**Workers’ Rights in the Global Economy**

**UEP 223/DWA 223**

**Occidental College**

**Spring 2016**

**Tues & Thurs 3:05-4:30 p.m.**

Instructor: Virginia Parks, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs, 12-1:30 p.m.*
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* except the following dates: 1/26, 1/28, 2/16, 3/1, 3/22, 3/24, 4/19, 4/21. Please contact me by email to make an appointment on these dates.

**Course Description and Goals**

This course examines how globalization affects the lives of workers across the globe from a geographic and human rights perspective. The course analyzes the impact of changes in the global political economy over the last fifty years on workers’ rights, working conditions, and living standards, and evaluates strategies adopted by worker organizations and advocates in response to these changes. Students will gain a working knowledge of structural changes in the global economy by examining the geographic relocation of jobs and workers, the changing roles of firms and states, and the emergence of new legal regimes governing worker rights. Case studies are drawn from across the globe, including the U.S., focusing on commodity chains (e.g., apparel), regions (e.g., China), or specific populations (e.g., migrant workers). This foundational knowledge will enable students to analyze different strategies for change—linking worker rights to trade agreements, corporate social responsibility, transnational legal strategies, corporate campaigns, consumer boycotts—in order to better understand the possibilities and limitations of each for redressing the inequalities of globalization and shoring up the rights of workers.

**Course objective 1:** Speak intelligently about how structural changes in the global economy affect workers broadly. Speak intelligently about how legal regimes differently govern workers’ rights.

**Course objective 2:** Approach the conditions of work and labor across the globe from a critical perspective, understanding how to identify the political constructs of work, labor, and rights.

**Course objective 3:** Analyze strategies for change in order to identify possibilities and limitations for improving workers’ lives.

**Required Readings**

2. Electronically accessible journal articles are posted on the course’s Moodle site.

Suggested readings are not required but may be of interest for further research or for your final papers. Required readings form the basis of that class session’s discussion.
Course Requirements
You may choose one of two options to fulfill the requirements of this course:

Option 1:
Class participation 20% of final grade
Response to readings I 20% of final grade
Response to readings II 20% of final grade
Response to readings III 20% of final grade
Response to readings IV 20% of final grade

Option 2:
Class participation 20% of final grade
Response to readings I 20% of final grade
Response to readings II 20% of final grade
Final Paper 40% of final grade

Please see p. 3 of the syllabus for the course grading rubric. Occidental standards require students to spend 6-9 hours per week on this course outside of class (e.g., reading, writing, preparing, reviewing).

Class Participation:
The course is structured as a discussion seminar, therefore its success depends upon the active, informed participation of all seminar members. Absences will impact your class participation grade. Please approach this course as an opportunity to engage with both the readings and your peers in an open and deliberative manner. Productive discussions demand that we have completed the readings and mulled them over. In addition to comments, bring questions (remember: sometimes readings are unclear or ambiguous; sometimes they contain difficult arguments that we need help parsing). Most importantly, we will engage classroom discussion in a spirit of open inquiry, informed debate, and tolerance. We won't always agree, but we need to learn to understand differing and different perspectives. Please remember that our focus in the course is the texts and case studies, and not the personalities, identities, or opinions of other participants in the discussion. It should go without saying that remarks directed at the age, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or other perceived status of the participants are not only irrelevant and potentially hurtful but also degrade our experience as a group. Be mindful.

Response-to-readings papers:
For each week’s required readings, I will write a question or set of questions that address the main themes and issues presented in those readings. You will write a three- to four-page response to my question/s comprised of short answers and/or an essay. Your response paper is due at the beginning of class for which it is assigned. Please hand in a hard copy and post your response to Moodle. Usually questions later in the semester will require single essay responses. Attend to developing a strong thesis statement, providing evidence from the readings, and writing mechanics.

I will assign you due dates for all of your response papers after the first week of class. You must write a response paper for the first two sets of readings to which you are assigned. After your second response paper, you must decide if you will continue with Option 1 or 2 described above to fulfill the requirements for the course. If you miss your third response paper deadline, you must pursue Option 2 (i.e., write a final paper). No exceptions.

Option 2 final paper: Due Tuesday, May 3 at 3:00 p.m.
In a 10- to 12-page paper, critically assess a labor and human rights problem or initiative of your choosing. You must situate this problem or initiative in relation to course concepts and readings. I strongly recommend meeting with me to discuss your final paper topic no later than two weeks before the due date.

All papers should be double-spaced with 12-point font and are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized by one-third a grade for every 12 hours (e.g., B+ to B). No exceptions. Please post your paper to Moodle and turn in a hardcopy to my mailbox in the UEP office.
Grading Rubric:
I want you to become informed, confident, and engaged citizens of the world. Your effective and strategic action stems from a strong foundation of critical thinking skills. I want you to understand the amount of time, the commitment of research, and the depth of thinking it takes to consider any topic or issue thoroughly. In the end, I wish for you to become skilled, deep, and confident thinkers. Every aspect of this course is designed to build these skills and habits because, in the long run, the person you become at the end of this class—or at the end of your career at Oxy—matters more than any grade you receive. In sum, I hope you become less focused on letter grades and instead that you become completely obsessed with developing these skills and habits and cultivating your intellectual identity.

That said, I also see value in grades. They are a measurement of aptitude that should direct your interests and your future pursuits, so I take them very seriously. When assessing grades, I use the following standards:

A
Multi-faceted and thoughtful reflections on course material; excellent depth of critical analysis; sophisticated and creative reading of primary sources; engagement with scholarship; well-constructed arguments; cogent, clear, and persuasive speaking and writing

**Participation**—student participates frequently; demonstrates thorough preparation and a firm grounding in the course material; demonstrates an ability to analyze readings and to clearly articulate her analysis, an ability to understand the subtle logic of a range of positions, and an ability to synthesize course material over the semester

student goes well beyond the requirements of the course. Overall, I’m thoroughly impressed!

B
Good to Very Good reflection, analysis, and use of sources; well-constructed arguments; solid speaking and writing skills

**Participation**—student participates regularly; demonstrates a good deal of preparation and a good handle on the course material; frequently offers interesting insights and intriguing interpretations of our sources; demonstrates an ability to connect readings/ideas across the semester

student meets requirements of the course competently, offering a smattering of insights!

C
Satisfactory; student can summarize course material and has made fair attempts at analysis; analysis and critique may require further development or coherence, thinking may still be a bit unnuanced, and/or ideas may be difficult to understand due to issues of speaking and writing

**Participation**—student participates regularly; demonstrates a good deal of preparation and a good handle on the course material; s/he can adequately summarize readings, but might not offer well-formed analysis and critique; every so often offers interesting insights

student meets requirements of the course to my satisfaction

D
Unsatisfactory; student reads course material but does not understand it at a satisfactory level; student completes course assignments but they do not evidence adequate understanding, analysis, or preparation

**Participation**—student participates occasionally, though s/he demonstrates inadequate preparation, makes comments that are not based in readings, and/or offers ideas with scant support

student made some effort to meet minimum requirements

F
Student fails to meet the minimum requirements of the course

**Participation**—little to no participation

** If you have any questions about course policies or expectations, please see me right away—before you run into any problems! **
**Email Policy**
I answer student emails M-F at 4:30 p.m. Be sure to email me before 4:30 p.m. if you need a response the same day. Please do not expect me to answer your emails in the middle of the night or an hour or two before an assignment is due!

**Writing Support Services**
We can all use help sharpening our writing skills. I strongly encourage you to utilize the writing support services provided by the Center for Academic Excellence, particularly for your response-to-readings papers requiring a single essay response and your final paper (if you are writing one). Drop-in hours are posted here:
http://www.oxy.edu/center-academic-excellence/drop-hours-only

**Academic Ethics**
Read full policy statement here:
http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics

**Plagiarism Defined**
Plagiarism occurs when the ideas, organization, or language of another are incorporated into one’s work without properly crediting the original source with a citation or other disclosure. It includes re-writing or re-formatting material without acknowledging the original source of the ideas. Even if the language and organization are in the student’s own words, any ideas or information that are not common knowledge must be acknowledged in a reference. Students are responsible for knowing and using the correct procedures for acknowledging and identifying sources of borrowed material. Failure to properly credit sources in all or part of work presented in draft or final form to anyone is plagiarism, regardless of whether it occurs as a result of dishonest intent or carelessness and regardless of the course credit attached to it. As a student scholar, if you:

- Quote directly from a source: you must enclose the quoted material, even if it is no more than a phrase or a single distinctive word (such as a neologism), within quotation marks, and provide a reference.
- Paraphrase, i.e., restate the material in your own words: (a) the paraphrasing must represent a substantial change from the original, not just the changing of occasional words and phrases, and (b) you must provide a reference.
- Present material that is common knowledge, but borrow someone else’s organizational pattern: you must acknowledge that borrowing in a reference.

Penalties for academic misconduct are severe (see “Academic Misconduct”), and ignorance of the principles and policies concerning cheating and plagiarism is not a defense. Students with any doubts at all about whether an action or piece of academic work involves academic misconduct should consult their instructors before committing the action or submitting the work.

**Disability Services**
Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments can contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support.

**Occidental Sexual Misconduct Policy and Resources**
Policy: http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-assault-resources-support/policies-procedures

24/7 Confidential Hotline: (323) 341-4141
Campus Safety Emergency Line: (323) 259-2511
Dean of Students Office: (323) 259-2661
Thurs 1/21: Introduction
Questions for the course: What do we mean by rights and especially workers' rights? What is globalization? What is the relationship between globalization and workers' rights?

Tues 1/26: Globalization and Workers' Rights

Thurs 1/28: Workers and Rights
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Bourgeois and Proletarians,” *The Communist Manifesto*
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm
http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/addams/hullhouse/hullhouse-10.html

Tues 2/2: Workers’ Rights in the U.S.

Arise Chicago, *Workers’ Rights Manual*

Thurs 2/4: Workers’ Rights as Human Rights
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble and Article 23
International Labor Organization “Introduction to International Labor Standards” (peruse)
International Labor Organization, Convention 87
International Labor Organization, Convention 98

Tues 2/9: Workers’ Rights as Human Rights
Seidman, *Beyond the Boycott.* Chpt. 2: “Labor Rights as Human Rights.”

Thurs 2/11: Global Capitalism
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/commodity.htm
Read up to Marx's discussion of the form of value. When you get to the following sentence, stop: 
"Since up to now it has only been the substance of value and the magnitude of value which have been specified, let us now direct our attention to the analysis of the form of value."

https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm - S4
Tues 2/16: Global Capitalism

Recommended: Business Week “How I Helped Move a Factory to Mexico”

Thurs 2/18: Commodity Chains
Apple as a case:


http://bostonreview.net/dara-o%27rourke-apple-foxconn-labor-standards

Tues 2/23: The Sweatshop


Thurs 2/25: Rights and Sweatshops
Human Rights Watch. 2015. “’Whoever Raises their Head Suffers the Most’: Workers’ Rights in Bangladesh’s Garment Factories.”


http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/after-bangladesh-labor-unions-can-save-lives/2013/05/26/77a8809c-c483-11e2-914f-a7aba60512a7_story.html

Tues 3/1: Remsen Bird Fund Guest Speaker
Chancee Martorell, Founder and Executive Director, Thai Community Development Center
http://thaicdc.org/about/staff/

Thurs 3/3: Workers’ Rights through Trade Agreements
ILO, United States Free Trade Agreements


Suggested:

**Tues 3/8**  NO CLASS/Spring Break

**Thurs 3/10**  NO CLASS/Spring Break

**Tues 3/15: Codes of Conduct and Corporate Social Responsibility**
Look at the following websites:
- United Students Against Sweatshops, [http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org/](http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org/)
- International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation, [www.itglwf.org](http://www.itglwf.org)
- Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, [http://www.iccr.org/](http://www.iccr.org/)


Suggested:

**Thurs 3/17**

**Tues 3/22**

Thurs 3/24
Seidman. *Beyond the Boycott*. Chapter 5. “Constructing a Culture of Compliance in Guatemala.”

Tues 3/29

Thurs 3/31: No Class

Tues 4/5: Migrant Workers’ Rights: The U.S. Case


Thurs 4/7: No Class

Tues 4/12: Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Juridical Condition and Rights of the Undocumented Migrants. Advisory Opinion OC-18 of September 17, 2003, pp. 101-114. [http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/serie_a_18_ing.pdf](http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/serie_a_18_ing.pdf)


Thurs 4/14: IACHR Cases


Suggested:

Tues 4/19: Transnational Labor Citizenship
Read pp. 503-550.

Thur 4/21: Transnational Labor Citizenship
Gordon continued. Read pp. 551-587.
**Tues 4/26: Global Unions**
http://www.jstor.org/stable/40342665

http://dissentmagazine.org/issue/?issue=42

*Suggested:*

**Thurs 4/28: Synthesis and Review**
Additional Resources:

Trade Agreements:

http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode19/uscode_sup_01_19_10_12_20_V.html

North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation  


The Inter-American System for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights  

Review the basic documents at:  
See also:  
http://www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic.TOC.htm
Focus on:
1. American Declaration of The Rights and Duties of Man, Art. XIV
2. American Convention on Human Rights, Articles 16, 46, 63

The Alien Tort Claims Act

Terry Collingsworth, “Using The Alien Tort Claims Act To Hold Multinationals Accountable For Human Rights Violations In U.S. Federal Courts”

Alien Tort Statute, 28 U.S.C. § 1350,  
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode28/uscode_sec_28_00001350----000-.html

Doe I v. Unocal Corp., U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, 2002,  

Resolution of Doe v. Unocal, 2005  
http://www.earthrights.org/legal/doe-v-unocal