

INTRODUCTION TO LABOR STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Labor Studies 37:575:100 online: Section 92 ***Draft subject to change***

Spring 2017

Professor Paula B. Voos

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Schedule: *The weeks in the course begin on Monday and end on Sunday evening at 11 p.m. You often will have things due on either Thursday evening or Sunday evening, just like any course that meets twice a week. The schedule and the assignments are subject to change.*

This is an online course that is largely asynchronous. But you do need to be able to schedule an online activity on the following days/times, so plan your schedule accordingly:

In this section you need to choose whether to visit a museum and write a paper, as an individual, OR engage in a Collective Bargaining exercise with a group of students at the Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. If you choose to do the bargaining exercise, you will be assigned to one of the following days/times and will also need to meet with your group in the week prior to the session.

Wed. April 19 from 7:00-10:00p.m.

Sat. April 22 from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Sunday April 23 from 2:00-5:00p.m.

Learning Objectives for this course follow. The student is able to:

Core Curriculum: SCL

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place (Goal h).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal m).

- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations. (Goal n).

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- 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:

- 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 instructors:

- Students will be able to apply facts and concepts from the course to argue convincingly against common contemporary fallacies related to employment relations.

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).

Evaluation (Subject to change via the “negotiate the syllabus” exercise):

For purposes of grading, there are multiple components of the course:

- Introductory exercises (Personal information sheet; pre-test participation) (3%)
- 3 Threaded Discussions (Forums) at 10% each (30%)
- Op. Ed. Writing assignment (10%)
- Rights check and union knowledge check at 1% each (2%)
- Bargaining exercise or Paper (10%)
- 3 Quizzes at 12% each (36%)
- One page take-home final (9%)

The professor reserves the right to determine the division between B and B+ etc., although in many years B+ starts at an overall average of 88. That cutoff is subject to change each semester.

Unit I. The Situation Working People Face Today (Jan. 17 – Feb. 19)

Week 1: Introduction (Jan. 17-22)

- Explore what the course is about and make note of what is required of you.
- Learn how to use Canvas and locate readings & other online resources. There are excellent instructional videos online about the use of the system.
- Post information about yourself for the instructor and other students you will be working with (worth 0.5% of your grade)
- Take the Pre-test. Your score does not affect your grade but it is important to be sure how your computer will interact with the exam software to prevent later problems. (worth 1% of your grade). So please use the computer you will later use on Sunday to take exams.

Read: Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 1

Assignment for Week 1: Interview at least one parent or grandparent about your family's work history (preferably more). You do not need to write anything about the interview. It will form the basis of an online discussion next week.

Week 2: Work and Our Lives (Jan. 23-29)

- You and your family's history of work
- Intergenerational economic mobility and immobility
- Intergenerational transmission of resources (types of economic and social capital)

Read:

Paul Krugman, Chapter 1, *End This Depression Now*. New York: WW Norton, 2012, and

Harold Meyerson, "European Austerity Engenders a Keynesian Outlook," *Washington Post*, 12/31/14 (link in the online course shell).

The Pew Charitable Trust, "A Third of Americans Now Say They Are in the Lower Classes" and watch the accompanying short video on absolute vs. relative income mobility (link in the online course shell).

Gene Demby, "Young People Want Equality but Struggle to Discuss Bias," National Public Radio, 5/15/14 (link in the online course shell).

Listen: Richard Florida, "The Rise of the Creative Class," on Big Think (link in shell).

Due week 2: Participate in Forum 1: You need to post at least once by Thursday evening, and then a second time by Sunday evening. Both quantity and quality count so you may want to post beyond this minimum.

Week 3: Corporations & Work in the "New Economy" (Jan. 30 – Feb. 5)

- Corporations – structure, power, and rights
- Old and new forms of work organization
- The rise of contingent work

Read: Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 2, and

Peter Capelli et al. Change at Work (New York: Oxford, 1997), subpart "The Employment System that Died," and "How the World Began to Change," pp. 15-29, and "The Restructuring of Organizations," pp. 44-51.

Watch: 4 Video excerpts from *The Corporation* on You-tube.

PBS video, "A Job at Fords" from the series, *The Great Depression*

Week 4: Social Class in the U.S. (Feb. 6-12)

- Class and opportunity in the U.S.
- Class and social mobility
- Relationship between wealth and power
- Has class faded in American culture?

Read: *NYTimes* website on Social Class:

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class/>

Be sure to read on this site:

(1) the Overview article, 'Shadowy Lines That Still Divide'

(2) Tamar Lewin "Up from the Holler" Click on Day 3

(3) David Leonhardt "The College Dropout Boom" Click on Day 5

(4) at least two other articles/blogs from the site.

(5) Also read Bob Herbert's op. ed. 'Mobility Myth' click under 'Readers Opinions'

(6) You should also be sure to do the interactive exercise on the *NYTimes* site using your family of social origin.

Watch:

Professor Francis Ryan, Rutgers Labor Studies & Employment Relations Dept. speak about the history of the ideal of social mobility in the U.S. and the reality today.

Joseph Stiglitz, "The Price of Inequality: How today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future," Interview June 6, 2012 on *Democracy Now*.

Kate Pickett, Big Think Interview, "Why Inequality is Bad for Your Health" <http://bigthink.com/katepickett>. The rest is optional viewing.

Read: Joseph E. Stiglitz, "How Policy Has Contributed to the Great Economic Divide," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 2012.

Due in week 4 – Nothing this week. However, you should start working on the assignment that is due on Thursday next week:

Assignment: Write a **500 word** Op-Ed. on social class and inequality. You can choose any one of the following three suggestions for a central theme (Op-Eds advocate an idea or a public policy).

- "Social class is real in the United States." These Op-Eds are typically built around the personal experience of the author, their family, and/or people they know. See the *New York Times* website on social class for several examples.

- “Widening economic inequality is a big problem in the United States.” This type of Op-Ed needs to be built on facts (the Domhoff reading in week 5 has many) but must be written in a way that is readable, convincing, and often illustrated by either personal experience or that of others.
- “We should reduce economic inequality in the United States by passing the following law.” Here you would need to choose a public policy that would help reduce economic inequality and advocate convincingly for its effectiveness. Explain why it would reduce this current problem.

An Op-Ed is an opinion piece (named such because it is usually placed "opposite the editorials" in a publication) designed to offer an alternate position to what the media provides. Typically, an op-ed is written by an expert in a subject area or in industry. Generally, the goal of an op-ed is to educate the public on an issue. While an op-ed is largely an "opinion" piece, it must be based in fact and should be persuasive in style rather than a simple report. ***Take the time to edit, re-edit and then re-edit again. A clean, concise and compelling op-ed is your goal.***

Week 5: Economic Inequality Today (Feb. 13-19)

- Class, race, and gender inequality
- Does the U.S. have a power pyramid?
- Health and other effects of income inequality

Read:

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 3, and

1. W. Domhoff, “Wealth, Income and Power,” April 2005 (updated 2013).

Review:

Power-point slides by Alan Kruegar, Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors of the President of the U.S., Jan 2012, “The Caucuses and Consequences of the Growth of Income Inequality.”

Watch:

Richard Wilkinson's, TED Talk, on the impact of inequality globally.

Due Thursday Feb.16 in Week 5: 500 word Op. Ed. Upload your final version as **an attachment** to the dropbox "Op Ed" as a **Microsoft Word document**. See week 4 (above) for details on the assignment.

Take Online Quiz on Unit 1: Sunday Feb. 19

Unit II: Diversity, Work, and Employee Rights (Feb. 20 – March 26)

Week 6: Employment Rights in the U.S. (Feb. 20-26)

- Employment at-will
- Exceptions to employment at-will
- The NLRA (Wagner Act) and state bargaining laws
- The Fair Labor Standards Act & the Occupational Safety and Health Act

First: Take the rights check. This is a quiz that you can take and retake over the course of the week until you get a perfect score and the full number of points (10). After the week is over, the rights check ends – so be sure to do it this week.

Read:

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapt. 4

Steven Greenhouse,, Low-Wage Workers are Often Cheated. Study Says, September 1, 2009, *New York Times*.

Sloan Work and Family Research Network, Selected U.S. Labor Laws and Regulations Timeline, July 2004.

Lewis Maltby, *Can They Do That?* (New York: Portfolio, 2009). Chapter 4, "Wrongful Discharge and Employment at Will," pp. 57-67 and a portion of Chapter 13, "The Rights You Have," pp. 196-203.

Center for American Progress, "10 Things to Know about the Employment Non-Discrimination Act," from their website.

Watch: Videos on Employment at Will and the common law exceptions from Professor Carla Katz

Due Week 6: Participate in the forum on employment rights. At a bare minimum, the first comment is due by Thursday and the second by Sunday on each of the two scenarios.

Week 7: Work, Race, Ethnicity and Equality: (Feb. 27 – March 5)

- Race, ethnicity and inequality in the contemporary workplace
- Discrimination and Fairness
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Memphis Garbage Workers Strike and Martin Luther King

Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 7, "Race, Ethnicity and Work."

Charlie LeDuff, "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die: Who Kills, Who Cuts; Who Bosses Can Depend on Race," *New York Times*, June 16, 2000.

"Why Black Workers Who Do Everything Right Still Get Left Behind," *Washington Post*, October 3, 2016.

"Whites Account for Under Half of Births in the U.S.," *New York Times*, May 17, 2002, p. 1.

Watch: Three videos

(1) One is an excerpt from the movie, *At the River I Stand*, about the Memphis Garbage workers strike and Dr. Martin Luther King

(2) The second is a YouTube video that continues the story of the Memphis garbage strike.

(3) Mr. Wade Henderson, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Testimony to U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 2009.

Listen: National Public Radio, "Job Searching While Black: What's Behind the Unemployment Gap?" and read the accompanying news story on the web.

Week 8: The New Immigration (March 6-12)

- Effects of immigration on wages and work
- Public policy debates regarding immigration policy for the U.S.

Read:

New York Times, 1/27/2007, "Study of Immigrants Links Lighter Skin and Higher Income, and

Immanuel Ness, *Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005). Chapter 2, "The Political Economy of Transnational Labor in New York City: The Context for Immigrant Worker Militancy," pp. 13-39.

An optional reading by Ray Marshall is also available online.

Watch:

Professor Janice Fine, LSER Department, Rutgers, speaking about immigration issues.

Review:

Ellis Island Web site, "Immigration Timeline." Be sure to review information about the predominant nationalities of immigrants in various periods.

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Gender, Work and Family (March 20-26)

- Women's participation in the paid labor force
- Gender inequalities and discrimination
- Work/family policies and the law

Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapters 5 and 6, and

Washington Post, "Nearly 40 Percent of Mothers Are Now the Family Breadwinners Report Says," 5/28/2013.

Take Online Quiz on Unit II: Sun. March 26

Unit III Improving Working People's Lives (March 27 – April 30)

Week 10: (March 27-April 2) The Legacy: The New Deal and Labor

- A new relationship between government and working Americans in the 1930s
- Union growth and consolidation in the 1930s-40s
- The CIO and the sit-down strike
- The "New Deal System's" achievements and limitations

Read:

Jack Metzgar, Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). "Getting to 1959," first part pp. 17-39.

Watch: Various videos.

(1) Professor Paula Voos, Speaking about the New Deal, WWII and Labor (3 sections)

(2) A short You-Tube video regarding the early 1930s and the San Francisco General Strike:

(3) A short You-Tube video on the sit-down strike and its use by the CIO Autoworkers union in the 1930s:

(4) A feature video (54 min.), "Mean Things Happening: The Great Depression, Part 5" from PBS also on You-Tube. Please pay particular attention to the second half of the video on steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania.

Due week 10: *Participate in Forum 3. The first post is due by Thursday evening; additional posts are due by Sunday evening.*

Week 11 (April 3-9) Unions Today, Part 1

- What do unions do?
- Collective bargaining
- Are unions good or bad for the economy?

First: Take the union knowledge check. This is a quiz that you can take and retake over the course of the week until you get a perfect score and the full number of points (10). You cannot take it after the week is over so do it this week.

Review: Power-point on what American unions do.

Read:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members 2015."

Michael D. Yates, Why Unions Matter. New York: Monthly Review Press, "At the Table," pp. 66-78.

Explore: "Learn about Unions" on the AFL-CIO website. See various pull down items, but be sure to review "Collective Bargaining," and "The Union Difference" at the bottom of the bargaining page.

Watch:

(1) Reverend Jim Wallis, Sojourners, Testifying on unions and economic inequality, before a Senate subcommittee, 2009.

(2) Professor Paula Voos, Rutgers, Testifying about the economic effects of unions, before a Senate subcommittee, 2009.

(3) Professor Carla Katz, Rutgers, "Unions and Individual Voice"

Week 12: (April 10-16) Collective Bargaining Exercise Preparation. Read the Collective Bargaining exercise material. See both the web page and the confidential material in document sharing posted in your team's Canvas site. Prepare for bargaining by talking with your team, and submit your common union or management team plans for bargaining on Monday April 17.

Due in Week 12: Nothing, but your material is due Monday April 17 at 11:59p.m so this is the week to prepare your team's bargaining plans (initial proposals; bottom line etc.). Then you bargain next week in the day/time assigned.

Week 13 (April 17-23) You bargain this week. At the same time, you continue learning about unions in the U.S.

Unions Today Part 2: Union Organizing and Union Membership

- How unions are formed
- Union membership trends over time

Read:

"The Process of Establishing Collective Bargaining," pp. 65-66 of Fact Finding Report, Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, May 1994.

Posted materials for the bargaining exercise.

Watch Q&A videos on union organizing:

3 Videos, Professor Carla Katz

Watch for an overview of how employers combat union organizing campaigns:

(1) Target anti-union employee orientation video on YouTube

(2) Levitt, Confessions of a Union Buster Video on YouTube

Watch for an understanding of where contemporary unions are strong and where they are struggling, and why:

(3) Professor Jeff Keefe on unions in the public sector and among low-wage service workers

(4) Two videos on unions today by Professor Adrienne Eaton. One is about the challenges posed by contingent and non-standard work. The other is about unions among athletes, actors, professors and other "stars."

Review: Power-point on union membership

Week 14: Public Policy and the Future of Work (April 24-30).

Read:

Sweet and Meiskins, Chapter 8.

Watch the following videos:

(1) Paul Krugman, May 17, 2012, "End This Depression Now: Paul Krugman Urges Public Spending, Not Deficit Hysteria," on *Democracy Now*.

(2) Adrienne Eaton, Professor, Labor Studies Department, Rutgers, Unions and Informal Work

(3) Dr. Teresa Boyer, Executive Director, Center for Women and Work, Rutgers, on Work and Family policy

Due in Week 14 Thurs. April 27: Summary of final contract settlement; your evaluation of all team members. EACH student should submit to demonstrate their understanding of the final settlement.

Take Online Quiz on Unit III: Sunday April 30

WRAP UP: May 1 – May 7

A short take home final will be distributed May 1. It can be handed in anytime May 2-7.