

SGO44xx POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF WORK

Start: Autumn 2014

Type: MA course, 10 points

Teaching language: English

Course convenor: David Jordhus-Lier

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, you will learn about the political nature of work. Some of the most crucial issues of today – whether it is immigration, austerity reforms or climate change – can also be understood as politics of work. While labour traditionally has been a focus of economic geographers, the study of work can also benefit from perspectives and concepts drawn from political geography. Jobs and worker rights are at the centre of processes of democratisation and citizen-making around the world, and draw state actors, civil society actors and workers into interaction and contention.

Following from the labour geography tradition, this course will focus on the agency of labour, i.e. their ability to make a difference. Workers often make a difference through their movements. Movements in this respect can be understood in two ways, as *mobilities* and *mobilisations*. On the one hand, worker mobilities are transforming local and global labour markets, and are accompanied by new forms of politics. On the other hand, workers and their organisations continue to shape the agendas of social movements and political transformations. In this course, we will pay attention to both these aspects, and lecturers will draw from their research experience in different countries across a variety of political domains in their teaching. In the lectures and readings, you will encounter Chinese migrant workers, employees in the European aviation industry, hotel workers in the Oslo region and people with casual jobs in Southern Africa. You will also learn why geographical perspectives can help you better understand their strategies and possibilities in a changing world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge

You will learn

- to understand the political nature of work, and the spatial nature of workers' politics, both in concrete applied circumstances and on a more abstract level.
- to acknowledge the significance of workers' own actions and strategies, individually and collectively, on institutions, markets and governance regimes.
- to understand the complex relationships between work and democracy, within and beyond the realm of industrial relations.

Skills

You will be encouraged

- to apply spatial concepts to your analysis, to better understand and explain the reach, unevenness, mobilities and place attachments of workers.

- to assess the relevance and applicability of theories and concepts from human geography and other social sciences to explain the politics of work.
- to actively engage in written, oral and conversational discussions on the politics of work through seminar activity.
- to demonstrate these knowledge and skills through producing an independent academic text (course assignment).

General competences

This course will enable you

- to understand and explain current challenges of work and employment in democratic, undemocratic and democratising societies across the world, by making use of state of the art research in the discipline

TEACHING

This course is taught at the University of Oslo, Blindern campus. Other locations in Oslo may be used.

Teaching is based on 12 lectures, given in English, and are accompanied by 5 seminars. In the seminars, students get the opportunity to discuss the lectures and curriculum texts, as well as seminar exercises students are encouraged to upload to Fronter in advance of each seminar.

Teaching takes place in the early part of each autumn semester, as outlined in the course plan.

EXAMINATION

Assessment is based on a term paper that students will work on throughout the semester. The topic for the term paper is decided by each student in consultation with the course instructor(s), and must be within the thematic focus of the course. The *maximum length* of the term paper is 15 pages (plus references and notes), using 12 point letter size and a spacing of lines 1 1/2.

Students are required to submit a *minimum of 2 seminar exercises* in order to be eligible to submit the course assignment.

LANGUAGE OF EXAMINATION

The students can choose whether they will write the paper in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Danish.

GRADING SCALE

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](#).

Examination results are available in StudentWeb three weeks after the date of submission, if no other information is given on the semester page of the current semester.

RECOMMENDED PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

The introductory course in political geography SGO2400 (*Politisk geografi*), or a development-oriented course with a labour focus such as SGO2500 (*North-South Development*) and SGO3300 (*Sør i en globaliserende verden*).

LECTURES AND READING

1. MOVEMENT AS MOBILISATION: GEOGRAPHICAL CONCEPTS ON THE POLITICS OF LABOUR (Kristian Stokke)

Chapters from:

- Nicholls, W., Beaumont, J., & Miller, B. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements*. Ashgate.

2. TRADE UNIONS AND DEMOCRATISATION (Olle Törnquist)

- Törnquist, Olle, section on the Scandinavian experiences. Chapter 5 in Törnquist, O. (2013). *Assessing Dynamics of Democratisation: Transformative Politics, New Institutions, and the Case of Indonesia*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp 91-106 (14 pages)
- Törnquist, Olle et al. "From stagnation to democratic transformation: towards a roadmap"(on the new role of labour in particular in Indonesia's democratisation) on pp 24-33 in "Executive summary of democracy baseline survey power welfare and democracy (PWD)" Universitas Gadjah Mada and University of Oslo, by Purwo Santoso, Amalinda Savirani, Olle Törnquist, Eric Hiariej, Hasrul Hanif, Willy Purna Samadhi, Debbie Prabawati, Wening Hapsari M. Jogjakarta February 25, 2013. (9 pages)
- Teri L. Caraway and Michele Ford "Labor and Politics under Oligarchy" in Michele Ford and Thomas B. Pepinsky (eds) *Beyond Oligarchy? Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics* (forthcoming) (20 pages)

3. NORDIC MODEL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (Fredrik Engelstad)

- Dølvik, Jon Erik (2007), "The Nordic regimes of labour market governance: From crisis to success story?" Fafo-paper 2007:07. (52 pages)
- Engelstad, F. (2004), "Democracy at Work? Does Democracy in Working Life Make Sense in the 21st Century?". I F. Engelstad & Ø. Østerud (red.), *Power and Democracy. Critical Interventions*. Aldershot: Ashgate. Side 209-234. (26 pages)

4. THE STATE AS AN EMPLOYER (David Jordhus-Lier)

- Jordhus-Lier, D. C. (2012). Public sector labour geographies and the contradictions of state employment. *Geography Compass*, 6(7), 423-438. (15 pages)
- Gialis S.E. and A. Herod (2013). Resisting austerity: the case of Greece's powerworkers and steelworkers. *Human Geography* 6(2), 98-115. (17 pages)
- Tattersall, A. (2006). Bringing the community in: Possibilities for public sector union success through community unionism. *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, 6(2), 186-199. (13 pages)

5. MOVEMENT AS MOBILITY: MOBILE BODIES AND TOURISM EMPLOYMENT (David Jordhus-Lier)

- Jordhus-Lier, D. C. (forthcoming). "Fragmentation revisited: Flexibility, differentiation and solidarity in hotels". In Jordhus-Lier, D. C. and Underthun A. (eds). *A hospitable world? Organising work and workers in hotels and tourist resorts*, Routledge, UK. (15 pages)
- Alberti, G. (forthcoming). "Multi-scalar organising in London's hotels: The challenges of engaging transient workers through labour and community alliances". In Jordhus-Lier, D. C. and Underthun A. (eds). *A hospitable world? Organising work and workers in hotels and tourist resorts*, Routledge, UK. (22 pages)
- Henningsen, E., Jordhus-Lier, D. C. and Underthun, A. (forthcoming). "The resort as a workplace: Seasonal workers in a Norwegian mountain municipality". In Jordhus-Lier, D. C. and Underthun A. (eds). *A hospitable world? Organising work and workers in hotels and tourist resorts*, Routledge, UK. (19 pages)

6. MOBILE WORKPLACES: THE POLITICS OF THE AVIATION INDUSTRY (Anders Underthun)

- Harvey, G., Turnbull, P. (2012). Power in the skies: Pilot commitment and trade union power in the civil aviation industry. *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations* 20, 51-74 (23 pages)
- Weller, S. (2007). Strategy and the contested politics of scale: air transportation in Australia. *Economic Geography*, 83(2), 137-158.

7. LABOUR MIGRATION, REGULATION AND TEMPORARY WORK (Hege Merete Knutsen)

- Anderson, Bridget, Rogaly, Ben and Ruhs, Martin (2012) Chasing ghosts: researching illegality in migrant labour markets. In: Handbook of research methods in migration. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, Cheltenham, pp. 396-410. ISBN 9781849803113 (15 pages)
- Batnitzky, A. and McDowell, L. (2011) Migration, nursing, institutional discrimination and emotional/affective labour: ethnicity and labour stratification in the UK National Health Service. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 12(2): 181-202. (21 pages)
- McDowell, L. and Christopherson, S. (2009) Transforming Work: New Forms of Employment and Their Regulation. Special Issue: *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 2(3). pp. 333–342. (10 pages)
- Rogaly, Ben (2009) Spaces of work and everyday life: labour geographies and the agency of unorganised temporary migrant workers. *Geography Compass*, 3 (6). pp. 1975-1987. ISSN 1749-8198 (13 pages)
- Vosko, L.F. (2009) Less than adequate: regulating temporary agency work in the EU in the face of an internal market in services. Special Issue: *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 2(3), pp. 395-411. (17 pages)

8. LABOUR MIGRANTS AND THEIR POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS (Marielle Stigum Gleiss)

Forslag:

- Friedman E and Lee CK (2010) Remaking the World of Chinese Labour: A 30-Year Retrospective. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 48(3): 507-533. (27 pages)
- Cheng JYS, Ngok K, and Zhuang W (2010) The Survival and Development Space for China's Labor NGOs: Informal Politics and Its Uncertainty. *Asian Survey* 50(6): 1082–1106. (24 pages)
- Chan CK-C and Pun N (2009) The Making of a New Working Class? A Study of Collective Actions of Migrant Workers in South China. *The China Quarterly* 198: 287-303. (16 pages)

9. COMMUNITY UNIONISM AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING (David Jordhus-Lier)

- Jordhus-Lier, D. (2013). The geographies of community-oriented unionism: scales, targets, sites and domains of union renewal in South Africa and beyond. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(1), 36-49. (13 pages)
- Wills, J. (2012). The geography of community and political organisation in London today. *Political Geography*, 31(2), 114-126. (12 pages)
- Tufts, S. (1998). Community unionism in Canada and labor's (re) organization of space. *Antipode*, 30(3), 227-250. (23 pages)

10. LABOUR MARKET INTERMEDIARIES: THE CAMPAIGN TO BAN LABOUR BROKERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (Sylvi Birgit Endresen)

- Benner, C. (2003). Labour flexibility and regional development: the role of labour market intermediaries. *Regional Studies*, 37(6-7), 621-633. (12 pages)
- Theron, J. (2005). Intermediary or Employer-Labour Brokers and the Triangular Employment Relationship. *Indus. LJ*, 26. (32 pages)

11. THE POLITICS OF INFORMAL WORKERS (David Jordhus-Lier)

- Lindell, I. (2010). Informality and collective organising: identities, alliances and transnational activism in Africa. *Third World Quarterly* 31(2): 207-222. (16 pages)
- Gallin, D. (2001). Propositions on trade unions and informal employment in times of globalisation. *Antipode* 33(3): 531-549. (19 pages)
- Lloyd-Evans, S. (2008). Geographies of the contemporary informal sector in the global south: gender, employment relationships and social protection. *Geography Compass* 2(6): 1885-1906. (22 pages)
- Millstein, M., and Jordhus-Lier, D. (2012). Making communities work? Casual labour practices and local civil society dynamics in Delft, Cape Town. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38(1): 183-201. (19 pages)

12. ORGANISED LABOUR AND CLIMATE CHANGE (David Jordhus-Lier)

- O'Brien, K. L., & Leichenko, R. M. (2003). Winners and losers in the context of global change. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(1), 89-103. (14 pages)
- Felli, R. (2013). An alternative socio-ecological strategy? International trade unions' engagement with climate change. *Review of International Political Economy*, (ahead-of-print), 1-27. (26 pages)
- Räthzel, N., & Uzzell, D. (2011). Trade unions and climate change: The jobs versus environment dilemma. *Global Environmental Change*, 21(4), 1215-1223. (8 pages)
- Lipsig-Mummé, C. (2013). "Climate, Work and Labour: the International Context". In *Climate@Work*, C. Lipsig-Mummé (ed.), Fernwood Publishing, Winnipeg, CAN. (? pages)

Total pages = 496 (eventually appr. 700 pages)