

Semester:	Fall 2023
Course Number and Sections:	37:575:100:92
Course Title:	Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Course Day and Time:	Wednesday - Tuesday
Location:	Online non-synchronous
Course Instructor:	Ashley Conway, Assistant Teaching Professor
Contact Information:	Primary - use Canvas; secondary - aconway@smlr.rutgers.edu
Office Hours and Location:	Online by appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce 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).

Required Text

Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy. 4th Edition. Sage, 2020. The 2nd and 3rd editions are acceptable, please do not use the 1st edition.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course students 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 Learning Objectives and Assessment

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). Assessment: Quizzes
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal n). Assessment: discussions

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) *Assessment: discussions*

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI) *Assessment: discussions*

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). *Assessment: quizzes*
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2). *Assessment: discussions, project*

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	Possible points
Introduction assignments	Discussion, survey, and Academic Integrity quiz	5%	50
Online discussions	4 @ 150 points each	45%	600
Journal	10 @ 15 points each	15%	150
Quizzes	2 @ 100 points each	15%	200
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 in Canvas. Extra credit is not offered in this course.

Online discussions – 4 @ 150 points each (total 600 points)

In the first week of each online discussion students will prepare and submit an initial post. In the second week of the discussion, students will read group members’ posts and communicate their questions, insights, analysis, and conclusions in a threaded discussion. Discussions may require preparing a brief presentation; writing an essay or critique; or other task to share with group members. Project presentations will be made to groups in Discussion #3. The *Online Group Discussion Guidelines and Grading Rubric* document provides an in-depth explanation of how to successfully participate in online discussions and how the discussions are evaluated. Late submissions without an approved excuse will be assessed a 10-50% point penalty depending on lateness and previous late submissions.

Quizzes – 2 @ 100 points each (total 200 points)

Timed quizzes of 90 minutes include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. Quizzes will be taken on the Canvas course site during the open period. **Collaboration on quizzes is not allowed**, but they are ‘open book.’ There is a 25%-point penalty for taking a quiz late.

Journal/Learning Log -10 entries @ 15 points (total 150 points)

Ten entries will be submitted to an online journal about the week's course content, work-related events in the news, or personal course/work-related reflections. These entries are worth 15 points each. Journal submissions are read only by me. Making the entries should not take much time, but journaling will take some attention and some thought.

Class participation

This is an interactive class; students need to keep up with the course work to effectively interact with others in the class. I should be informed of personal situations or emergencies that interfere with your participation. As soon as a problem arises, email me using Canvas email. An online class provides welcome schedule flexibility, but students are responsible for managing their time and participating in class every week.

Contributing to the learning environment

Students are expected to contribute to a learning environment that fosters mutual respect, courtesy, and civility by adherence to class norms for discussion, debate, and all interpersonal interaction. Expressions of hatred or contempt based on race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender and gender identification, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability will not be over-looked, nor will they be tolerated.

Course communications

Students are responsible for accessing course materials on Canvas and participating as instructed. Rutgers email and Canvas email should be checked frequently throughout the study week for class announcements or updates. Activating the automatic email and announcement notifications in Canvas is recommended. Students are responsible for promptly replying to emails that request a response. **Inform me of emergencies or problems that will impact 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, most Rutgers class cancellations will not affect virtual class attendance and participation.

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>.

Rutgers' Resources for Success

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

Technical Assistance

Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology

Email: <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support>

Call: 833-OIT-HELP

Class Outline by Week

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

Weeks	Topic	Assignments
1 9/6-9/12	Orientation to the course and introductions	Week 1 tasks assigned – due 9/19
2 9/13-9/19	Work and our lives	Discussion #1 – initial post due 9/26 Week 1 tasks due this week – 9/19
3 9/20-9/26	Corporations and work in the new economy	Continue Discussion #1 – initial post due 9/26 Journal #1
4 9/27-10/3	Work and inequality	Continue Discussion #1-make replies-ends 10/3 Journal #2

5 10/4-10/10	Agents of change in the new economy	Discussion #2 – initial post due 10/10 Journal #3
6 10/11-10/17	Employment rights and job security in the U.S.	Continue Discussion #2 – make replies – ends 10/17 Journal #4
7 10/18-10/24	Unions and workers’ organizations	Journal #5
8 10/25-10/31	Work in a changing climate	Quiz #1
9 11/1-11/7	Work, race, and ethnicity	Discussion #3 – initial post due 11/7 Journal #6
10 11/8-11/14	Work, gender, and family	Continue Discussion #3 – make replies – ends 11/14 Journal #7
11 11/15-11/21	Work and the new immigration	Quiz #2
12 11/22, 27 & 28	Work and public policy Thanksgiving break	No assignment
13 11/29-12/5	Work and bridging the chasms that divide	Discussion #4 Journal #8
14 12/6-12/12	Course wrap up and evaluations	Continue Discussion #4 – make replies- discussion closes 12/12 Journal #9– 30 points Complete 2 course evaluations

Readings – This list is intended to give you an idea of the types of readings that will be assigned. This list will change. Always refer to Canvas for current assigned readings.

Week 1

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 1

Week 2

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapters 2 and 3

Autor, D. (2021, September 5) Good News: There's a Labor Shortage. *New York Times*.

Scott, J. & Leonhardt, D. (2005 May 15) Shadowy Lines that Still Divide. *New York Times*.

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.

Stein, J. (2018) How 12 Experts Would End Inequality If They Ran America. Washington Post.

Week 4

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 5.

Week 5

Sweet & Meikins, Chapter 8.

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

Frost, N. (21 July 2020) The Pandemic has Exacerbated Differences Between Unionized and Non-unionized Retail Workers. *Modern Retail*.

McNiolas, C., et al. (25 August 2020) Why Unions are Good for Workers—Especially in a Crisis Like COVID-19: 12 Policies that Would Boost Worker Rights, Safety, and Wages. *Economic Policy Institute*.

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

Bensinger, G. & Tiki, N. (24 September 2019) Google Workers Have Formed a Small Union, Overcoming Tech's Long Resistance. *Washington Post*.

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

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 8

Cho, R. (2019) How climate change impacts the economy. *Earth Institute, Columbia University*.
<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2019/06/20/climate-change-economy-impacts/>

Kelly, K. (2019) Climate disaster is a labor issue. Here's why. *Teen Vogue*.
<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/climate-disaster-is-a-labor-issue-heres-why>

Relofs, C. and Wegman, D. (2014) Workers: The Climate Canaries. *American Journal of Public Health* 104, 1799_1801.

Ruggeri, A. (9 July 2017) How Climate Change Will Transform Business and the Workforce. *Future Now, BBC*.

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*.

Weller, C. & Figueroa, R. (28 July 2021). Wealth Matters: The Black-White Wealth Gap Before and During the Pandemic. Center for Economic Progress Issue Brief.

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 SuOozzi, 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.

Miller, C. (10 April 2020) Could the Pandemic Wind Up Fixing What's Broken About Work in America? *New York Times*.

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

Week 12

Kochan, Thomas. (2018) What would Frances Perkins do? *Boston Review*.

<http://bostonreview.net/politics/thomas-kochan-what-would-frances-perkins-do>

Lumen Learning. American Government - Module 16: Domestic policy

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/amgovernment/chapter/what-is-public-policy/>

MacGillvary, J. & Jacobs, K. (2018) Policy Brief: The Union Effect in California: A Voice for Workers in Public Policy Actions. UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education.

Week 13

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*.