

Youth and Work: 37:575:493:81
Spring 2020
Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Mercer County Community College
Thursday, 6:00pm to 8:40pm

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Overview

This course examines the current situation of young workers, reviews the history and policy responses to child labor in America and considers the challenges of youth and work today.

Some of the core questions we will explore include: What counts as “work”? Why do young people work and how has that changed over time? How does young people’s preparation for and participation in the labor market differ from that of previous generations? What are some of the challenges that young workers face at work? What kinds of policies, organizational practices, and legal changes can improve young worker’s experience in the work force?

We will examine the work experiences of children and youth in the 19th and early 20th century. We will look at how “child labor” is defined in social and economic contexts and investigate several industries including coal mining, manufacturing, textiles, homework, street work, retail and service and agriculture—to better understand the causes and effects of child labor in U.S. history—and how reform programs and laws emerged to address the issue. We will also look at whether the U.S.’s response to the child labor problems contributes to understanding global labor problems.

The course next explores contemporary experiences of young people in the labor market. We will explore how young people prepare for work, view their education and workforce development pathways; and view their work and future careers. Here we will focus on the experiences of young workers across racial, class and gender lines and pay particular attention to the growing working poor in the youth labor market, and how public policy can address some of these inequalities. Central to this will be an analysis of the experiences of young people in the recent economic recession, and various policies and programs that can improve their experiences and economic security, especially in the midst of the economic crisis.

Relationship to School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) Learning Goals

Learning Objectives. The student is able to:
Core Curriculum: 21C and SCL

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on contemporary issues (a).
- Analyze contemporary issues of social justice (d).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (m).
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments (n).

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).
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (Goal 6)

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)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

Students will demonstrate their understanding of these concepts via class readings, discussions, assignments, and exams which focus on historical and contemporary issues of youth and work.

Academic Integrity. Familiarize yourself with the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy which can be found online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Your written assignments will be submitted to "Turnitin.com" to insure that your assignment is yours and not gleaned from the web, another student or source. Use proper citations and quote marks around any material that is not yours. Be careful not to "copy" phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words.

Course Requirements

Class attendance: You are expected to attend each class session, and to be on time. An attendance sheet will be passed out during each class; it is your responsibility to sign the sheet. Be punctual and plan to stay for the entire class. Students who repeatedly arrive late and leave at break will have their grades lowered. If you need to leave early, see me before class; otherwise you are expected to remain until the class is over.

Participation: The nature of this topic is one which is best explored through group discussion. As a result, you are expected to attend class and actively participate and contribute to discussions in some form. "Class participation" means not only attending class but also doing the readings and engaging actively and constructively in discussion, including respectful listening as well as talking. If you are not one to be the most verbal in class discussions, other options for participation include facilitating in small group work, emailing thoughts or responses to course content, and posing questions or topics on discussion boards.

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. If you have a laptop computer or tablet, please feel free to bring it to class as a useful tool to augment in class readings and You Tube clips. This course is meeting in a Smart Classroom, so electronic devices will be used to augment teaching and learning only. Do not use any recording devices in this class.

Missed Exams: All students are expected to take the scheduled in-class exams (midterm and final) at the designated times. Documented emergencies and personal matters will be taken into account for possible cases of rescheduling that arise.

Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments should be submitted to me in print version at the beginning of class the day that they are due. If you miss class that day, you must submit via email attachment prior to that time. Out of respect to those who meet this expectation, all late papers will be subject to downgrading.

Accommodations: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

"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> The Rutgers Office of Disability Services can also be reached at 848-445-6800.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class will introduce an array of sometimes conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

In Class Exercises

This class is highly participatory and requires that you attend and that you work in groups or teams. Coming to class prepared (with readings and assignments up to date) is key to participating effectively in your discussion group. Throughout the course, there will be in-class group exercises, including some hands-on projects related to the readings done in groups or pairs. There are NO make-up class exercises and they must be completed during the class period. Of course, if you do not attend class, you will lose points for participation in these exercises as well as for attendance. Unexcused absences of more than two classes will result in points from you final grade.

Quizzes:

There will be several quizzes based on the readings, lectures and discussions. The quizzes will require you to construct thoughtful, informed answers to the questions.

Workplace Observation Assignment

Students will each conduct a fieldwork project in at local businesses to analyze the work experience of young people today. Details for this assignment are located on the course website and will be further discussed in class.

Class Grade Distribution:

Your final grade is based on the following distribution:

History of Family Work Paper	20%
Quizzes	20%
Workplace Observation	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Professor reserves the right to add or change readings or otherwise change the structure of the course.

Required Book

Other course readings are available on the Sakai course website or from me directly. Please note that additional readings—mostly contemporary op-ed essays from newspapers, magazines and the web will be introduced to weekly class sessions.

Cassino-Besen, Yasemin. 2014. **Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America**. Temple University Press

Optional Books (required components are posted on Sakai)

Course Schedule

Part One: Overview and Framing

Week 1—January 16: Introduction to Studying Youth and Work; Syllabus Review

Homework: In prep for the first in-class exercise, ask your parents, and your grandparents to describe their first work experience. Ask about their age, nature of their job, working conditions, hours and pay and why they first went to work. Please include your own work experience and write your findings in a brief paper (2-4pgs) to be handed in next week. Should you not have parents or grandparents available to interview ask someone in their age cohort for their first job information.

Exercise: Youth and Work Bingo

Week 2—January 23: The Current Situation of Young Workers

In Class Exercise: “First Work Experiences”. We are going to start to get to know each other and also start to think about our own work experiences. We will discuss your papers and our family’s first paid work experiences, how they got hired, how they felt about it, how much they earned, etc. We will also plot our work experiences on a timeline to compare with those of our family’s earlier generations.

EPI Briefing Paper, “The Class of 2019”.

Boston College Center for Work and Family Briefing Paper, “Creating Tomorrow’s Leaders: The Expanding Role of Millennials in the Workplace.”

Week 3— January 30: Working and Growing Up in America

Jeylan Mortimer, 2003. *Working and Growing Up in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Introduction

John Schmitt, 2008 Center for Economic and Policy Research: *Unions and Upward Mobility for Young Workers*, Oct. 2008.

View and Discuss: *Eyes on the Fries: Young Workers in the Service Economy*

Part Two: The “Child Labor Problem”

Week 4—February 06: What is “child labor”?

Hugh Hindman, 2002. *Child Labor: An American History*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe. Chapters Intro, 2 and 9

Videos: Fingers to the Bone: Child Farmworkers in the U.S.; Made in the USA: Child Labor and Tobacco; Children of the Fields; U.S. Child Labor, 1908-1920 and The Dark Side of Chocolate

View and Discuss: Hind’s photos of child labor- related Quiz.

Week 5—February 13: U.S. Policy Responses to Child Labor

Hindman, *Child Labor*, Chapter 3.

John M. Herrick and James Midgley, “The United State.” Pp. 187-216 in *The State of Social Welfare: The Twentieth Century in Cross-national Review*, edited by John Dixon and Robert P. Scheurell (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood).

Leveinson, Jeff. *Mill girls of Lowell*, 35-40.

View Film: The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire

Week 6—February 20: **In class Midterm Exam**

Part Three. The Challenges of Youth and Work Today

Week 7—February 27: Young Workers: Service Sector Employment

Yasemin Besen-Cassino, 2014. *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Stuart Tannock, “Why Do Working Youth Work Where They Do?” A Report from the Young Worker Project.

Stuart Tannock, *Youth at Work*, Chapter 2: On the Front Lines of the Service Sector

In Class Exercise: *Retails Jobs and Young Workers* –ad analysis(requires work outside of class) Related Quiz.

Week 8—March 5: Young Workers: Race, Class and Gender

Besen-Cassino, *Consuming Work*, Chapter 5: “They Need Me Here”: Work as a Perceived Alternative to School; Chapter 6: “White Young, and Middle Class”:

Aesthetic Labor, Race, and Class in the Youth Labor Force: Chapter 7: Origins of the Gender Wage Gap: Gender Inequality in the Youth Labor Force.

Think Progress.org, “There’s Even a Gender Gap in Children’s Allowances”

<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/04/23/3430025/gender-gap-allowance/>

In Class Exercise: *Gender Wage Gap*

Week 9- March 12: Education, Stagnant Pay and Increasing Debt Load

Tamara Draut, *Strapped*, Chapter 1: Higher and Higher Education; Chapter 2: Paycheck Paralysis, and Chapter 3: Generation Debt

Week 10 - March 19 -Spring Break

Week 11— March 26: NO CLASS MEETING DUE TO WORKPLACE OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT

Workplace Observations: Visit the course website and find the section that details the Workplace Observation assignment. Download the observation sheets and start your observations. You must bring this material to class next week. I have given you this 3-hour period to complete the assignment. You may do it during this time or at another time but there are no late assignments.

Week 12—April 3: The Intern Economy and Alternative Education Options

Ross Perlin. *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*. New York: Verso. Chapter 2, “The Explosion”

The Economist. 2014. “The Internship: Generation I.” *The Economist*, Sept. 6, International 1-9

U.S. Department of Labor, Apprenticeship USA Toolkit

Josh Eidelson, “Legal Protections for Interns: A Guide”

WORKPLACE OBSERVATION PAPERS DUE

Week 13—April 10: How Young Workers Will Change Work

Tannock, *Youth at Work*, Chapter 7: “The Youth Union”

Ray B. Williams, “How the Millennial Generation Will Change the Workplace”

Lauren Stiller Rikleen, Esq., “Creating Tomorrow’s Leaders: the Expanding Roles of Millennials in the Workplace”

In Class Exercise: *Changing Workplaces*

Week 14—April 17: An Agenda for Change

Tamara Draut, *Strapped*, Chapter 7: Changing Course: An Agenda for Reform

Besen-Cassino, *Consuming Work*, Chapter 8: The Economic Recession and the Future of Youth Labor

Week 15—April 24: Final Exam (In Class)