

2016 AFL/CLC Winter School

Course Descriptions

Communication for Union Activists

Building a strong union depends on good communication between members, activists and leadership. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google groups, Union Book, Linked In and texting are just some of the tech tools now available to union activists and leaders. While on-line communication will never replace face to face communication with members it does provide us with new and immediate ways of connecting with our members, sharing information and promoting the union on an ongoing basis. Whether you already know your way around these tech tools or are brand new to them, this course will provide you with the hands-on practical experience you need to use the technology effectively to build activism and solidarity on union issues.

Collective Bargaining

This course develops a solid understanding of the bargaining process and the factors that affect collective bargaining. It provides opportunities to practice preparing for and negotiating parts of a collective agreement. You will gain a working knowledge of the laws and rules that structure the bargaining process. This material will be of interest to new bargaining committee members and local union officers.

Duty to Accommodate

Mention “duty to accommodate” to a union activist and their eyes light up! Recent human rights decisions and aggressive case management by WCB and other insurers have left many injured workers afraid and many union activists confused (and even busier). How can we advocate for our members’ rights and protect our collective agreements? Is the return to work program in your workplace fair? How can we support our injured members when they come to us for help? This course begins with a look at various implications of being disabled in our society. Participants will develop an understanding of the fundamental legal concepts related to the implementation of the duty to accommodate. As well, participants will critically explore the principles and components of return to work programs.

Facilitator Training

This course is designed for union members who are interested in developing the ability to facilitate basic labour education courses, identify adult learning needs and objectives, and develop learning techniques, including the proper use of visual aids. The purpose of this course is to assist unions as well as the AFL, CLC and labour councils in the delivery of their education programs. Therefore, every effort will be made to see that participants, upon completion of this course, have an opportunity to put to use their new-found knowledge and experience.

Labour History

The *real* history of Canada has more to do with the daily struggle of workers and their families than with prime ministers, politicians or the wealthy few. Find out what you never learned in school about the triumphs, sacrifices and tragedies that built the Canadian labour movement. Learn how union activists in the past dealt with hostile employers, media and governments. Appreciate your inheritance so that you can preserve it and improve it. Understand where we are going by knowing where we have been!

Labour Law

Course requires extensive reading and preparation at the school.

This course presents an overview of labour legislation and its impact on the strategies and actions of unions. Among the topics to be explored are: certification and dispute settlement procedures; unfair labour practices; the duty to bargain in good faith; strikes, lockouts and picketing; the duty of fair representation; management and union rights; and grievance arbitration law. Students will attain a good understanding of the basic principles underlying Canadian labour law and the specifics of labour legislation.

Occupational Health & Safety

The Occupational Health and Safety program is intended for use by unions to train new joint committee members. Through the program, participants learn and practice skills needed to promote and achieve prevention in the workplace. The program trains worker representatives to identify and fight off behavioural-based management approaches and establish real prevention programs that identify, assess and control hazards. Like collective agreement bargaining, there is a profound need to get information, communicate with members, build proposals and apply leverage. However, when it comes to health and safety, there is no multi-year contract that defines the conditions of work. In all workplaces, hazards change regularly-even daily-and these changes to the conditions of work usually take place without any consultation with workers. Because the employer can continuously and unilaterally change the hazards of work, worker representatives need to continuously bargain with employers for improved prevention. The program trains worker representatives to carry out this continuous bargaining mission. To accomplish this the following issues will be addressed: staying alive while earning a living; the body in the workplace; toxic substances; principles of control; it's the law; the myth of worker carelessness and making work fit the worker.

Organizing for Success

Organizing is something all unions need to do. Whether it is current members or new members, unions need to have engaged and supportive people in the workplace. This course is designed to provide you with the basic skills you need to organize a local. Developed with a hands-on approach you will learn the ABCs that make up a successful drive.

Parliamentary Procedures & Public Speaking

Do you want to participate in union affairs but don't know the ins and outs of Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure? Demystify parliamentary procedure by taking this course. Course deals with how to run a union meeting, the duties of the chairperson, table officers and the members at large. It covers rules or order and the order of precedent for motions. It offers opportunities to practice effective public speaking skills. It is important that we develop our ability to listen, think and speak clearly.

This is an excellent course for anyone active in the union, in a leadership position or someone who wishes to get involved. The public speaking component is designed to provide training and practical experience in all facets of verbal communication, including speech preparation and delivery, impromptu talks, introduction techniques, controlling nervousness and effective participation in meetings.