
Labour Studies Program



Report 2003-4

A growing and exciting program of studies

Program options

The Labour Studies Program now offers a variety of degree options for students interested in labour studies:

- Honours BA [120 credits]
- Honours (Double Major) BA
- Honours (linked Double-Major) BA
- Honours (Major/Minor) BA
- Honours (Minor) BA
- BA [90 credits]

The Labour Studies Program is housed in the Division of Social Science in the Faculty of Arts.

Labour Studies is also one of the streams (along political science, mathematics and statistics, psychology, sociology, and others) offered as part of the BA and the Honours BA in Business and Society, also housed in the Faculty of Arts.

What is Labour Studies?

Labour Studies is an interdisciplinary exploration of the world of work and workers from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

Labour Studies casts a wide net investigating all aspects of work involving paid and unpaid labour, the study of unions (including collective bargaining and grievance processing), the labour movement, working class communities, workplace diversity and all aspects of state regulation of employment, labour-management relations, and working life.

Scholarships and awards

Labour Studies students are eligible for many scholarships and awards offered by York University, the Faculty of Arts and the Division of Social Science. In addition there are scholarships just for Labour Studies students.

The Neil Reimer Award is awarded annually by the Centre for Research on Work and Society and the Labour Studies Program to the third year student majoring in Labour Studies who has achieved the highest grade-point average. No application is necessary. The award is financed by the Neil Reimer Union Education and Development Fund, a fund

established in 1984 by the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union to honour their founding National Director.

A second scholarship only for Labour Studies students is currently being developed. This award will recognize students who have contributed to their communities as well as maintained solid grades in university. More details will follow shortly.

What can I do with a Labour Studies degree?

A degree in Labour Studies prepares students for employment in the labour movement, private industry, government service, journalism, public or private administration, social work, law, and teaching.

Many Labour Studies Program graduates begin careers in labour relations, human resources, or related fields, usually after postgraduate study either at the Master's level (e.g. the Master of Industrial Relations programs offered by the University of Toronto and

Queen's University) or the postgraduate certificate in Human Resource Management available at several colleges and universities.

Some graduates attend law school and practice labour and/or human rights law. Others have pursued graduate studies in political science, history, economics and business at universities in Canada and abroad.

Labour Studies professors

Prof. Jan Kainer is Coordinator of the Labour Studies Program, and teaches SOSC 2210 9.0 *Labour Relations in Canada: An Introduction* and the placement course. She recently presented a paper on the experience of marginalized youth in a York University and Seneca College bridging program at the Work and Learning Network conference in Edmonton. She is also involved in the Union Module for the Gender Work Database at York University.

Prof. Paul Craven teaches SOSC 3380 6.0 *Law, Labour and the State*, and the core honours course SOSC 4210 6.0 *Collective Bargaining Simulation*, as well as a graduate course on Workplace Citizenship.

He is a member of York's graduate programs in History, Sociology, and Human Resource Management, and of the Ontario Labour-Management Arbitrators Association. His most recent book, coauthored with Prof. Douglas Hay, *Masters, Servants and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, is to be published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2004. For more information on

Prof. Craven's research and teaching please visit:
www.arts.yorku.ca/sosc/pcraven.

Prof. Craig Heron teaches SOSC 3210 6.0 *The Working Class in Canadian Society* and in 2004-5 will add SOSC 3980 3.0 *Workers' Organizations*. He has a new book on the history of drinking in Canada and another in press on Labour Day as a workers' festival. He is currently completing a manuscript on the social life of working-class Hamilton between 1890 and 1940.

He has recently presented papers at the Canadian Committee on Labour History's Workshop on Gender and the Labour Movement, the Canadian Historical Association annual meetings, the Trent University conference on "Writing Canadian Labour," the North American Labor History Conference, and the New Brunswick Museum. He continues to edit the *Themes in Canadian Social History* series for the University of Toronto Press. He has just retired from the board of the Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre after 15 years of active participation.

Prof. Thomas Klassen is teaching the newest Labour Studies courses: diversity issues in the workplace, and strategies of social research. He is currently co-authoring a book manuscript titled *Fashioning Labour Market Regimes: Parties, Institutions and Globalization in Canada* and co-editing a book on mandatory retirement. In the summer of 2003 he co-authored papers presented at conferences in Vancouver, Halifax and Montreal. He also conducted several weeks of research in Germany in June and July.

Labour Studies courses for 2004-05

Social Science 1510 9.0 *The Future of Work* - Prof. Thomas Klassen

Social Science 2210 9.0 *Labour Relations in Canada: An Introduction* - Prof. Jan Kainer

Social Science 3210 6.0 *The Working Class in Canadian Society* - Prof. Craig Heron

Social Science 3240 3.0 *Labour and Globalization: North American Perspectives* - Prof. Jan Kainer

Social Science 3241 3.0 *Labour and Globalization II: Comparative Perspectives* - Prof. Thomas Klassen

Social Science 3380 6.0 *Law, Labour and the State* - Prof. Paul Craven

Social Science 3980 3.0 *Workers' Organizations* - Prof. Craig Heron

Social Science 3981 3.0 *Diversity Issues in the Workplace* - Prof. Thomas Klassen

Social Science 3993 3.0 *Strategies of Social Research* - Prof. Thomas Klassen

Social Science 3164 6.0 *Occupational and Environmental Health* - Prof. Barbara Beardwood

Social Science 4210 6.0 *Collective Bargaining Simulation* - Prof. Paul Craven

Social Science 4240 6.0 *Labour Studies Placement* - Prof. Jan Kainer

Social Science 4250 6.0 *Special Topics in Labour Studies* - TBA

Unique work placement course

The Labour Studies program offers students the opportunity to earn course credits by working for a union or labour friendly organization one day per week.

The Labour Studies Work Placement course (4240) is open to all labour studies majors or minors and is a mandatory capstone course for Honours students in the program.

The rationale for the course is to introduce students to the practical side of the world of trade unionism, to complement their existing courses by exposing them to the realities of industrial relations, and to help prepare students for entry into the labour market. In some cases, students are able to secure summer internships or even full-time employment after their work placement.

The course combines field experience with a seminar in which students share their knowledge in structured presentations. By coming together to exchange their views and share their particular experiences, they begin to appreciate how their work situation is often times similar to others in different organizations.

Over the years, students have worked in a wide range of public and private sector unions representing unionized workers in a variety of occupations and industries including the auto, garment, education, steel, hotel and restaurant and food retail sectors. A few unions that have a long standing relationship with the labour studies program include the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and

the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP).

The Labour Studies program has also been very fortunate to have the support of several trade unionists that have volunteered their time to supervise students in the placement program. For a number of years Pearl McKay Blake at UFCW, Vic Morden at CEP and Alexandra Dagg at UNITE have consistently offered their services and professional training in ensuring students have a positive educational experience at their union.

In addition to working at trade unions, some students have been placed with a law firm, Sack, Goldblatt and Mitchell, which specializes in labour law. Others have worked with labour friendly organizations such as the Toronto Training Board and community groups such as the Council of Agencies Servicing South Asians (CASSA) and the Metro Network for Social Justice (MNSJ).

The benefits of a work study course are best expressed by students themselves. As the following excerpts explain, most students appreciate the “real life” experience of working inside a labour organization:

It wasn't until I was placed in a union that I really began to learn what labour relations really means!

Not only did the work placement give me the privilege of experiencing first hand some of the realities of the union movement, but alongside this path I have noticeably improved skills I have struggled with in the past.

The labour studies placement class has been the best experience for me, as it is a chance to use all the skills gained in real life scenarios.

From the 2002-3 graduates

“I would recommend the labour studies program either as a major or part of the business and society program to any student entering university and not sure of what they want to do. It is a great opportunity for students to get a good grasp on issues affecting labour on a world scale.”

- Solace Myers

“My four years as a Labour Studies and Sociology major at York has been the most interesting and eye opening experience of my life. Through this program I have gained the skills and knowledge to go forward and pursue my future academic and career objectives. The labour Studies Placement class has been the best experience for me, as it is a chance to use all the skills gained in real life scenarios.”

- Adina Furman

“Over the past four years I have learned a great deal from my professors, lecturers, teaching assistants, and my fellow students. The Labour Studies Program has taught me how to analyze the world through the eyes of the working class. The readings, assignments and discussions provided an insightful understanding of how Canada has benefited from workers acting collectively.”

- Aftab Sheikh

“Being a part of the Labour Studies Program through my major, Business and Society, has benefited me tremendously over the last four years. Not only has it provided me with a solid educational background,

it has given me the tools needed to assess and understand the many social, political and economic issues that continue to develop in our time.

- Natalie Lorini

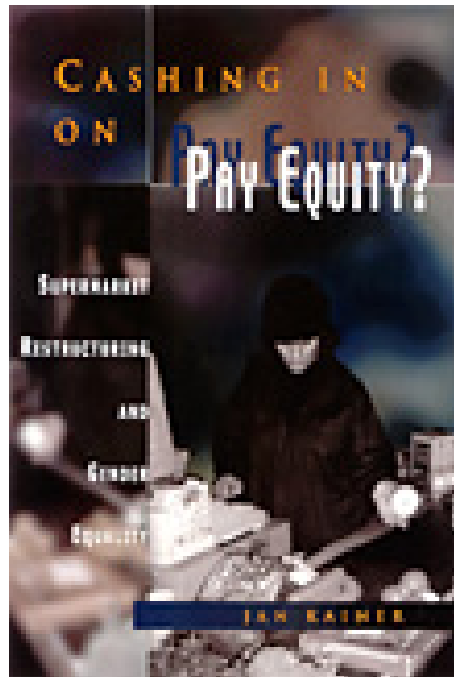
What else do Labour Studies students do?

Some Labour Studies students become involved with the Working Student Centre at York University. The Centre is run by student volunteers who offer advice to working students experiencing problems at work such as on wages, vacation time, discrimination and other issues. The Working Student Centre is located at 276 York Lanes. Its web site is:
www.yorku.ca/wstudent.

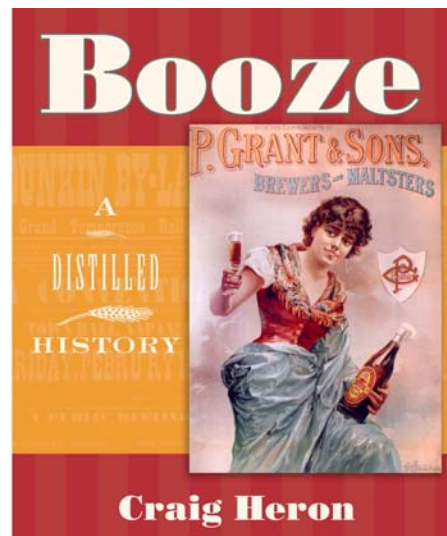
Labour Studies students have also formed their own association. The Labour Studies Student Association organizes events for program majors at York University, and advises the Program Coordinator about student interests and needs. The web site for the Association is:
www.yorku.ca/lssa.

Students play a role as co-editors of the *Labour Studies Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* is a way for current students, alumni, faculty and others interested in labour studies to share information and to keep in touch. Past issues of the *Labour Studies Newsletter* can be accessed at:
www.arts.yorku.ca/sosc/labour/newsletter.html.

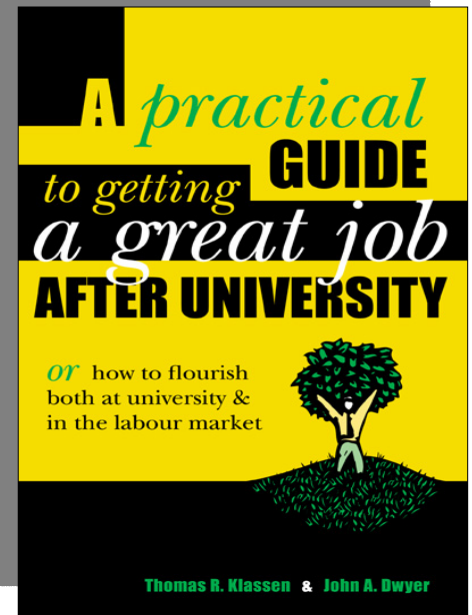
Recent books by Labour Studies professors



CASHING IN ON PAY EQUITY?
Supermarket Restructuring and Gender Equality
by Jan Kainer



BOOZE: A DISTILLED HISTORY
by Craig Heron



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GETTING A GREAT JOB AFTER UNIVERSITY
Or How to Flourish both at University & the Labour Market
By Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer

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Additional copies of this report may be accessed at the above web site.