

Occupational Safety and Health 575:338 Course Syllabus

School of Management and Labor Relations

Amy Bahruth ~ abahruth@rutgers.edu

908-812-0974

Special Note

This course format was initially a 3 hour in-person lecture. It has been converted into a remote class due to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. There will be bumps in the road during this semester as this is a new instruction method for me and I'm learning how to make this class more manageable and engaging as we go. Please have patience and understand that this is not a perfect solution to in-person learning but I'll do my best to make it an enjoyable experience.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the important issues in Occupational Safety and Health. We will not only focus on the Occupational Safety and Health Act and its standards (or lack thereof), but on the larger political agenda of the global economy and how it impacts on the safety and health of workers around the world. The class style will be participatory, including small group discussions and activities. Related videos will supplement our class discussion.

The challenge of providing safe and healthy workplaces in a context of a market economy and global competition that produces pressure for low-cost production. Students will consider major types of workplace health and safety problems; review existing public policy in the area and learn how to conduct a workplace audit. They also consider how employers, unions, and public policy might improve health and safety outcomes. Issues are addressed using multiple disciplines (sociology; history; industrial hygiene; and employment relations).

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course you should be able to:

- **Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:** Apply employment relations concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
- **School of Management and Labor Relations:** Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI).
- **Additional Course Objective(s) from the Instructor:** Students will be assessed on the objective by how well they apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work on exams and written assignments. A standard rubric will be used for this purpose. (Institutional knowledge encompasses labor, law, and work practices, in the U.S. and other nations now operating in a global framework.)

Method of Instruction

Due to SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes COVID-19, this course will be delivered remotely this semester. We will use Canvas and Zoom for facilitating the course activities. Reading materials, assignment instructions and submissions, quizzes, and other course-related activities will be facilitated through Canvas.

Course Structure

The course is structured by weekly modules. Each week is comprised of:

- Introduction of the topic for that week
- Readings (PDFs, links to website articles, other)
- Multimedia (lectures, interviews, podcasts, or other)
- Discussion - group work and participation
- Forums - extra credit only
- Assignments - weekly articles (total of 8) and/or written assignments (total of 4)
- Quizzes - weekly quizzes on reading material (total of 10)

Course Materials

All course materials; reading materials, videos, audio are provided within Canvas. You do not need to purchase any course materials.

Student Responsibilities

- **Be prepared for class.** Always read the assigned material before the class so that you can fully participate in class discussions and more easily follow the lecture.
- **Take careful lecture notes.** Copies of power point slides will be posted on Canvas in the appropriate week's module. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are forced to miss a class. Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, small group discussions and forums, group exercises and student presentations. Students are required to participate actively in all aspects of the course, especially small and large group discussions and group exercises. When participating in discussions respect others' views and listen. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you must give them your full attention and consideration.
- **Student Code of Conduct**
You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional, responsible, courteous, and respectful manner at all times during this course.
- **Communication**
You are expected to check your official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. I will communicate all official course correspondence to students via Announcements on Canvas. Any announcement through Canvas

automatically generates a notification to your Rutgers email account. You can email me from Canvas using the "Inbox" feature (in the red global navigation bar on the left). This includes requests for excused absences.

- **Groups**

Groups will discuss course reading, prepare presentations and participate in-group activities together through zoom breakout rooms and canvas forums. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance on the class project will be evaluated both by the instructor and the other members of your group. You will be placed in random group breakout rooms for discussion but will have the opportunity to select members of your team for the purposes of the group project.

Attendance

- **You should plan to attend every class session – especially if you want the OSHA 30 card** (see more below). I will be able to keep attendance through zoom, including time in class. I recognize that illness, death in the family or other emergencies happen, and will excuse absences as long as the affected student can provide me with proof. **Signing in for another student is considered academic dishonesty and can result in failing the course.**
- **Be punctual.** Students who are late to class two times lose the same number of attendance points as students who miss an entire class. Stay for the whole class. Students who leave early without the instructor's permission will be marked absent and be ineligible for the OSHA 30 card.
- Attendance will be 5% of your overall grade. Signing attendance sheets is a requirement for obtaining an OSHA 30 card.

Written Assignments

Grading Criteria

1. **Content:** Papers should reflect careful, thorough consideration of the assignment. All papers should have a clear, creative thesis and a strong conclusion. Papers should also demonstrate careful reading of the course material and should cite all sources that were consulted when preparing the assignment. **Quality of weekly written article summaries and reaction papers will be evaluated based upon writing mechanics, content/detail, thoroughness, understanding of material and quality of analysis.**
2. **Mechanics:** Student writing should **demonstrate college-level competence** in grammar and style. Students with unsatisfactory writing skills will be encouraged to seek additional assistance from Rutgers writing tutorial resources.
3. Papers the instructor(s) deem unacceptable in terms of either content and/or mechanics will be returned to the student for revision prior to grading and marked

down for each day the paper is late. Failure to use spell check and grammar check to fix basic mistakes will result in automatic return of the paper without grading.

Assignments

Reaction Papers:

All papers will be due in Canvas by the start of class on the due date. All papers turned in after this time will be marked late. **Late papers will be marked down one point for each class that they are late.** I will not accept assigned papers in class or via email.

You will be responsible for writing one (1) reaction paper to “*Libby, Montana*”, which is a movie about asbestos exposures to workers and community residents of the town of Libby.

You also will be responsible for three (3) reaction papers on the following reading assignments:

1. OSHA's Recommended Guidelines for Safety and Health Programs
2. Workers' Compensation - "How NJ Fails Injured Workers"
3. TBD

The reaction papers are to be a minimum of a **full three to five-pages**, double-spaced and based on questions I will give you to respond to as a start. You will be graded on how developed your reaction is and how well you grasped the content of the material.

Weekly Articles:

You will be responsible for turning in eight (8) weekly articles from the news regarding health and safety. **You will need to write a full one-page minimum summary of the article AND a reaction to it.** Over the course of the semester, I expect your analysis to reflect the knowledge you've gained from material covered in class. For example, initially you may not know what standard has been violated in a given case, but by the second half of the semester, that should be more evident and/or you should know where to find that information.

Each week your group will discuss the articles found so make sure you are prepared. **Discussing these articles will count towards your overall participation grade.** A few good resources for finding articles include: www.OSHA.gov, <https://ohsonline.com/Home.aspx>, <http://jordanbarab.com/confinedspace/>; <https://www.ehstoday.com/>; <https://www.coshnetwork.org/>; <http://www.usmwf.org/> and any newspaper source you find.

You **will NOT** get full credit for these articles or any written work if you hand them all in at the end of the semester. They are to be completed each week and submitted through the week's Assignment link under Modules in Canvas. Your grade will drop by a point for each week it is late – no exceptions.

Quizzes:

You will be responsible for ten (10) very short quizzes that are based upon the reading for that week. Quizzes will count towards your overall participation grade.

Small Group Discussions:

Additionally, you will be participating in small group discussions and class interactions that will count towards your overall participation grade. These assignments will be submitted in for credit towards your overall participation grade and for credit towards your OSHA 30 card.

Turnitin

All written assignments submitted will be checked through Turn-It-In for plagiarism, including work from students, both past and present. If I get high percentages for plagiarism, I will take action.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. Students are expected to be familiar with all Rutgers University policies regarding academic integrity.

TurnItIn Statement

Students (You) agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (via Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If you do not agree please contact me immediately.

Mid-Term and Final Exams

The mid-term exam for this course will cover material (course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, exercises, etc.) from the first half of the course. It will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, identifications, short answers and short essay questions. The final exam will cover material from the mid-semester break to the end of the course.

Class Project

In the “People” tab on the left side panel in Canvas, join a group by topic that you want to work on. You will work in your group of approximately six (6) of your classmates. You will be able to have video chats and collaborate in that space to put together your presentation.

I suggest as a way to do this that everyone read/view the material, take notes of what they think is most vital for us (the new audience) to know and then come together as a group to have a discussion on how you want to present this material to the class. You can then split up the work any way that makes sense and each person should contribute something to the entirety of the project.

Your group should be prepared to present during the last two weeks of class. Be as creative as you wish in developing your presentations. You can use pictures/video, power point or any other medium. A **one-page outline/summary of the presentation or a copy of your slides is required at the time of your presentation.** Additionally, one member of your group will be required to submit a copy of your presentation up on Canvas.

There will only be 10 possible spots and your presentation should be approximately 15 minutes maximum. I will hold you to your time slot unless there is an emergency situation to keep things fair for all class members. If you are unable to present your project on the date you selected, you will forfeit your opportunity and will be required to write a ten (10)-page report instead.

Topics include (details will follow):

- Combustible Dust
- Apple, Inc.
- Gasland – the documentary
- Farmworkers
- Meat Industry
- Temporary Workers

Project Expectations:

- Read the materials and view any of the accompanying videos, if any.
- Assess what you’ve read and prepare an overview of the material – make sure it’s presented from the perspective that this is NEW information for your classmates.
- Make sure to identify the hazards associated with that industry and identify any OSHA standards that are applicable.
- Assess and identify what controls you would recommend, to minimize or eliminate hazards identified.
- I will have questions for you to consider in your analysis. This is not an exhaustive list of questions – you might have different information or thoughts you’d like to share. You do not have to cover every one of the questions - I’m basically looking for you to present a new topic to the class and highlight what you feel is the most important information we should know.

- You can make this personal – how do you feel about the information you learned? Has this information changed you in any way? How and why?

Rubric for Presentations

Thoroughness: (Out of 50 Points)

- Provided a brief overview of your topic.
- Analyzed the associated safety and health hazards, prioritized by severity.
- Provided a description of what, if any, OSHA standards apply.
- Provided recommendations for preventative or corrective measures for controlling hazards.

Organization of the Material: (Out of 30 Points)

- Does the presentation demonstrate good knowledge of the assignment?
- Is the presentation well-structured and thought out?
- Can you tell the assignment was taken seriously?

Quality of Analysis (Out of 20 Points)

- Are points illustrated with good examples?
- Are OSHA references properly used?
- Are hazards identified by category?
- Is the hierarchy of controls the basis for recommendations?
- Did all students participate in the presentation?

Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra Credit Opportunities:

Throughout the semester, I will be offering extra credit opportunities. These will include a short paper on your family's work history; forum discussions within the course modules; midterm and final assignments and any other opportunity that may arise during the course of the semester. It is entirely up to you to take advantage of these opportunities. **I value any extra credit work done in your overall grade. So, for example, if you are in between two grades, extra credit assignments will bump you to the higher of the two grades.** Please note, an A in this course is a 93.

Evaluation Criteria

Grades will be based on:

- 15% project
- 5% attendance
- 10% participation (including breakout discussions, forums, quizzes and on zoom participation)

- 15% weekly articles
- 15% reaction papers
- 20% on each exam

Participation grades will be on a sliding scale from 60 to 100 based on your participation levels. I expect to hear from you – especially if you want to challenge something I'm saying. **Don't be afraid to speak your mind – that type of behavior gets rewarded in my class!**

Overall Grade:

A = 93 – 100

B+ = 88 – 92

B = 83 – 87

C+ = 78 – 82

C = 73 – 77

Attendance Grade:

0 Classes Missed = 100

1 class missed = 93

2 classes missed = 86; etc.

Grade drops by seven points for each class missed.

OSHA Card

If you've attended every class and are interested in obtaining the OSHA 30 card, it will be a fee of \$8 payable to me via Paypal or Venmo at the end of the semester. This fee is to cover the cost of your card and goes to the University of Cincinnati, our OSHA outreach partner. I'll need to keep all attendance records and your home address information for 5 years. If you missed a class or two and still want a card, please see me. Depending on the class missed, I might be able to work with you.

NOTE: Program Purpose

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Outreach Training Program for General Industry teaches general industry workers about their rights, employer responsibilities, and how to file a complaint as well as how to identify, abate, avoid and prevent job-related hazards. **If you attend all classes and complete all assignments, you will be eligible for an OSHA 30-Hour General Industry card.** OSHA student completion cards in the General Industry Outreach Training Program do not expire. **THE CARD COSTS \$8 and, if you meet the requirements, I will need the money at the end of the semester!**

30-Hour General Industry OSHA Outreach Training Program – Designated Training Topics.

The topic requirements are as follows:

Mandatory - 12 hours.

- Introduction to OSHA – 1 hour.
- Managing Safety and Health – 2 hours.
- Walking and Working Surfaces, including fall protection – 1 hour.
- Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and Fire Protection – 2 hours.
- Electrical – 2 hours.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – 1 hour.
- Materials Handling – 2 hours.
- Hazard Communication – 1 hour.

Elective - 10 hours.

Must present at least 10 hours of training on the following topics. At least five (5) of the following topics must be presented. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.

- Hazardous Materials (Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Spray Finishing, Compressed Gases, Dipping and Coating Operations).
- **Permit-Required Confined Spaces.**
- **Lockout / Tagout.**
- **Machine Guarding.**
- Welding, Cutting, and Brazing.
- **Introduction to Industrial Hygiene.**
- **Bloodborne Pathogens.**
- Ergonomics.
- Fall Protection.
- **Safety and Health Programs.**
- Powered Industrial Vehicles.

Optional - 8 hours. Teach other general industry hazards or policies and/or expand on the mandatory or elective topics. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.

What I'll be covering:

- SARS-CoV-2
- Asbestos
- IAQ
- Workplace Violence
- Occupational Safety and Health History

Course Schedule

The course is divided into 14 weeks (14 class meetings):

- Week 1 - Introduction & Course Overview
- Week 2 - History of OSH in US and All About OSHA Part 1
- Week 3 - All About OSHA Part 2
- Week 4 - Principles of IH and Personal Protective Equipment
- Class 5 - How to Conduct a Hazard Analysis
- Class 6 - Workers' Compensation and Confined Spaces
- Class 7 - Hazard Communication and Exit Routes
- Class 8 - Workplace Violence and Walking/Working Surfaces
- Class 9 - Indoor Environmental Quality and Ergonomics
- Class 10 - Asbestos
- Class 11 - Subpart S - Electrical Standard and Lockout Tagout
- Class 12 - Bloodborne Pathogens and Special Topics
- Class 13 and 14- Presentations and OSHA Paperwork

In case of computer failure

Make sure you have an alternative plan of access to your Canvas course in case your computer crashes (it happens). An extra computer at home, your employer's computer, or computer at your local library can be some alternatives. Additionally, be sure to backup your important documents and assignments on a flash drive or other external device.

Computer, Software/Apps/Accessories Requirement

- Adobe Flash – latest version (you will need it to view videos)
- Access to the internet
- Access to Zoom and Canvas
- Microsoft Word
- Reliable computer

Special Needs Accommodations

If you have a disability and require special accommodations for your learning activities please contact the [Office of Disability Services Links to an external site.](https://ods.rutgers.edu/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site/) (https://ods.rutgers.edu/Links to an external site.). Should you require my assistance in facilitating the process, I will be happy to do so. Just let me know. Below is the full contact information for the office of disability services:

Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045.

- E-mail Address: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu
- Phone: (848) 445-6800 • Fax: (732) 445-3388
- <https://ods.rutgers.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas:

Visit the [Canvas Student Tutorial](https://community.canvaslms.com/community/answers/guides/video-guide)[Links to an external site.](#) at <https://community.canvaslms.com/community/answers/guides/video-guide>[Links to an external site.](#)

1. Contact [Rutgers IT Help Desk](https://rutgersonline.desk.com/)[Links to an external site.](#) (<https://rutgersonline.desk.com/> [Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#), 877-361-1134 accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
2. Visit the [Rutgers Canvas Student orientation](https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas)[Links to an external site.](#) (<https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas>[Links to an external site.](#))

Copyright Information

- [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Creative Commons License](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Code of Best Practices in Fair Use of OpenCourseware](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)

Student Support Services

Rutgers offers various student support services to help you succeed in your learning. Visit the [Student Support Services](#) page for more information.

Contacting your Instructor

If your inquiry is of a personal/private nature, including scheduling a one-on-one session with the instructor, contact your instructor through email from your ***rutgers.edu email account***. Messages sent from your personal (non-Rutgers email account) may end up in a Spam folder, or get hacked in cyberspace, consequently delaying response to your inquiry. You may also contact your instructor via the Canvas Inbox feature (left side navigation bar, red area).

Instructor contact: Professor Amy Bahruth, abahruth@rutgers.edu