Topics in Comparative Politics I:
Globalization, Automation, and Labour

Winter 2024
Political Science 438H1S
Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
SS 2114

(January 9, 2024 version)

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. and by appointment

This seminar examines the prominent sources of labour precarity and how workers — across different institutional settings — respond to these threats. The course covers phenomena such as workplace technological change/automation, international trade, and the economic rise of China, as well as their consequences, including growing inequality, the revival of the radical right, protectionism, and demand for redistributive policies.

Course requirements

50% of your course grade will come from two short papers (2-3 pages, double spaced or roughly 500-750 words). These short paper assignments require that you produce op-ed style writing that facilitate the use of research knowledge beyond academia “in such a way that may benefit users and create positive impacts within Canada and/or internationally, and, ultimately, has the potential to enhance the profile, reach and impact of social sciences and humanities research” (language taken from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). These articles should inform “public debate/policies as well as decisions and/or processes of people in businesses, government, the media, practitioner communities and civil society.”

Review the op-ed sections of prominent news outlets (e.g., WaPo, the New York Times), (the former) Monkey Cage, Good Authority, and the Conversation for examples. You are expected to select a topic related to the course and use the assigned readings. You are encouraged to use additional sources to support your arguments. Use hyperlinks to link readers to the sources you used. These papers should be submitted via Quercus. You must submit:

1) Short paper 1 by February 14
2) Short paper 2 by March 20

10% of your course grade will be based on an oral presentation of one of the short papers of your choice to the class during either week 11 or week 12.

The remaining 40% will be based on seminar participation (including the presentation weeks) (20%) and online discussion (20%). Students are required to use the online annotation tool
Perusall. Perusall allows students to interact and learn from each other as they complete the assigned readings. Students should aim to complete a minimum of 2 high-quality annotations per reading to receive full credit for this component (more is encouraged). Annotations must be completed prior to our scheduled class time to receive credit.
- To set up Perusall, create an account at https://perusall.com/ and use access code WU-XJ7V7. Alternatively, use this link: https://app.perusall.com/join/wu-xj7v7.
- General Instructions about using Perusall: link

Required readings will be made available on Perusall.

Late penalty and re-marking policy

Late penalties for the paper assignments are 3 percent per day, including weekends. Days will be rounded up to the next whole number (e.g., 0.5 days late will be treated as 1 day late).

If you think you have been graded unfairly, you will have 72 hours to provide a written note to explain why a grade adjustment is warranted. A re-marking might result in a higher, the same, or a lower grade than what you have been initially awarded.

Annotations on Perusall must be completed prior to our scheduled class time to receive credit.

Inclusion and special accommodation

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach Accessibility Services (accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) and/or me as soon as possible. Developed jointly by you and your accessibility advisor, a letter of accommodation maintains confidentiality about the nature of your disability but informs me about relevant accommodations needed to help you be successful in the course.

Religious observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during the academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Absences

Absences due to illness will not be penalized if appropriate documentation is provided. For illness: https://registrar.utoronto.ca/policies-and-guidelines/verification-of-illness-or-injury/#:~:text=The%20Verification%20of%20Illness%20or,based%20on%20illness%20or%20injury.
Academic integrity

The University treats cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to the University’s plagiarism detection tool website for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the University’s plagiarism detection tool reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the University’s plagiarism detection tool service are described on the company web site.

Use of generative AI in assignments

You are not explicitly prohibited from using generative AI in your paper assignments. However, you are accountable for the work you submit (e.g., factual accuracy as AI tools are known to “hallucinate”). If you used generative AI, you must submit, as an appendix with your assignment, documentation of what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. You must also identify your original contributions (versus the AI tool’s output). Unedited outputs generated by AI based on generic prompts will typically not be evaluated favorably.

I consider the use of generative AI counterproductive to your learning if you rely heavily on AI tools for (1) summarizing readings (to avoid reading yourself or critically engaging with the texts), (2) generating a large portion of your submitted work (as opposed to synthesizing texts, coming up with arguments, and writing yourself), (3) generating responses in-class (as opposed to reacting organically to your peers; in real life, you do not always have access to a computer when engaging with others).

Copyright and privacy in instructional settings

If students wish to audio record, video record, photograph, or otherwise reproduce lectures, course notes or other similar materials provided by instructors, they must obtain the instructor’s written consent beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. In the case of private use by students with accommodation needs, they must have registered for the accommodation through AccServ.
Tentative seminar schedule and readings (will be finalized by January 17)

Week 1 – Introduction (Jan 10)
No readings

Week 2 – Technological change I: Historical and economic perspective – Comparing technology in the past vs now vs future? (Jan 17)

Week 3 – Technological change II: Public Opinion and politics (Jan 24)

Week 4 – Politics of the new digital/tech economy (Jan 31)

*FIRST SET OF PERUSAL GRADES*

Week 5 – Backlash against green technology and policies (Feb 7)
Quick background on electric vehicles and jobs: https://www.axios.com/2023/11/02/uaw-contracts-electric-cars-batteries

**Week 6 – Globalization I: Open Economy Politics and Trade (Feb 14)**

Reading week (Feb 21)

**Week 7 – Globalization II: Immigration and exclusionary pressures (Feb 28)**

*SECOND SET OF PERUSAL GRADES*

**Week 8 – Crisis of embedded liberalism (and welfare)? (Mar 6)**

**Week 9 – What do the people want (Mar 13)**

**Week 10 – Labour precarity and resistance in the developing world (Mar 20)**


Dulay, Dean, Janica Magat, and Mateo Villamizar Chaparro. “Precarity and preferences for redistribution in weak states: Evidence from the Philippines” (working paper).

*THIRD SET OF PERUSAL GRADES*

**Week 11 – Student presentations (Mar 27)**

No readings

**Week 12 – Student presentations (Apr 3)**

No readings