

**Note: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SYLLABUS  
(contents might change depending on unforeseen circumstances)**

**SOC353H1F: The Quality of Working Life  
MONDAY 10:10 - 1:00/FALL 2025**

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**Prerequisites:** SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 and 1.0 credit from SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed from the course without notice by the university.

### **Course Description**

What is work for? Is a job just a way of earning money—nothing more? How do we think and feel—and talk—about what we do for a living? This course examines concepts, theories, and research evidence about the quality of working life. The factors that contribute to job values, job satisfaction, and worker well-being, but also what makes us motivated to change jobs or careers. We'll also explore cultural paradoxes about the meanings of work and the reasons for the many misperceptions about it. By the end of the course, you'll have an understanding about the mindsets that people have about work and ways to change the ways we think and talk about it.

### **Course Readings/Webpage**

All assigned readings are available on Quercus. You do not need to purchase any textbooks. Lecture slides will also be posted on Quercus prior to each lecture. The Quercus page contains an "Announcements" tab. You should check the Announcement tab regularly or set up Quercus announcements to your email. It will be the main way we communicate about course-related matters. This is where all deadlines, new content, instructions, grade releases, answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and any other pertinent information will be posted. Treat the Announcement tab as a series of appendices to this syllabus.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

The guidelines for each of the following will be posted as separate documents on Quercus.

#### **Reflection Journal Part I (10%)**

- Ongoing, written during class time during weeks 2, 3, and 4 of the course. Due during class time on October 6th.

**Test 1 (25%)**

- Written during class time on week 5 (October 6<sup>th</sup>). Based on materials from weeks 2, 3, and 4 of the course. Format will include a mix of shorter and longer written questions (details TBA).

**Reflection Journal Part II (15%)**

- Ongoing, like Part I but now including reflections written during weeks 6 through 10 of the course. Due during class time on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Presentation (25%)**

- During class time in Weeks 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

**Test 2 (25%)**

- Written during class time Week 11 (December 1<sup>st</sup>). Based on materials from Weeks 6 – 10. Format will include a mix of shorter and longer form written questions (details TBA).

**Policies**

**Emails:** All course-related emails (assignments, absences, general course questions) should be sent to the teaching assistant (Alexander Wilson): [alexanderc.wilson@utoronto.ca](mailto:alexanderc.wilson@utoronto.ca). Each email header should include SOC353 and provide your concern (e.g., SOC353 – Question about Reflection Journal I). Before emailing with a question, check the syllabus, and Quercus course announcements. All emails must be written in a respectful tone and include your name (as it appears on Quercus) and student number. Emails will be answered within 3 business days (not including weekends).

**Enrollment:** You may not enroll in this course at the same time as another course. In other words, you must be exclusively enrolled in this course during the 10:10 – 1:00 Monday time slot for the duration of the term. This is essential for you to complete the learning objectives and requirements of the course. There are no exceptions—and no accommodations will be made if you schedule another course that overlaps to any extent with this course.

**Missed Tests, Presentations, Reflection Journals:** Students missing the tests, presentations, and reflection journals will automatically receive a grade of zero unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. Students must clearly document their request with one of the following within 24 hours:

- Absence declaration via ACORN
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

We will be carefully checking each request. Please note that unclear or inadequate documentation will result in a denial of the make-up test or extension on the presentation or reflection journal and result in a grade of zero.

If you miss your presentation, you will be required to make up for it after Test 2 on Week 11 to the TA and course instructor. This means that you will do your 5-minute presentation alone and

have your own personalized question period that can include questions from the week prior. An additional in-class writing assignment will also be included as part of the make-up requirement.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory for the course in order to meet the required learning objectives. If you are not in attendance for the full class period from 10:10 to 1:00, you will not receive credit for any reflection journal entries during that specific class period. In other words, you cannot write the reflection assignments remotely. Also, we will not provide any make-up opportunities for the reflection journal entries. We will provide one free missed reflection journal entry for the term. Beyond that, you will not receive any credit for that day's entry if you are not present in class for the entire period.

**Lateness/Leaving Early Policy:** Chronic lateness to class and/or leaving class early is not acceptable. After one offence, you will receive a 3-point deduction from your journal reflection final mark for each additional offence. If you have any issues or concerns about attending the course from 10:10 to 1:00 on Mondays for the 11 weeks, you should raise this immediately with Professor Schieman.

**Accessibility and Student Accommodations:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you require accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Services Office (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>) as soon as possible.

**Other Accommodations:** Your college registrar's office is there to support you in the event of an illness, personal, or family-related emergency, or issue that is hindering your success as a student. If there is an ongoing issue that hinders your studies, please contact your registrar as they will be able to connect you with appropriate resources and supports and can provide documentation to your instructors that will aid in receiving accommodations. UofT's My Student Support Program (My SSP) provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost.

**Use of Generative AI in Assignments:** The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, *is prohibited*. The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, will be considered an academic offense in this course. Representing as one's own an idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated will be considered an academic offense in this course. This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

**Academic Dishonesty/Classroom Behaviour:** University policy on academic dishonesty must be strictly followed and cheating will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero on a test or assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: 'Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty'), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty: University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). Any disruptive behavior in class will be dealt with at the instructor's discretion and might involve mark penalties.

### *Copyright Statement*

Course materials prepared by the instructor are the instructor's intellectual property and are covered by the Copyright Act. They are made available to you for your own study purposes and cannot be shared or distributed outside of the class. You may not record any part of this course without the instructor's permission.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

### **WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 8 — Introduction**

No required reading. Course overview and background.

### **WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 15 — Overview**

Schieman, Scott and Alexander Wilson. 2025. "The Social Psychology of Work." *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Stets et al. (editors). Springer.

### **WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 22 — Job Values and Occupational Decision Making**

Johnson, Monica. K. 2001. Change in Job Values During the Transition to Adulthood. *Work and Occupations* 28(3): 315-345.

Mortimer, Jeylan T. Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck, Mikki Holmes, and Michael J. Shanahan. 2002. "The Process of Occupational Decision Making: Patterns during the Transition to Adulthood." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 61(3):439-465.

### **WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 29 — Work and Health**

Staff, Jeremy and Jeylan T. Mortimer. 2024. "Work Experience and Mental Health from Adolescence to Mid-Life." *Social Forces* 103(1):305-326.

Mirowsky, John and Catherine Ross. 2007. "Creative Work and Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 48(4):385-403.

### **WEEK 5: OCTOBER 6 — Test 1 (Reflection Journal I, due at the beginning of class)**

**NO CLASS OCTOBER 13 - THANKSGIVING DAY**

### **WEEK 6: OCTOBER 20 — Work and the Self-Concept**

Michael L. Schwalbe. 1985. "Autonomy in Work and Self-Esteem." *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter,), pp. 519-535

PRESENTATION 1: Your job defines you.

**OCTOBER 27 — NO CLASS READING WEEK**

**WEEK 7: NOVEMBER 3 — Issues in the Work-Family Interface I**

(Guest speaker: Marisa Young)

Schieman, Scott and Marisa Young. 2015. "Who Engages in Work-Family Multitasking? A Study of Canadian and American Workers." *Social Indicators Research* 120:741-767 (2015).

PRESENTATION 2: Working from home is better than working in an office.

**WEEK 8: NOVEMBER 10 — Issues in the Work-Family Interface II**

Reading: Moen, P., Lam, J., Ammons, S., and Kelly, E. L. 2013. "Time Work by Overworked Professionals: Strategies in Response to the Stress of Higher Status." *Work and Occupations* 40(2):79-114.

PRESENTATION 3: 'Work-life balance' will keep you mediocre.

**WEEK 9: NOVEMBER 17 — Gig Work and Surveillance**

Reading: Glavin, Paul and Scott Schieman. "Precarity Engineered: Worker Hardship, Surveillance and Affective Insecurity on Labor Platforms." Unpublished Manuscript.

PRESENTATION 4: Workers need to be monitored, so employers are justified for using surveillance tools.

**WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 24 — AI and The Future of Work**

Reading: TBA

PRESENTATION 5: If robots or AI can do the work, humans should step aside.

**WEEK 11: DECEMBER 1 — Test 2 (Reflection Journal II, due at the beginning of class)**