INTRODUCTION TO LABOR STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS RUTGERS UNIVERSITY 37:575:100:05 FALL 2012

Instructor: Carla A. Katz

Wednesday: 7:15 p.m. to 10:05 p.m. Auditorium (Room 137) Labor Education Center,

Cook/Douglass Campus

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<u>Course Overview:</u> The class is designed to give you an overview of various aspects of labor and employment relations, including the perspective of working people and their labor organizations. We will also study the changing nature of work, workers and workers' institutions and organizations; the impact of technological change, the economic cycle, social class, immigration, race, ethnicity and gender; the role of government in labor policy; the history of unions, the role of unions in politics and challenges the labor movement faces today; and collective bargaining and workers rights issues.

Class will include lectures, small group discussions, simulations, in-class assignments, and media presentations. Students are encouraged to freely express their views. Respect for the appreciation of different viewpoints will be a guiding principle in this class.

<u>Text:</u> Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*, Second Edition. Sage 2013.

All readings, except for the text, are available on Rutgers Sakai, which you may access at http://sakai.rutgers.edu. To log on, enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right hand corner. Click on the tab: 37:575:100:05. Click on modules on the menu on the left hand side of the page.

The syllabus, schedule and assignments are subject to change as the course evolves.

Course Requirements

- 1. **Read entire syllabus** and make sure you understand it. This is your contract with the instructor.
- 2. **Be prepared for class**. Always read the material assigned for a class before the class. **Bring the material to class with you** in case you need to refer to it (for instance, for an open-book quiz or for a discussion). Check your email regularly for class announcements.
- 3. **Be present and be on time**. Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, **please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence**. An email is automatically sent to me. Please note: My attendance policy is that students

begin with an "A" for attendance However, the grade for attendance will decline each time a student is absent, late, or leaves early. If you are late or leave early, you will be charged with ½ class absence. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence, lateness or need to leave early, it must be provided to me in writing in advance or immediately after the occurrence. Even excused absences must be reported via the University absence reporting website indicated above.

- 4. **Participate in discussions and group activities**. Students will be divided into groups for breakout sessions and projects. The teaching assistants will supervise the groups. Your participation in these group situations goes to your participation grade. Explain your views. Ask questions. Listen don't monopolize the discussion or ignore other views. Do your share of the work in simulations and in-class group activities. Texting, talking on your phone, FB and Twitter are prohibited in class (unless part of the group activity).
- 5. **Take careful lecture notes**. Copies of any power points will be posted on Sakai. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you miss a class. These are not provided by the instructor or by teaching assistants.
- 6. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity requires that all academic work be the product of an identified individual or individuals. Join 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.

Evaluation

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

- Family Interview Exercise (5%)
- Bargaining exercise (10%)
- Class preparation, attendance and participation (20%)
- Written OPED assignment (15%)
- Exams (50%):
- There will be two (2) exams that are predominantly "objective" a combination of short-answer, objective, and short essay items given in class. Both closed book but you may bring one note card or sheet of paper no larger than 4x6 inches with notes on it. (25%). The second exam will be similar in nature to the first exam but cover material since the first exam. (25%)

Attendance Grade: You start with 100 points and points will be deducted for each class missed.

<u>Learning Objectives</u>: This is a social science course; the following SAS learning objectives are particularly relevant:

- h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place. One learning objective involves understanding how U.S. workers have reacted to the changing nature of work, to their class position in American society, and to particular contingencies like immigration. You will gain an overview of the history of the American labor movement, how it fits into a global context, and how race, ethnicity and gender affect workers. You will demonstrate knowledge through writing assignments and examinations.
- m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. A second objective involves understanding theories regarding the relationship between economic organization (e.g., the extent of economic markets and corporate structures) and the type of worker organization and public policy responses that are needed to improve the lives of workers. You will demonstrate this knowledge through writing assignments and examinations.
- **n.** Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations. A third objective will be for you to apply these theories to current policy debates. You will demonstrate this through participation in class debates and through participation in a collective bargaining exercise based on current situations.

<u>Collective Bargaining Exercise:</u> The entire class will participate in a collective bargaining game spanning a couple of weeks. Students will be assigned to union team or to a management team and will be required to negotiate a contract by a set date and time. You will be graded as a team on this exercise.

Written Assignment--Due in Class on October 31, 2012

Write a 500-word Op-Ed piece on social class and inequality. 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 expert in a subject area or industry writes an Op-Ed. Generally, the goal of the Op-Ed is to educate the public on an issue.

While the 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, reedit and then reedit again. A clean, concise and compelling Op-Ed is your goal.

In the Op-Ed, you should discuss your experience and your family's experience with social class and economic inequality and whether or not those experiences reinforce the assertion that over the past few decades, social mobility is stagnating and economic inequality is increasing in the United States.

I. Week 1, September 5, 2012: Introduction to the Class and Course Requirements

- Review Syllabus and discuss expectations. Assignment of groups
- What is Labor Studies and why is it important?
- Discussion of work, family, how job and income security affect workers and their families. Relate the Great Depression and decline of manufacturing in the late 1970's/early 1980s to the recession and globalization today
- Introductory analysis of the jobs that you have held and those of your close friends or family.

Week One Assignment:

- Family Member Interview: Interview at least one family member and come to the next class prepared to discuss your family's economic history over the past three generations, including: occupations they had, how did they get their jobs and how long did they keep them, did they experience periods of unemployment, has your family wealth increased or decreased over the generations, to what factors does your family attribute their financial or professional success (eg. talent, ambition, persistence, connections, education, mentors...) how you would feel about following in your parents' work path. Bring your written notes to hand in.
- Read this syllabus thoroughly. Learn how to use Sakai and locate readings.
- Complete all Week 2 readings.

II. Week 2, September 12, 2012: Class, Income and Social Mobility DISCUSSION: Inequality and stratification in the U.S.

Class, family and the centrality of work: What does it mean to say we are in a 'new economy'; Young workers, the new economy and the economic recession

READINGS: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapters 1 and 3

"Class in America: Shadowy Lines That Still Divide" by Janny Scott and David Leonhardt, *New York Times*, May 15, 2005, pp. 1-26.

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

Michael Zweig, "The Working Class Majority: America's Best-Kept Secret" (Ithaca. N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), Chapter 3, "Why is Class Important?" pp. 61-73

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Insights from the family interview project

III. Week 3, September 19, 2012: Power Dynamics, the New Economy and the Future of Work

DISCUSSION: Distribution of Wealth and Power **FILM:** "The Big One", Directed by Michael Moore

READINGS:

G. W. Domhoff, "Wealth, Income and Power", April 2005.

Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 2

Greenhouse, Steven, <u>Low-Wage Workers are Often Cheated. Study Says</u>, September 1, 2009, New York Times.

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Based on the readings and class materials discussed thus far, discuss and defend your view of class in America. Is our system a "power pyramid" as suggested by G.W. Domhoff or is our system based on egalitarian principles where everyone has the equal chance at making it big? Be prepared to support your argument based on facts and the readings.

IV. Week 4: September 26, 2012: Labor's History of Collective Action/ Organizing the Unorganized

DISCUSSION: Role-plays and Discussion on Organizing the Unorganized

READINGS:

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

"Union Members", Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, January 21, 2011.

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

"The Risk of Dismissal for Union Organizing and the Need to Modify the Process", Testimony by Dean Baker, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research.

AFL-CIO Fact Sheets: Unions 101; Union Advantage by the Numbers

IV. Week 5, October 3, 2012: Employment Rights in the U.S.

DISCUSSION: Employment at-will; exceptions to the doctrine; the NLRA and state bargaining laws: the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

READINGS:

Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 4

Lewis Maltby, <u>Can They Do That?</u> (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.

<u>Basic Guide to the National Labor Relations Act</u>: General Principles of Law Under the Statute and Procedures of the National Labor Relations Board.

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

PowerPoint on OSHA and FLSA

VI. Week 6, October 10, 2012: Unions and Collective Bargaining Today

DISCUSSION: What unions do, types of unions; other elements in the labor movement; process of collective bargaining; public sector vs. private sector unions

READINGS: Martin Jay Levitt (with Terry Conrow), <u>Confessions of a Union Buster</u>, Chapter "Copeland Oaks." New York: Crown, 1993, pp. 163-200.

Michael D. Yates, <u>Why Unions Matter</u>. New York: Monthly Review Press, "How Unions Form," pp. 30-38; and pp. 53-80.

"Public Sector Unions Under Fire", New York Times, July 12, 2011

DISCUSSION: Why have public worker unions and members been under siege across the country in the past couple of years? In what ways has the collective bargaining process for public workers suffered as a result of legislative changes being made in numerous states, including New Jersey?

Midterm Examination Review

VII. Week 7, October 17, 2012: MIDTERM EXAM

VIII. Week 8, October 24, 2012: Work, Race, Ethnicity and Equality:

DISCUSSION: Race, ethnicity and inequality in the workplace

FILM: "At the River I Stand" (1993 documentary on Martin Luther King and 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike)

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

Charlie LeDuff "At a Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die" (pp. 96-114)

Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

Upton Sinclair, "The Jungle", Chapter #3

Roger Waldinger, et al., "Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles" (Los Angeles., Calif.: Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, Working Paper No. 15, April 1996), pp. 1-19

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Read Upton Sinclair's The Jungle and the article by Charlie LeDuff entitled "At the Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die. Compare the situation for meat workers now and when Sinclair's novel was published. How are they similar? How are they different? Has the situation improved? Why or why not? Would you want to work in a meat packing plant or slaughterhouse? Why or why not?

IX. Week 9: October 31, 2012— Collective Bargaining Exercise #1 (Happy Halloween—Come to class in costume!)

X. Week 10: November 7, 2012: Work and Gender

DISCUSSION: Gendered Work and Inequality and the gender pay gap

READINGS: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 6.

Ehrenreich, Barbara, <u>Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America</u> (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000): Selling in Minnesota

Gatta, Mary and Yasemin Besen-Cassino, <u>Gender Pay Gap in New Jersey</u>, A report of the American Association of University Women, 2010

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Based upon reading sections of "Nickel and Dimed" and other material, do you think Ehrenreich's experiment was a fair representation of the life of a low-wage worker in America? Ehrenreich asserts that her experience would have been radically different had she been a person of color or a single parent. Do you agree? Ehrenreich found that some low-wage workers are reluctant to form labor organizations. Discuss.

XI. Week 11: November 14, 2012: Work and Family

DISCUSSION: Challenges of integrating work and life; Work hours and 'overwork'; Family leave; Role of gender and socio-economic class

READINGS: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 5

Arlie Russell Hochschild, The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home

Sarah Fass, "Paid Leave in the States"

XII. Week 12: November 28, 2012:Immigration Old and New

DISCUSSION: Is immigration good for the American economy and workers?

READINGS:

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

Gracie Chang, "Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy," Chapter 3, "Undocumented Latinas: The New Employable Mother," pp. 55-92.

Immanuel Ness, <u>Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market</u> (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.

Optional Reading:

Ray Marshall, "Getting Immigration Reform Right," EPI Briefing Paper #186, March 15, 2007.

Ira N. Gang and Anne Morrison Piehl, <u>Destination</u>, <u>New Jersey: How Immigrants Benefit the State Economy</u>, Report, Program on Immigration and Democracy, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, December, 2008.

XIII. Week 13: December 5, 2012: Collective Bargaining Simulation Prep

XIV. Week 14: December 12, 2012 Collective Bargaining Simulation

XV. Week 15, TBD, Final Examination