

Women Taking the Lead: Race, Gender & Labor

Special Topics in Labor Studies



Special Topics in Labor Studies
Labor Studies & Employment Relations
School of Management & Labor Relations
Rutgers University

Social Justice Fellows Special Topics Course
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Spelman College

Inaugural Fellowship Cohort
Advancing Black Strategist Initiative
Jobs with Justice

100% Virtual Synchronous

Spring 2024

Tuesdays 2:00pm – 5:00pm (Rutgers)

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*Syllabus is
subject to
changes!*

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Course Description:

This course is a deep exploration of intersecting and systemic inequalities that have impacted the lives of Black women workers historically and today. We will begin the course with an introduction to racial, class, and gender disparities in the US labor sector that the recent pandemics have exposed and further deepened. We will then delve into a historical analysis of systemic inequalities in relation to Black labor and how Black women protested labor exploitation. We will trace these historical roots of systemic inequalities into the present by analyzing their impact on Black laborers today and organized Black labor resistance to these injustices.

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Office Hours:

Students may schedule appointments by email. We will offer zoom appointments Tuesday 2-3pm ET and by appointment.

***Students may make appointments for other meeting times as well.**

Course Rationale:

This special topics course takes a feminist theoretical approach to understanding how intersecting inequalities have shaped Black women's labor experiences historically and continue to do so today. Students who take this course must be prepared to deepen their writing, thinking, and reading of media sources and textbooks. They must also demonstrate effective writing and oral communication skills. Students will be introduced to topics that engage the particular ways in which race, class, gender, and sexuality impact workers and working experiences.

Course Requirements:

Class participation + discussions- 25%

Facilitations- 25%

Mid-Term Project -25%

Final Project – 25%

Goals and Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the social injustices that have impacted Black women workers since the nineteenth century
- Analyze how the current pandemics have impacted the health, family lives, and labor experiences of Black women workers
- Examine how intersecting racial, class, and gender inequalities have shaped the labor experiences of Black people historically
- Trace the ways in which racial, class, and gender disparities shape Black workers' lives today
- Explore Black workers' organized resistance to labor exploitation historically and today

Assignments:

1-Class Participation & Discussions

All students are expected to come to class prepared to share their interpretation, analysis and synthesis of assigned readings and media materials.

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2-Facilitations

Each week, a group of students will be responsible for co-facilitating class discussion with their own discussion questions. The group is also expected to **post their collective discussion questions and advance commentaries** about the assigned readings to Canvas **by Monday 11:59pm ET AND post individual two-paragraph “post-class” discussion reflections to Canvas by Friday 11:59pm ET.** This assignment will rotate each week.

3- Mid-Term Project

Students will complete a mid-term group assignment to demonstrate their knowledge of the information covered during the first half of the course. They will also present their group project in the form of an oral presentation.

4- Final Exam Project

Students will complete a final exam group assignment to demonstrate their comprehensive knowledge of the information covered throughout the entire course. They will also present the assignment in the form of an oral presentation.

**Students will be required to complete a 5-page written assignment incorporating learnings from readings, guest speakers, film/videos, and the worker profile project*

Course Structure

This course will be delivered **entirely online** using this [Zoom Link](#)

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity requires that all academic work be 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 this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. For more information on the **Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy**, see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>.

Copyright: The instructor for this course holds the copyright to the course teaching materials, including lecture slides, discussion questions, exams, and assignments. The copyrights to the readings and films belong to their rights holders (authors, producers, publishers, etc.). Students may not copy or distribute this material without the permission of the instructor. Unauthorized distributions of course materials are serious offenses. For more information on the **Rutgers University Copyright Policy**, see <http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7- current.pdf>

Disability Statement: 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

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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>.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable. This course 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.

Missed Exams: All students are expected to take the scheduled midterm and final exams at the designated times.

Canvas: This course uses the Rutgers Canvas course management system, accessible at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu>. Click "NetID Login" on the right side of the main Canvas site. Once you log in, you can access the course site by clicking the "Courses" tab. The course site features the syllabus and weekly modules with the reading, viewing, and writing assignments.

Paper Assignments: You will submit all drafts of your papers electronically on Canvas and they will be checked using Turnitin.

Lateness Policy: All late paper assignments will be marked down 10 points for every 24-hour period they are late. If you have a severe personal emergency that makes it impossible for you to meet the deadlines, please contact your instructors.

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<u>READING SCHEDULE</u>		
1/23/24	Week One	<p>IN CLASS READING: Crenshaw, Kimberlé. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Issue 1, Article 8, 138-167 https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/</p> <p>VIEW: “The Urgency of Intersectionality,” Crenshaw lecture</p>
Dominant Narrative & Counter-narrative		
1/30/24	Week Two	<p>Reading Due:</p> <p>Crenshaw, Kimberlé. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Issue 1, Article 8, 138-167 https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/</p> <p>IN CLASS GROUP WORK: Reading #1 Jamboard Exercise</p>
2/6/24	Week Three	<p>Readings Due:</p> <p>Erica Smiley & Sarita Gupta, <i>The Future We Need</i> (introduction and chapters 1-2)</p> <p>Tami L. Lee & Maite Tapia, “Confronting Race and other Social identity Erasures: The Case for Critical Industrial Relations Theory.”</p>
Complexity of Multiracial Feminist Economic Democracy		
Historical & Political Contextualization: Disparities in Labor and Quality of Life		
2/13/24	Week Four	<p>Readings Due:</p> <p>Tera Hunter, <i>To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. (chapters 2 and 4)</p> <p>Dr. Mona Phillips, <u>Spelman’s Presidential Inauguration Program Speech</u>, 2016.</p>
Labor Resistance Post-Slavery/Early Black Women’s Labor Movement		

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2/20/24	<p>Week Five</p> <p>Whiteness, Intersectionality, and Labor</p>	<p>Readings Due:</p> <p>Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, “Slaving” Irish Ladies and Black “Towers of Strength in the Labor World”: Race and Women’s Resistance in Domestic Service,” <i>Women’s History Review</i>, Special Issue: “Women, Work, and The State,” (2020): 190-207.</p> <p>Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, ““The World Will Get a Correct Estimate of the Negro Woman’: The Intellectual Work of Early Black Women Labor Organizers.” <i>A Racial Reckoning In Industrial Relations</i> (Chapter 3).</p> <p>*Discuss Worker Profile Assignment</p>
2/27/24	<p>Week 6</p> <p>Narrative/ Storytelling/ is not Fluffy</p>	<p>Readings Due:</p> <p>Sheri Davis-Faulkner, “Labor Tales of Critical Race Theory: Disrupting Normative in Search of the Transformative.” <i>A Racial Reckoning In Industrial Relations</i> (Chapter 2).</p> <p>Naomi R. Williams, “Origin Stories: Labor History and Industrial Relations.” <i>A Racial Reckoning In Industrial Relations</i> (Chapter 1).</p>
3/5/24	<p>Week 7</p> <p>Work & Achieving the American Dream</p>	<p>Guest Speaker: Enobong Hannah Branch, Caroline Hanley. <i>Working Black and White: Striving for the American Dream.</i></p> <p>Readings Due: Pdf copies of assigned chapters will be uploaded to Canvas.</p> <p>In Class Presentations: Present Your Worker Profile (3min)</p>
3/12/24	<p>Spring Break/ No Class</p>	
3/19/24	<p>Week 8</p> <p>Prison Labor and the American Project</p>	<p>Film: <i>The 13th</i>, Ava Duvernay, Stream on Netflix, 2016.</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <p>Mary Church Terrell, “Peonage in the United States: The Convict Lease System and the Chain Gangs,” <i>The Nineteenth Century And After: A Monthly Review</i>. London: New Street Square Publishing (August 1907): 306-322.</p> <p>“Like I Was a Man”: Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia Author(s): Sarah Haley Source: <i>Signs</i>, Vol. 39, No. 1, Women, Gender, and Prison: National and Global Perspectives (Autumn 2013), pp. 53-77.</p>

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Contemporary Worker Organizing		
3/ 26	Week 9 Black Worker Center Movement	Guest Speaker(s): TBD Readings Due: TBA
4/2	Week 10 New Labor Resistance & Organizing	Guest Speaker(s): TBD Readings Due: TBA
4/9	Week 11 Contemporary Racial, Class, and Gender Disparities in Labor	Readings Due: TBA
4/ 16	Week 12 <i>Open</i>	Guest Speaker(s): TBD Readings: TBA
4/ 23	Week 13	Final Class Presentations
4/ 30	Week 14	Final Class Presentations
5/8	Final Paper Due	11:59pm ET Wednesday May 8th