



University
of Victoria

POLI 433/533 Transnational labour: workers, corporate power and resistance

Instructor Fall 2022: Dr. Marlea Clarke

Course delivery: Seminar, on campus, face-to-face; Tuesday, 11:30-14:20

Course description:

This course offers a broad overview of globalisation, corporate power, labour exploitation, workers, and resistance in global supply chains. It does so by examining the (re)working of the international division of labour; the rise of a transnational capitalist class; forced labour and other forms of worker exploitation; and various mechanisms to protect workers and challenge corporate power. The course takes a 'bottom up' approach by exploring forced labour, and precarious and migrant work in global supply chains, as well as worker and union resistance to inequality and exploitation. It also takes a 'top down' approach by examining the growing concentration of corporate power, and the processes and institutions that facilitate inequalities, exploitation, and insecurity in labour markets. These issues will be explored by drawing on a range of theoretical approaches and analytical lens (e.g. feminist, political economy, global commodity chain, and post-colonial theory) and through sector-based examples (e.g., food, beverages, clothing). Finally, the course will critically examine several strategies employed to shape or regulate labour markets and production, such as philanthro-capitalism, modern slavery laws, worker organising and forms of 'private' regulation, such as corporate social responsibility.

Prerequisites: None

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Understand key changes in capitalism linked to neo-liberal globalisation
- Discuss forced labour and other forms of exploitation in global supply chains
- Map some responses – by workers, governments, international organisations, and courts – to forced labour and exploitation in global supply chains
- Ability to articulate and refine your own ideas, both in writing and orally, particularly in response to feedback
- Increased awareness of your own and others' positions on key issues explored in the course and to position yourself within scholarly and policy debates.

Topics may include:

Transnational capitalist class, globalisation, forced labour, precarious employment, worker resistance, global commodity chains, philanthro-capitalism

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.