

Semester:	Fall 2019
Course Number and Sections:	37:575:100:92
Course Title:	Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Course Day and Time:	Wednesdays through Tuesdays
Location:	Online
Course Instructor:	Ashley Conway, Assistant Teaching Professor
Contact Information:	Primary - use Canvas; secondary - aconway@smlr.rutgers.edu
Office Hours and Location:	By arrangement

Text

Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. 3rd Edition. Sage, 2017. (Please note: the second and third editions are similar, although the latter is more up to date. The first is very different – do not use it).

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the Labor Studies and Employment Relations major. Our primary focus will be work, workers and the organizations and institutions that shape and define the employment relationship. We will examine how class, race, ethnicity and gender impact work; the role of corporations; the role of unions and worker centers; the global economy; and the future of work.

Students must complete either 100 or 110 for majors or minors offered by the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department. Students may count both toward their degree, but may not count both toward either majors or minors. This course counts toward the Core Curriculum SCL requirement (see below).

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course you will:

- Know and understand fundamental social science, historical, and legal perspectives, theories, and concepts relating to work, employment relations, and worker movements;
- Know the fundamental laws/institutions governing employment relations including government, labor unions, corporations and other key institutions;
- Understand how the global economy impacts work and employment relations;
- Understand how diverse backgrounds and cultures shape experiences and perspectives on the world of work; and
- Develop critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

School of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum objectives met by this course: SCL (social analysis)

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal m).
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal n).

School of Management and Labor Relations curriculum objectives met by this course:

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department objectives met by this course:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).

Additional course objective from the instructor:

- Students will be able to apply facts and concepts from the course to argue convincingly against common contemporary fallacies related to employment relations utilizing information literacy skills.
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (SMLR Goal V)

Class Outline by Week

The syllabus is subject to change – always refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date information

Units	Topic	Assignments
1 9/4-9/10	Orientation to the course and introductions	Academic Integrity quiz, introduction survey, group introductions – Week 1 tasks are due 9/10 – submit late if due dates are missed
2 9/11-9/17	Work and our lives	Family member interview assigned for use in Discussion #1 (9/25) – Week 4 Civic engagement project assigned – research and chose a site by 10/8

3 9/18-9/24	Corporations and work in the new economy	Civic engagement project assigned – research and chose a site by 10/8
4 9/25-10/1	Work and inequality	Discussion #1 – initial post due 10/1,
5 10/2-10/8	Agents of change in the new economy	Discussion #1 continues – closes 10/8 Project Part I: Site Proposal due 10/8
6 10/9-10/15	Employment rights and job security in the U.S.	Quiz #1 Opens Sunday, 10/13, 12:00 AM Closes Monday, 10/14, 11:59 PM
7 10/16-10/22	Part I: Want rights?	
8 10/23-10-29	Part II: Want rights?	Quiz #2 Opens Sunday, 10/27, 12:00 AM Closes Monday, 10/28, 11:59 PM
9 10/30-11/5	Work, race and ethnicity	Discussion #2 – initial post due 11/5
10 11/6-11/12	Work, gender and family	Discussion #2 continues – closes 11/12
11 11/13-11/19	Work and the new immigration	Project Part II – activity log and journal due 11/19

12 11/20- 11/26	Work and bridging the chasms that divide	Quiz #3 Opens Sunday, 11/24, 12:00 AM Closes Monday, 11/25, 11:59 PM
13 11/27, 12/2 & 12/3	Work and public policy <i>Shortened week – Thanksgiving recess 11/28-12/1</i>	Discussion #3 – initial post due 12/3 Project Part III due 12/3 (The initial post for this discussion is uploading your project presentation to the Discussion #3 site. The site will open early so this can be done before the Thanksgiving recess.)
14 12/4-12/11	Evaluation week Last day of regular classes –12/11	Discussion #3 continues – closes 12/11 Complete the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS) online

Course Assessment

The following assignments will assess the learning goals of SAS, SMLR, Labor Studies Department and the instructor:

Quizzes (3)

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal m).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).

Online graded discussions

- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal n).
- Students will be able to apply facts and concepts from the course to argue convincingly against common contemporary fallacies related to employment relations utilizing information literacy skills.
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (SMLR Goal V)

Civic engagement project

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)
- Apply perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).

Course Grading

A=90-100; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

Activity	Number	Percent of course total	Points that can be accrued
Introduction assignment & info literacy	5 parts	5%	50 points
Online discussions	3 @ 100 points each	30%	300 points
Project	3 parts	35%	350 points
Quizzes	3 @ 100 points each	30%	300 points
Total			1,000 points

Points have no absolute meaning, and in the end, I will use my judgment in translating points into grades for the course. Implicitly, that means that grades are “curved” in the sense that they are comparative. The comparison is both to other students taking the class this semester and with those who took the class in the past. In addition, I may increase or decrease a grade for exceptional (positive or negative) class participation and performance by one level (for example, between a B and B+).

Grading rubrics for assignments and discussions are available on the course site in Canvas.

Extra credit is not offered in this course.

Online discussions - 30% of the course grade

In online discussions students interact through a series of posts about a particular topic. Students can communicate their questions, insights, and conclusions in a *threaded discussion* pertaining to a topic, as well as learn from one another in the process. Threaded discussions are also a means for me to identify whether or not you comprehend the course content. Discussions include responding to instructor and student generated questions.

The *Online Group Discussion Guidelines and Grading Rubric* document (available on the course site in Canvas) provides an in-depth explanation of how to successfully participate in an online discussion and how the discussions are evaluated. Your posts will be evaluated on a scale from minimally adequate to exceptional, with more typical responses being in the good to excellent range.

Each discussion will require preparing a critique, preparing a brief topic/issue presentation, writing a short essay or conducting online research to share with your assigned group. Failing to participate in a discussion during the open period will result in a major point deduction (25% or more) or zero points, depending on your participation history.

Civic Engagement Project – 35% of the course grade

You will research and choose a group or organization engaged in resolving a civic problem to volunteer with this semester (50 points). As a volunteer, you will engage for a minimum of 10 verified hours with your chosen group. You will keep a log and journal of your activities (100 points); submit a summary write-up of your experience to the instructor (100 points); and create virtual poster presentation to share with your group about your experience (100 points). Detailed information about the project is available on the course site.

The project is solely your individual effort, not a group or team project, although you will be discussing your project experience in your group at the end of the semester.

Missed due dates – 25% point penalty

Quizzes – 30% of the course grade

Three quizzes include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer and essay

questions. The quizzes must be taken online in the Canvas course site during the open period (refer to course calendar). Make-up quizzes will be allowed only for legitimate, documented, and verified reasons. Make-up quizzes without an approved excuse will be assessed a 25% penalty (50 points).

Note: late submissions for discussions/project and make-up quizzes must be completed within one week of the original deadline. Exceptions to this are on a case-by-case basis.

Class participation

Keep current and avoid being late - This is an interactive class; you need to keep current in the readings, viewings, and discussions to effectively interact with others in the class. You should inform me of serious personal emergencies that arise such as a hospitalization that makes it impossible to get online. Because this class does not meet face-to-face, a routine illness (such as a cold, stomach virus or “not feeling well”) is not considered a valid excuse for failing to participate in the class. Except for a truly serious illness, you are expected to log in to view course material, submit assignments, participate in online discussions, and take exams.

With the exception of a military deployment, work related scheduling conflicts are not considered an emergency, nor is a problem with your personal computer. There are many ways to get online in hotels, at campus computing facilities, public libraries, or cafes. Also, with the Canvas app for your smart phone you can attend class without a computer.

A scheduling conflict related to athletic participation is not considered an acceptable excuse for late submission of an assignment, absence from a discussion or failing to take an exam. Athletes should plan the study week to accommodate practice, events, and event related travel.

This course is fully online and does not require the attendance of any “real time” or synchronous sessions. An online class provides welcome schedule flexibility, but you are responsible for managing your time and participating in class every week no matter what else is going on in your life. In general, I recommend that you sign into the class four or more times a week and that you check your Rutgers email every day.

Contribute to the learning environment - You are expected to contribute to creating an environment that fosters respect and civility by adherence to class norms for discussion, debate, and all interpersonal interaction.

Course communications - You are responsible for accessing course materials on Canvas and participating as instructed. Students must maintain a functioning Rutgers e-mail address and should check it frequently throughout the study week for class announcements or updates.

Instructor communications - It is your responsibility to promptly reply to emails that request a response. **You should inform me of emergencies or problems that are likely to affect your participation or performance in the course. The sooner I am informed, the easier it will be to develop a plan for you to keep up with the course work.**

Class cancellations – Because this is a fully online course, Rutgers class cancellations will not affect study in this course. In the event of wide-spread loss of power and Internet connectivity (e.g. power outages due to a hurricane or a blizzard), assignments should be completed off-line according to the syllabus. Loss of power or Internet service at your residence or problems with your personal computer are not acceptable reasons for failing to participate in class.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is vital to the mission of Rutgers, to education at Rutgers and membership in the Rutgers community. It is a core value that supports trust among students, and between students and teachers. Academic integrity is also a shared value; administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it.

Academic dishonesty is not an individual act that affects only the students involved. It violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and is an offense against scholarship. For this reason, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with harshly.

Honesty matters. As a shared value, administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it. See the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

From the Office of Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

If you have an Office of Disability Letter of Accommodation (LOA), please email it to me as soon as possible.

Readings – *This list is subject to change. Always refer to Canvas for the assigned readings.*

Week 1

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 1

Week 2

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapters 2 and 3

Shenker-Osorio, A. (2013, August 1). Why Americans all believe they are middle-class. *The Atlantic*.

Kochhar, R. (2018, September 6). The American middle class is stable in size, but losing ground financially. Pew Research Center.

Week 3

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 4

Cappelli, P. et al (1997). Change at work. Oxford University Press. New York. "The employment system that died" pp. 16-29; "How the world began to change" pp. 44-51.

Week 4

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 5.

Week 5

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 8.

Beyerstein, Lindsey. (2009) Union 101: [Why unions matter and how they work](#). *In These Times*.

Week 6

Maltby, L. (2009) [Can they do that? Retaking our fundamental rights in the workplace.](#) Chapters 4 & 13.

P. Mattera. (2018) [Grand theft paycheck: The large corporations shortchanging their workers' wages.](#) Corporate Research Project of Good Jobs First and Jobs with Justice Education Fund.

Week 7

Stolzoff, Simone. (9/26/2018) One thing millennials haven't killed: The labor union. *Quartz at Work*.

Chen, Michelle. (2/5/2018). Millennials are keeping unions alive. *The Nation*.

Week 8

Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (2016) [Getting to yes: Negotiating an agreement without giving in](#). Random House Business Books.

Hilgers, Lauren. (2/2019) Out of the shadows: The new labor movement - fighting for domestic workers' rights. *New York Times*.

Manjoo, F. January 28, 2015. [Uber's Business Model Could Change Your Work.](#) *New York Times*.

Week 9

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 7.

Deitch, E. A., Barsky, A., Butz, R. M., Chan, S., Brief, A. P., & Bradley, J. C. (2003). Subtle Yet Significant: The Existence and Impact of Everyday Racial Discrimination in the Workplace. *Human Relations*, 56(11), 1299–1324.

Jasper Dag Tjaden, Carsten Schwemmer, Menusch Khadjavi, Ride with Me—Ethnic Discrimination, Social Markets, and the Sharing Economy, *European Sociological Review*, Volume 34, Issue 4, August 2018, Pages 418–432.

Stewart. A. (September 12, 2018). I Was a Firefighter for 35 years. Racism Today Is as Bad as Ever. *New York Times*.

Week 10

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 6.

Woods, R. H., & Kavanaugh, R. R. (1994). Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment as Experienced by Hospitality-Industry Managers. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 35(1), 16–21.

Week 11

King, P. and Suozzi, T. March 24, 2019. [A grand compromise on immigration.](#) *New York Times*.

Amadeo, K. (November 9, 2018). Donald Trump on immigration: Pros and cons of his policies. *The Balance*.

Lowell, L. et al. July, 2006. [Immigrants and labor force trends; The future, past, and present.](#) *Migration Policy Institute, Insight*, No. 17.

Ness, I. (2005). Immigrants, unions and the new U.S. labor market. Chapter 2, pp. 13-39. *Temple University Press*, Philadelphia, PA.

Week 12

Alexander, Amy. January 19, 2016. [How politicians divide, conquer, and confuse American workers based on race.](#) *The Atlantic*.

Graham, Carol. July 10, 2017. The unhappiness of the U.S. working class. *Brookings Institute*.

MacGillis, Kelly and ProPublica. The despair of poor white Americans. *The Atlantic*.

Week 13

Cook, G. August. August, 2019. The economist who would fix the American dream. *The Atlan*

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Rutgers School of Labor and Management Relations
Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations Syllabus
