

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 the region of 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 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

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Class Timing: Mondays, 1:30 to 4:30 pm

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 and gender equality and social justice? These are defining questions of our time, and researchers and policymakers from various disciplinary backgrounds, 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.

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 paid and unpaid work (caring domestic work, volunteer, and community service work, for example) are changing globally and will change in the future.
2. To understand and critically analyze implications for gender equality and social justice of such changes.
3. To optimize learning and critical thinking via course readings, lectures, films, case studies, guest speakers, debates, written and verbal participation.
4. To provide students with the opportunity to relate course content to their daily lives, future studies, and careers.

Course Evaluation:

1. Brief (500-word max) commentaries on 2 selected course readings: 10%
2. Midterm exam: 20%
3. Personal Essay/Reflection on Planning for the Future of Work: 20%
4. Research Presentation: 20%
5. Final Exam (take-home): 20%
6. Class participation: 10%

Course Themes and Topics:

1. Work: past, present, future
2. Gender, age, ethnicity/race, class, nationality, dis/ability and the future of paid and unpaid work
3. Global Demographic Shifts and implications for work
4. Globalization: past, present, future
5. Migration: domestic, transnational
6. The Climate Crisis and implications for work
7. Disruptive technologies: Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, The Internet of Things
8. Precarious work, the Gig Economy, "Sharing" Economy
9. Changing nature of work: Remote work, flexible work, part-time work, job sharing.
10. Labour rights, organizing and mobilizing workers for the future
11. Pandemics and work
12. Artificial Scarcity, Degrowth/economic contraction, a "post-work" world