

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
GSWS 2212G: Gender and the Future of Work (DRAFT SYLLABUS)
WINTER 2027

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 urban Indigenous population. Western recognizes the significant contributions of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada and commits to undoing historical and contemporary injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples.

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

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Class Timing: Thursdays, 10:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Office Hours: Thursdays: 2:00 pm to 4:00 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.¹

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), new transportation systems, 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.
6. To complete two micro-credentials on gender-based analysis and research ethics.

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: 5% (due Week 2)
2. Brief (100–150-word max) commentaries on 4 course topics (*What did you learn? What new questions do you have?*): 20% (two due before week 6, two due before week 12)
3. Personal Essay/Reflection on planning for the future of work (1,000-word max): 20% (due Week 12)
4. 10-minute Presentation based on Personal Essay/Reflection: 15% (Week 12 and 13)
5. Completing [Gender-based Analysis Plus certificate](#) and [TCPS 2: CORE-2022 \(Course on Research Ethics\)](#) (before last day of class): 10%
6. Class participation: 10% (throughout the semester)

¹ 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.

7. Final Exam (take-home): 20% (Date TBA)

Using Generative AI Language Apps

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 it 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 Generative AI 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: (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

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 2027 Course Schedule²

Week 1: 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>

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/>

Future of Work, PBS Documentary, 2021.

Week 2: Work in a Warming World

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

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

Bipasha Baruah. 2026. [How adopting green energy can restrain despots and dictators and make the world safer](#). *Toronto Star*, May 6.*

Christopher Pollon. 2023. Pitfall: The Race to Mine the World's Most Vulnerable Places. Greystone Books. (Read "Introduction: The City with a Heart of Gold" and "Where Do We Go from Here?")

Short Research Videos on gender equality in the green economy:
https://publish.uwo.ca/~bbaruah/publications/research_videos.html

Week 3: Precarious and Gig Work

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

Masikini, N, Singh A. and B. Baruah. 2026. Gender Equity in the "Sharing" Economy: Possibilities and Limitations. Saraswati, L.A., Shaw, B. and H. Rellihan (eds). *Introduction*

² Course readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be uploaded on Brightspace. It is the student's responsibility to access other readings online via the links provided or through Western libraries.

to *Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches (3rd Edition)*. New York and London: Oxford University Press.*

Week 4: Precarious and Gig Work (contd.).

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>

Documentary: *The Gig is Up*

Week 5: Sexuality, Dis/ability and the Future of Work

Guest Speaker: 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.

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.

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>

Week 6: Gender and Transport/Mobility

Alam, M.M, Kurshitashvili, N., Gonzalez K.D. & B. Baruah. 2022. [*Is a Mile for One a Mile for All? A Knowledge Synthesis Report on Gender and Mobility \(2000–20\)*](#). Washington DC: The World Bank.

Baruah, B. 2021. Women on Wheels in New Delhi, India: Can Social Innovation Promote Gender Equality? In Kim, E. & H. Miura (eds.) *Social Economy in Asia: Realities and Perspectives*. New York and London: Lexington Books. pp. 173-196.

Week 7: SPRING BREAK! No Class!

Week 8: 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

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>

Emily Peck, 'You Are Mommy Tracked to the Billionth Degree.' *Politico*. 15 November 2021. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/15/women-remote-work-penalty-solutions-520601>

Week 9: 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>

Baruah, B. & A. Burke. 2025. What does degrowth say about gender equality and social justice? In Buckingham, S. (ed.). *Feminist Climate Policy in Industrialized States: A Gender-Just Climate Emergency Response*. Routledge. Pp. 159-175.

Week 10: Pandemics and Work

Robson, D. The hero tax: Why 'selfless' workers are professionally exploited. *BBC Worklife*, 15 April 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20240409-heroic-jobs-earn-less-money>

Burke, A. [Who won and lost with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#). *Policy Options*, March 23, 2023.

Bipasha Baruah.

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 11: Disruptive Technologies

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/>

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/>

Documentary: *Coded Bias*

Week 12: Presentations

Week 13: Presentations

Week 14: Where do we go from here? Course Wrap-Up

FINAL EXAM DATE: TBA