

LABOR AND GLOBAL WORKERS' RIGHTS (LGWR)

LGWR 510: International Labor Law

3 Credits

Seminar exploring international labor law, including its standards, reviewing bodies, procedures, information sources, remedies, and overall strengths and weaknesses. LGWR 510 International Labor Law (3) Because globalized production systems call for globalized rules for workplace rights, a body of international labor law is rapidly developing. Designed principally for global labor activists, this course equips students to evaluate the role that international labor law – its sources, participants, mechanisms, and remedies – plays in the promotion of labor rights in the global economy. A centerpiece of the course looks at the International Labor Organization, whose complex processes introduce students to the generally “soft” rules of international workplace regulation. Beyond the ILO, the course looks at other bodies – some global, others regional or bilateral – that require or encourage compliance with decent working standards. It also addresses how private parties can create either voluntary “codes of conduct” or negotiated framework agreements spelling out labor rights. Across all of these topics, students take up cases covering the broad range of labor struggles (affecting unions, children, women, immigrants, forced laborers, etc.). Critical to the course is the student’s gaining familiarity with the surprising variety of information available on working conditions around the globe. As the course progresses, students are asked to formulate opinions on which international labor law forum holds the greatest potential to help with selected worker rights issues in selected countries. Students will review evidence suggesting that labor activists make their best use of international labor law when they link legal action to outreach, education, research, and “on the ground” organizing to enhance chances for success.

LGWR 520: Global Workers' Rights

3 Credits

Seminar course exploring the issues of work and workers' rights in the global economy. LGWR 520 Global Workers' Rights (3) This course examines the multiple debates around the topic of workers' rights: taking political and social perspectives and linking them to contemporary debates and proposals to enhance and/or strengthen workers' rights in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Global Value Chains (GVCs). The course combines an initial discussion of both the nature and the breadth of workers' rights, both in terms of philosophical debates and institutional policy parameters. The course then examines how workers' rights have been defended through strategic corporate research and campaigns. The course will analyze the extent to which the legal grounding of workers' rights comes into harmony, or perhaps discord, with the actual state-based institutions that are said to implement labor laws and monitor their compliance. The course will also look at how workers' rights and labor standards are continuously challenged by MNCs and their supplier firms, especially in light of the hegemony of competition and economic liberalization of the present age. Taking cues from such developments, the course looks at how certain theories and perspectives may assist students in understanding more acutely how the gradually changing economic and industrial structures and production-distribution regimes impact on

workers' rights. Answering this question will be done by examining recent theories derived from economic sociology and contemporary industrial relations, especially those that look at how GVCs impact lead firms, supply firms, states, workers and worker organizations. Specifically, the course will look at how workers' rights are impacted by types of foreign investment and types of economic upgrading processes taking place in developing countries and often being propelled by capital fractions that are headquartered in the industrialized world. The last segment of the course will explore labor solidarity in GVCs. It will pay particular attention to how strategic corporate research can inform international solidarity campaigns.

LGWR 530: Chinese Labor Rel

3 Credits

Since it opened its economy to private investment in 1978, China's planned economy has been turned into a market-driven economy. Relying heavily on export-oriented industries, China serves as a “spatial fix” for Western capital, which eagerly searches for new sites of investment and business opportunities. As a result, China has become a gigantic manufacturing hub and the second largest economy in the world. The massive inflow of foreign investment, the pro-business developmental strategies of the Chinese state, and weak legal enforcement of workers' rights have rendered workers victims of economic reform. This course will examine labor relations in post-socialist China. It will cover topics such as the development of China's economic reform, the employment and working conditions of workers, trade unions and the collective bargaining system, the state's role in employment relations, the labor law system, and the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the country's labor relations. In addition to China, this course will focus on Vietnam (another post-communist country in Asia), and Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea (three of the four Asian Tigers). It will investigate how these countries are similar to or different from China in terms of socio-economic development and labor relations. Moreover, the course examines labor relations in China and other countries by drawing upon analytical and theoretical concepts on subjects such as the state, the legal system, the economic system, class relations, and civil society.

LGWR 540: Research Methods in labor and Global Workers' Rights

3 Credits

This course introduces students to social science research methods and writing skills as they relate to workers and labor policy.

LGWR 596: Individual Studies

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Creative projects, including nonthesis research, that are supervised on an individual basis and which fall outside the scope of formal courses.

LGWR 597: Special Topics

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 18

Formal courses given on a topical or special interest subject which may be offered infrequently.

LGWR 597C: Labor and Employment Relations in China Comparative Perspective

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 18

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LGWR 894: Capstone Experience

3 Credits

Supervised, professionally-oriented student activities that constitute the culminating experience for the program.

LGWR 895: Internship

1-6 Credits

Supervised, professionally-oriented, off campus, non-group instruction, including field experiences, practicums, or internships. LGWR 895 Internship (1-6) The Labor and Global Workers' Rights (LGWR) internship aims to provide MPS in LGWR students with hands-on experience in labor and global workers' rights. The internship will build and reinforce the students' skills by enabling them to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real-world labor and global workers' rights setting. As the MPS in LGWR is a professional degree, an internship in a real-world labor and global workers' rights setting is critical to students' academic and professional success. Students complete their internships with US or international labor unions or a labor-oriented organization such as a worker center, labor NGO, or labor research institute. Through the internship, students will learn about priorities, policies and practices that these organizations have regarding workers' rights and/or international labor issues. Students may also gain insight, for example, into the challenges that American unions have with building working relationships and alliances with unions in other countries while also addressing global dynamics affecting working conditions and workers' rights. Prior to the beginning of the internship, students will work with their internship adviser to develop individualized learning objectives. These learning objectives will shape a student's experience at the internship site and the types of projects the student will complete. The learning objectives will also provide the students with a metric by which they can evaluate their effort and performance.