

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES**  
**GSWS 2212G: Gender and the Future of Work**  
**WINTER 2024**

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships with Southwestern Ontario and the City of London. Within proximity of Western, there are 3 First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the wider region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all 11 of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

**Instructor:** Dr. Bipasha Baruah, Professor & Western Research Chair

**Email:** [bbaruah@uwo.ca](mailto:bbaruah@uwo.ca)

**Telephone:** 519-619-2111 (ext. 86316)

**Class Timing:** Mondays, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

**Office Hours:** Mondays: 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Thursdays: 1:30 to 2:30 pm, or by appointment.

**Class Format:** In-person weekly lectures and classroom discussion

**Course Description:** How can we manage transformative change at work, caused by multiple factors such as technology, demographics, climate change, pandemics, and globalization while ensuring economic security for all as well as environmental sustainability, gender equality and social justice? These are defining questions of our time, and researchers and policymakers from various disciplinary backgrounds as well as professional and political sensibilities are attempting to find answers. This course will mobilize intersectional, decolonial, feminist, and anti-capitalist scholarship to understand transformative changes to paid and unpaid work, their

effects upon gender equality and social justice, and future possibilities and challenges.<sup>1</sup>

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

This course seeks to enable students to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To enhance the breadth and depth of students' knowledge of how work (paid work, unpaid caring work, volunteer, and community service work) is changing globally and will continue to change in the future.
2. To understand the influences of technology, demographics, climate change, globalization, pandemics, new ways of working (remote, flex, hybrid, gig work, for example), and the evolution of social safety nets and social protection systems upon paid and unpaid work.
3. To understand and critically analyze implications for gender equality and social justice of such changes.
4. To optimize learning and critical thinking via course readings, lectures, documentary films, case studies, guest speakers, debates, written and verbal participation.
5. To provide students with the opportunity to relate course content to their daily lives, future studies, and careers.

### **Course Evaluation:**

1. Summary of motivation for taking this course (*Why did you take this course? What do you hope to get out of it?*). 100-word max: 10% (due by Jan 15, 2024)
2. Brief (80–100-word max) commentaries on 4 course topics (*What did you learn? What new questions do you have?*): 20% (due before class on the week after the topic is covered in class)
3. Personal Essay/Reflection on planning for the future of work (1,000-word max): 20% (due April 1, 2024)
4. 10-minute Presentation based on Personal Essay/Reflection: 20% (April 1 and 8, 2024)
5. Final Exam (take-home): 20% (April 11-30, 2024, TBA)

---

<sup>1</sup> There are topics that are entirely relevant for this course (such as the future of domestic and international migration; and the future of labour rights, unions, and other forms of organizing and mobilizing) that I may not be able to cover in class, but students are welcome to explore these topics in their essays and research presentations.

6. Class participation: 10% (throughout the semester)

### **Using Generative AI Language Apps**

ChatGPT and its various analogues are not “research help” nor are they “grammar checkers.” They produce text based on a predictive model as to what word is most likely to come next. When asked to cite “research,” they have no capacity to do actual research, so they invent articles and books. You may find yourself citing a work whose author and title are complete fictions; more often, the AI attributes its imaginary research paper to a real scholar, but not necessarily one who even works in the area. Using a Generative AI app may seem like an easy way to manage your time or to simplify your workload, but if you use it without acknowledging that you are doing so, you are cheating. You are also depriving yourself of the value of education, since by using ChatGPT you are not building your own skills in critical thinking, research, or communication, all of which are areas of significant interest to potential employers. In brief, if you use a Generative AI app to help with your assignment, you **must** identify every part of your assignment that you did not write yourself. Anything else is a violation of academic integrity and subject to all the same penalties as more traditional types of plagiarism. If ChatGPT use is suspected, you may be asked to show your rough work, to answer questions about your sources and your research process, and to explain your argument orally.

**Course Texts: (both are available online from Western Libraries, no need to purchase)**

Alexandrea J. Ravenelle. (2019). *Hustle and Gig: Struggling and Surviving in the Sharing Economy*. University of California Press

Reena Patel. (2010). *Working the Night Shift: Women in India's Call Center Industry*. Stanford University Press.

***I do not always agree with the readings I assign. You are not always expected to agree with them either. The readings are assigned to enable you to think critically and form your own opinions. Learning to read critically doesn't mean that you must always criticize what you're reading. It means engaging with and articulating both the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented.***

**Websites:**

1. **BBC Worklife:** <https://www.bbc.com/worklife>
2. **Time Magazine:** The Future of Work: Looking to the future of remote and hybrid work: <https://time.com/collection/future-of-work/>
3. **The Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) at the Rotman School of Management:** <https://www.gendereconomy.org/>

## Winter 2024 Course Schedule<sup>2</sup>

### Week 1: Jan 8, 2024: Work: Past, Present, Future

Chris Winters. (2022). The Past, Present, and Future of Work. *Yes Magazine*. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/work/2022/08/16/work-history-future>

*Future of Work*, PBS Documentary, 2021. Episode 1: The New Industrial Revolution

### Week 2: Jan 15, 2024: Work: Past, Present, Future

Fabian Stephany. (2023). Revisiting the Past, Present, and Future of Work. *Oxford Internet Institute*. <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news-events/news/revisiting-the-past-present-and-future-of-work/>

Royal Bank of Canada. (2018). *Humans Wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption*. <https://www.rbc.com/en/future-launch/resource-type/research-insights/humans-wanted-how-canadian-youth-can-thrive-in-the-age-of-disruption/>

*Future of Work*, PBS Documentary, 2021. Episode 2: Futureproof

*Future of Work*, PBS Documentary, 2021. Episode 3: Changing Work, Changing Workers

### Week 3: Jan 22, 2024: The Climate Crisis and Implications for Work

Bipasha Baruah, Reconciling Economic Security, Environmental Protection and Social Justice. *Huffington Post*. 1 April 2016.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/development-unplugged/reconciling-economic-security\\_b\\_9583020.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/development-unplugged/reconciling-economic-security_b_9583020.html)

---

<sup>2</sup> Links to some readings are included in the syllabus, others are posted as PDFs on OWL, and some are accessible online from Western libraries.

Bipasha Baruah. (2016). Renewable inequity? Women's employment in clean energy in industrialized, emerging and developing economies. *Natural Resources Forum* 41(1): 18-29.

Baruah, B. and S. Biskupski-Mujanovic. (2021). Closing the Gender Gaps in Energy Sector Recruitment, Retention and Advancement. In Webb, J., Tingey, M. & F. Wade (eds.) *Research Handbook on Energy and Society*. Edinburgh, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 169-184.

Short Research Videos on gender equality in the green economy:  
[https://publish.uwo.ca/~bbaruah/publications/research\\_videos.html](https://publish.uwo.ca/~bbaruah/publications/research_videos.html)

#### **Week 4: Jan 29, 2024: Sexuality, Dis/ability and the Future of Work**

Guest Speakers: Kat Newman and Melanie Stone

Christopher S. Carpenter, Samuel T. Eppink, Gilbert Gonzales. (2020). Transgender Status, Gender Identity, and Socioeconomic Outcomes in the United States. *LR Review* 73(3): 573–599.

Keith Bates, Dan Goodley & Katherine Runswick-Cole. (2017). Precarious lives and resistant possibilities: the labour of people with learning disabilities in times of austerity. *Disability & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1281105>

Kristen Schilt. (2011). (Chapter 6: Transgender Matters: The Persistence of Workplace Gender Inequality) *Just one of the guys?: Transgender men and the persistence of gender inequality*. University of Chicago Press.

#### **Week 5: Feb 5, 2024: Precarious and Gig Work**

Naciza Masikini, Anjali Singh and Bipasha Baruah. (2024 forthcoming). Gender Equity in the “Sharing” Economy: Possibilities and Limitations. Saraswati, L.A., Shaw, B. and H. Rellihan (eds). *Introduction to Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches (3rd Edition)*. New York and London: Oxford University Press.

Alexandrea J. Ravenelle, *Hustle and Gig*, Chapters 1,2,3,4

#### **Week 6: Feb 12, 2024: Precarious and Gig Work**

Alexandrea J. Ravenelle, *Hustle and Gig*, Chapters 5,6,7,8

Olivia Carville. 2021. Airbnb is spending millions of dollars to make nightmares go away. *Businessweek*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-06-15/airbnb-spends-millions-making-nightmares-at-live-anywhere-rentals-go-away>

### **Week 7: SPRING BREAK! No Class! (Feb 19-23)**

### **Week 8: Feb 26, 2024: Disruptive Technologies**

Guest Speaker: Nathalie Claire Diberardino

Documentary: *Coded Bias*

Joy Buolamwini, Artificial Intelligence Has a Problem with Gender and Racial Bias. Here's How to Solve It. *Time*, February 7, 2019. <https://time.com/5520558/artificial-intelligence-racial-gender-bias/>

Carmina Ravanera and Sarah Kaplan. 2022. An Equity Lens on Artificial Intelligence. The Rotman Institute for Gender and the Economy. <https://www.gendereconomy.org/artificial-intelligence/>

### **Week 9: March 4, 2024: Globalization and Work**

Reena Patel, *Working the Night Shift*, Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Off-Shoring Customer Service: A New Global Order, Chapter 8: Conclusion.

Reena Patel. 2014. Kenneth Bo Nielsen & Anne Waldrop (eds). Today's 'Good Girl': the women behind India's BPO industry. *Women, Gender and Everyday Social Transformation in India*. Anthem Press. pp. 21-32.

### **Week 10: March 11, 2024: New ways of working: Remote work, flexible work, part-time work, job sharing...**

Carmina Ravanera, Kim de Laat and Sarah Kaplan. (2022). The Future of Work: Will Remote Work Help or Hinder the Pursuit of Equality? Rotman Institute for Gender and the Economy: [https://www.gendereconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FutureofWork\\_GATE.pdf](https://www.gendereconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FutureofWork_GATE.pdf)

Tim Smedley, How shorter workweeks could save Earth. *BBC Worklife*. 7 August 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190802-how-shorter-workweeks-could-save-earth>

Maddy Savage, Why Finland leads the world in flexible work. *BBC Worklife*. 8 August 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190807-why-finland-leads-the-world-in-flexible-work>

### **Week 11: March 18, 2024: Pandemics and Work**

Guest Speaker: Andrea Burke

Christine Ro. Why this recession disproportionately affects women. *BBC Worklife*, 20 October 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20201021-why-this-recession-disproportionately-affects-women>

Kate Bahn, Jennifer Cohen and Yana van der Meulen Rodgers. (2020). A feminist perspective on COVID-19 and the value of care work globally. *Gender Work Organization* 27: 695–699.

Katherine Scott. (2021). Women, work and COVID-19: Priorities for supporting women and the economy. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. <https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/women-work-and-covid19>  
(Read the Executive Summary).

### **Week 12: March 25, 2024: Degrowth Perspectives on Work**

Paul Gallant, Deliberate Degrowth: *THIS*. 6 August 2020. <https://this.org/2020/08/06/deliberate-degrowth/>

Rebecca Solnit. What if climate change meant not doom — but abundance? *The Washington Post*. 15 March 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/03/15/rebecca-solnit-climate-change-wealth-abundance/>

Umair Haque. Why Artificial Scarcity is Killing You: How Predatory Capitalism Breaks Societies, Economies, and Minds. 20 July 2018. <https://eand.co/why-artificial-scarcity-is-killing-you-d19ff364c812>

Corinna Dengler and Birte Strunk. 2018. The Monetized Economy versus Care and the Environment: Degrowth Perspectives on Reconciling an Antagonism. *Feminist Economics* 24(3): 160–183.

Bipasha Baruah. 2021. “What does degrowth say about gender equality and social justice?” SSHRC Final Report and Evidence Brief: <https://www.sshrc->

[crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/ifca-iac/evidence-briefs-donnees-probantes/earth-carrying-capacity-capacite-limite-terre/baruah-eng.aspx](https://crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/ifca-iac/evidence-briefs-donnees-probantes/earth-carrying-capacity-capacite-limite-terre/baruah-eng.aspx)

**Week 13: April 1, 2024: Presentations**

**Week 14: April 8, 2024: Presentations**