

Migrant Workers and Human Rights

Sample of the Fall 2011 term offering

Human Rights & Equity Studies, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, York University

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Course Overview	
Week 1. September 12	Course Introduction
The Fault Lines: Labour Migration and Global Apartheid	
Week 2. September 19	Workers on the Move
Week 3. September 26	Mapping the Geopolitics of Displacement <i>[Film: El Norte]</i>
Oh Canada: Native Land, Migrante Country	
Week 4. October 3	The Shift Towards Disposable Workers, Disposable Peoples
Week 5. Co-curricular Week -no class on October 10	
Week 6. October 17	Unwelcomed Guests at our Thanksgiving Table? Migrant Farm Workers <i>[Documentary: El Contrato]</i> <i>[Proposal Due]</i>
Week 7. October 24	Women Serving the Nation: Latina Exotic Dancers and Filipina Nannies: Trafficking and Migration <i>[test review]</i>
Week 8. October 31	Mid-term test <i>[Return of Proposals]</i>
Human Rights Violations, Human Rights Delusions	
Week 9. November 7	Inter/national Human Rights Protocols and Migrant Workers <i>[Guest Speaker]</i>
Week 10. November 14	The Other Side of Migration: Communities and Families Left Behind and those Without Status
Migrant Workers Fight Back: Allies, Agency and Resistance	
Week 11. November 21	From the Margins of the Rural: Migrant Farm Workers United
Week 12. November 28	Organizing within the Global City <i>[Documentary: Made in L.A.]</i> <i>[Case Study Essay Due]</i> <i>[test review]</i>
Week 13. December 5	Conclusion: Final in class test

Course Evaluation Breakdown

Class Engagement (Attendance, Participation, Two Readings Summaries): 20%

Mid-term test: 20%: October 31st

Case Study Proposal: 15%: October 17

Case Study Essay: 25%: Due November 28

Final test: 20%: December 5

Course Description

In the last few decades globalization has produced displacement and the urgency of movement for millions of people in order to secure a livelihood. In this context, people from the Third World have to contend with particular ways of moving, living and working in the global economy.

This course will explore precarious forms of labour migration that exploit race, class, gender and sexuality to create a highly vulnerable and disposable class of workers that violate basic human rights at every turn. We will focus primarily on the North American context while taking cues from other regions of the world where the First World and the Third World collide.

The Canadian context is of particular importance, where *marginalized migrant workers* (as opposed to formally-processed immigrants accepted under the Canadian point system, or migrants admitted under special programs with marketable professional skills) are rendered stateless through the denial of fundamental human rights.

In the first section of the course, we explore key concepts and theories of labour migration. The second section turns specifically to the Canadian context and the federal government's Temporary Foreign Worker Programs. In the third section we turn to international migrant rights protocols and their limits and possibilities for the lives of migrant workers and their families. The concluding section turns to re-conceptualizations of human rights by migrant workers and their allies through diverse models of organizing from the countryside to the global city.

Course Objectives

This course intends for students to:

- Understand the causes and functions of precarious labour migration
- Discern the relevancy of international human rights protocols seeking to promote the human rights of migrant workers and their families
- Inspect the ways in which migrant workers resist, adapt and assert their agency in precarious labour migration
- Engage in the movement for im/migrant workers' rights in Canada and/or in the international context