September 20: Technological accounts of globalization

Levinson, Marc. 2016. *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 13, 14.

Bonacich, Edna, and Jake Wilson. 2008. *Getting the Goods: Ports, Labor, and the Logistics Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1.

September 27: Political accounts of globalization

Evans, Peter. 2008. "Is an Alternative Globalization Possible?" *Politics & Society* 36(2):271-305.

Peter Evans and William H. Sewell, Jr. 2010. "The Neoliberal Era: Ideology, Policy, and Social Effects" in *Social Resilience in the Neo-Liberal Era*, Peter Hall and Michelle Lamont (eds.) Pp. 35-67

Part II: Globalization and jobs

October 4: When capital moves faster than people

Re-read Rodrik 1997, Ch 1-2

Harvey, David. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp. 121-189.

October 11: Global value chains

Gereffi, Gary, and Olga Memedovic. 2003. "The Global Apparel Value Chain: What Prospects for Upgrading by Developing Countries?" United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Gereffi, Gary, Martha Martinez, and Jennifer Bair. 2002. "Torreón: The New Blue Jeans Capital of the World." In *Free Trade and Uneven Development: The North American Apparel Industry After NAFTA*. Temple University Press. Pp. 203-222.

Film excerpt: Morgan, Andrew. 2015. *The True Cost*.

October 18: Shrinking unions and labor standards

Western, Bruce. 1999. *Between Class and Market: Postwar Unionization in the Capitalist Democracies*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 3-28, 176-192

Rosenfeld, Jake. 2014. *What Unions No Longer Do*. Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-30, 68-83.

October 25: Case study 1: Wal*Mart

Lichtenstein, Nelson. 2009. *The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business*. Metropolitan Books. Pp. 1-12, 46-69, 197-236

November 1: Case study 2: The automotive industry

Shaiken, Harley. 2009. "Motown Blues: What Next For Detroit?" *Dissent* Spring 2009 50-56

Zhang, Lu. 2014. *Inside China's Automobile Factories*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 23-80

Film excerpt: Moore, Michael. 1989. *Roger and Me*.

November 8: MID-TERM EXAM

No new readings this week.

Part III: Changing forms of labor protest

November 15: Global dynamics of labor protest

Silver, Beverly J. 2003. *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-66.

November 22: THANKSGIVING BREAK

No new readings this week.

November 29: New sites of protest

Chun, Jennifer Jihye. 2009. *Organizing at the Margins: The Symbolic Leverage of Labor in South Korea and the United States*, Cornell University Press. Pp. 1-23, 101-169.

Eli Friedman, "China in Revolt," *Jacobin*.

Film: Friedman, Eli. 2015. *Don't Cry Yue Yuen: A Labor Protest in China*.

December 6: The possibilities of global labor organizing

Evans, Peter. 2014. "National Labor Movements and Transnational Connections: Global Labor's Evolving Architecture Under Neoliberalism." *Global Labour Journal* 5(3).

McCallum, Jamie K. 2013. *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*. Cornell University Press. Pp. 1-47.

December 13: REVIEW—optional class discussion

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM: Available online December 15-22