INTRODUCTION

A key objective of this course is to provide students with a critical introduction to the study of trade unions and trade unionism. With a particular focus on South African trade unions during the apartheid and post-apartheid periods, and Argentinian trade unions during the military government and democratic period, the course will examine the nature and the role of these unions as workers' representatives both in the workplace and beyond (i.e. in the broader society), and how that role is changing in the contemporary period and the future implications thereof.

With regard to the post-apartheid period and post military government period, particular attention will be paid to the challenges of the democratic dispensations in South Africa and Argentina, slow economic growth and high unemployment, and globalisation and its neo-liberal discourse as presented to the trade union movement and the responses as well as strategies developed by the latter to meet those challenges.

In pursuing the above objectives, the module will cover the following areas. First, different theoretical perspectives on trade unions and trade unionism will be outlined. Attention will be drawn to theoretical accounts of the origins, the nature and the role of trade unions in society as well as the factors that influence them.

This will be followed by a historical overview of trade unions and trade unionism in South Africa during the apartheid era and in Argentina during the military period. Attention will be drawn to questions such as the political and economic context and the ideologies – i.e., national-populism, socialism, communism, etc. – which shaped and influenced the development of trade unions and trade unionism, the issues with which the unions were confronted, and the strategies and approaches they adopted to address those issues.

This will pave the way for the subsequent discussion and analysis of the changes that trade unions in South Africa and Argentina have undergone from the 1980s to the current period as they were integrated into the global economic crisis and the international labour movement.
**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To provide students with:
- An understanding of key perspectives on trade unions
- An outline of the different ideologies that influence trade unions
- An assessment of the historic and contemporary roles played by trade unions
- A comparative analysis of the different historical events experienced by the labour movements in South Africa and Argentina
- An examination of the different policies created to improve labour and employment

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Read the prescribed material for the course
- Read the compulsory materials for lectures and tutorials (marked with #)
- Participate in class discussions
- Write the tutorial test
- Participate actively in the writing of the group essay

**Note:** you will only be able to write the exam if you comply with the course requirements. Only students who are in possession of a valid LOA will be afforded the opportunity to write a make-up test.

**ASSESSMENT**

- A written assignment during tutorials [15%]
- A long essay submitted in the last week of the course [25%]
- A two-hour examination in November [60%]

**STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE**

The course is divided into six themes. The first theme is one week long, the second theme is one week, the third theme is one week, the fourth theme is one and half weeks long, the fifth theme is one and half weeks long and the sixth theme is one week long. Lectures are from Tuesdays to Thursdays. There are three assignments (all of which are compulsory).
THEME 1: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TRADE UNIONS AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Compulsory readings


Recommended readings


THEME 2: TRADE UNIONS AND TRADE UNIONISM IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Compulsory readings


**Recommended readings**


### THEME 3: PERONISM, POPULISM, MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AND WORKER MOVEMENTS

**Compulsory readings**


**Recommended readings**


### THEME 4: TRADE UNIONS, WORKER MOVEMENTS AND ‘DEMOCRACY’ IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Compulsory readings**


**Recommended readings**


### THEME 5: TRADE UNIONS, WORKER MOVEMENTS AND ‘DEMOCRACY’ IN ARGENTINA

**Compulsory readings**


**Recommended readings**


### THEME 6: TRADE UNION REVITALISATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, ARGENTINA AND BEYOND

#### Compulsory readings


#### Recommended readings


### LONG ESSAY

Students must submit an essay on October 18 (no later than 3:00 pm) on one of the topics discussed in class. The essay should not be longer or shorter than eight pages and should be typed in 1.5 line spacing. Essay questions will be given to the students three weeks before the term ends. (Please note: while the outline lists the chapters in edited volumes, students must cite the authors and title of each chapter).
All assignment questions will be discuss during double period on Fridays.

First assignment:

1. Briefly discuss the origins and historical background of trade unions. In so doing, pay attention to the notion of class formation as understood by Marx and Engels.
2. Why were Marx and Engels so highly optimistic about the revolutionary potential of unions? To answer this question, you need to consider Marx's later reservation.
3. On what basis was the optimistic perspective of unions criticised by the pessimistic theorists (i.e., Michels, Lenin, and Trotsky)?
4. Like the optimistic theory, the pessimistic theory also came under strong criticism. What were the main arguments used to criticise the pessimistic theory?
5. Based on the above discussions, what do you think is the defining features and functions of trade unions?

Second assignment:

1. How did the apartheid regime react toward black trade unions during the 1950s?
2. What were the responses of the labour movement and the trade unions after the Sharpeville massacre?
3. Define the following concepts: strategic unionism, tripartism, and corporatism.
4. Baskin described corporatism in South Africa as "bargained corporatism". What does he mean by this?
5. What counter strategies should the unions adopt to avoid the dangers presented by corporatism?

Third assignment:

1. Outline the labour advances, strikes and bureaucratisation during the first and second Peron governments.
2. How did National-Populism affect the working class’s consciousness and the CGT’s structures?
3. What was the meaning of “The Cordobazo”?
4. What were the strategies used by the labour movement to resist the military regime?
5. Did the CGT agree with the labour movement in the strategies applied?

Please consult Handout 1 for an outline of the University’s policy on plagiarism, guidelines on the formatting and writing of assignments, the departmental rules regarding citations and referencing, and the criteria for assessing written work. A copy of the Assignment Cover Sheet, which must accompany all assignments submitted to the Department, is also available in Handout 1.

If you require consultation time, please send an e-mail to the lecturer in order to set up an appointment. Thank you!

ENJOY THE READINGS!