

Syllabus (tentative)
Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations 37:575:100:80
School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University
Fall 2012

Course Number: 37:575:100:80
Day and Time: Wednesdays 6:00pm-8:40pm
Location: Western Monmouth Higher Education Center

Professor: Mingwei Liu
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the Labor Studies and Employment Relations major. In most of the world, employment is a significant determinant of individuals' and groups' socio-economic status. Labor Studies and Employment Relations examines the employment relationship and its relationship to income equality and access to other important economic, social and cultural resources. It covers: the general topic of work, workers, employment and the organizations and institutions that represent employee interests in the employment relationship; public policies related to employment, human resource management policies and practices, issues of race, class and gender in labor markets and employment, the legal framework for employment relations and issues related to the globalization of employment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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.
- m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- n. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Preparation

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. Bring the week's reading material to class with you so that you can refer to it during lectures and group discussions. Students should plan to *print out all course materials*, take extensive notes on the online course readings, or do both.

Take careful lecture notes. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are forced to miss a class. These are not provided by the instructor.

Participation

Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, small group discussions, 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 explain your views using reasoned arguments and provide evidence for assertions of fact. *Respect others' views and listen.* You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you must give them your full attention and consideration.

Texting, talking on your phone and emailing are all prohibited during class. Students who repeatedly do these things during class time will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent for the week.

Group-Based Learning

This course is weighed heavily towards group and experiential learning for several reasons. First, labor and employment studies are the study of individual workers, as well as the study of collective action in the workplace. Group projects in this course are designed to simulate the possibilities and pitfalls of collective action in the workplace. Second, the modern workplace relies heavily on teamwork. Employees are expected to work together on projects and tasks on a regular basis and to demonstrate effective team leadership. Employers in all sectors of the economy evaluate workers on their ability both to work productively with others, and to lead their co-workers. Finally, experiential learning and group work is fun!

The instructor will assign students to groups early in the semester and these groups will work together throughout the semester. Groups will discuss course reading, participate in experiential exercises, prepare presentations and participate in group trivia quizzes and other in-class exam preparation exercises together. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance on group assignments will be evaluated both by the instructor and the other members of your group.

Attendance

Students should *plan to attend every course session*. Students must sign in personally at the beginning of class; failure to do so will result in a loss of attendance points. 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.

Stay for the whole class. If you are late or leave early, you will be charged with ½ class absence. I recognize that illness, death in the family or other emergencies happen, and will excuse absences for these reasons.

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. Signing in for another student is considered academic dishonesty and can result in failing the course.

Communication

Students are expected to check their official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. The instructor will communicate all official course correspondence to students via email. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the instructor. Verbal discussions with the instructor before or after class will not be considered official unless followed up with written email confirmation.

Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours.

When emailing the instructor, always include “Intro to labor studies and employment relations” in the subject line of your email.

EVALUATION

Final grades will be based on the following four factors:

1. Class preparation, attendance and participation (35%)
2. Written assignments (30%)
3. Group Presentations (10%)
4. Legislation Simulation (5%)
5. Mid-term and Final Exams (20%)

Overall Grade: A = 93 –100; B+ = 88 – 92.9; B = 83– 87.9; C+ = 79 – 82.9; C = 73 – 78.9

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading Criteria

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 using either APA citation rules which can be found on the American Psychological Association website or MLA rules found on the MLA site.

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.

Papers the instructor 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.

Submitting Papers

Students will submit all papers electronically via the Sakai course website. Students can submit their papers by following these directions:

- Include a header on your paper with your last name, first initial and assignment #
- Go to the Sakai course site

- Click on Assignment
- Click on the correct assignment number
- Click on submit as Student
- Drop all the way down below the text box and click on add attachments
- Click on the browse files
- Select your document and upload
- Make sure to complete the upload
- Check to be sure you post your paper under the appropriate assignment

The instructor will not accept papers in class or via email.

Deadlines

All papers will be due 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 full letter grade for each day that they are late.

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. These can be found on the website www.rutgers.edu

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 and identifications. The final exam will cover material from the second half of the course.

COURSE READINGS AND OTHER MATERIALS

Text: Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. 2nd edition. Sage, 2013.

All other materials are available on the course Sakai website. Students can access the course Sakai site by following these directions:

- Go to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
- To log on, enter your Rutgers net ID and password in the upper right hand corner.
- Look for the tabs at the top of the next page. Click on the tab: 37:575:100:80 F12.
- Click on “resources” on the menu on the left hand side of the next page. You should see all of the course readings and other course materials.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: WORK AND EQUALITY IN THE U.S.

WEDNESDAY SEPT. 5. COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Read: This syllabus
- In Class: Introduction, Expectations of students and the Instructor, review syllabus
- Due: Learn how to access the course readings on sakai
Learn how to submit papers on sakai
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WEDNESDAY SEPT. 12. WORK, SOCIOECONOMICS STATUS AND EQUALITY

- Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 1, "Mapping the Contours of Work"
Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 2, "New Products, New Ways of Working, and the New Economy"
Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 3, "Economic Inequality, Social Mobility, and the New Economy"
Janny Scott and David Leonhardt "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide" (pp. 1-14)
- In Class: Lecture on inequality and stratification in the U.S.
Group discussion about individual work history, family economic history
WIN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN SIMULATION
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WEDNESDAY SEPT. 19. WORK, GENDER AND EQUALITY

- Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 6, "Gender Chasms in the New Economy."
Virginia Valian "Gender Schemas at Work" in Why So Slow? (pp. 1-22)
Virginia Valian "Evaluating Men and Women" in Why So Slow? (pp. 125-144)
- In-Class: Lecture on gender, equal pay and "women's work"
Film: Rosie the Riveter
- Due: Written Assignment #1 – Understanding Your Family's Work and Economic History
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WEDNESDAY SEPT. 26 WORK, RACE, ETHNICITY AND EQUALITY

- Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Chapter 7, "Race, Ethnicity and Work."
Upton Sinclair The Jungle (pp. 21-52)
Charlie LeDuff "At a Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die" (pp. 96-114)
- In-Class: Lecture on race, ethnicity and inequality in the workplace

PART II: A HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

WEDNESDAY OCT. 3

Read: Voos and Slott, 1-8

In-class Lecture on historical perspective
Group discussion on key historical developments
Film: At the River I Stand

PART III: 21ST CENTURY WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

WEDNESDAY OCT. 10. CHANGING CONTOURS OF WORK: GLOBALIZATION

READ: Shipping Jobs Overseas: How Real is the Problem? AFL-CIO
Corporate Myths about Shipping Jobs Overseas, AFL-CIO
Policy Solutions to Shipping Jobs Overseas, AFL-CIO
CHARLES DUHIGG and KEITH BRADSHER. 2012. "How the US Lost Out on iPhone Work." New York Times, January 21, 2012.
CHARLES DUHIGG and DAVID BARBOZA. 2012. "In China, Human Costs Are Built Into an iPad." New York Times, January 25, 2012.
Nicholas Kristof, "Where Sweatshops are a dream", New York Times, Jan.15, 2009

In-class: Lecture on globalization and China
Film: Is Wal-Mart good for America?
Group discussion on globalization

WEDNESDAY OCT. 17. YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM WORK

READ: Sweet and Meiskins, Chapter 4, "Whose Jobs are Secure?"
Sweet and Meiskins, Chapter 5, "A Fair Day's Work."
Sweet and Meiskins, Chapter 8, "Reshaping the Contours of the New Economy."
Ehrenreich, "Nickel and Dimed."
Greider, William. "Work Rules." In R.E. Miller and K. Spellmeyer.
The New Humanities Reader. 3rd edition. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 2009. (pp. 251-269)
Hannah Seligson. "American Graduates Find Jobs in China", New York Times, Aug. 11, 2009.

IN-CLASS Group Discussion: Future employment trends; What I plan to do to shape my future

Lecture on Future Employment Trends

DUE: Written Assignment # 2

PART IV: COLLECTIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE THE OUTCOMES OF WORK

WEDNESDAY OCT. 24. UNION ORGANIZING

READ: Michael Yates “How Unions Form” in Why Unions Matter (pp. 24-38)
Marty Levitt “Copeland Oaks” in Confessions of a Union Buster (pp.163-201)

IN-CLASS: Mid-term exam covering first half of course
Film: Where do You Stand: Stories from an American Mill

WEDNESDAY OCT. 31 WHAT DO UNIONS DO

READ: Richard Freeman What Do Unions Do? (pp. 43-60, 162-180, 181-190)

IN CLASS: Group Discussion – Organizing
Lecture on organizing
Lecture on what unions do
Group Discussion –Public opinions on unions

WEDNESDAY NOV. 7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

READ: Michael Yates “Collective Bargaining” in Why Unions Matter (pp.53-80)
Harry Katz, John Paul MacDuffie and Frits Pil. “Autos: Continuity and Chang in Collective Bargaining” in Collective Bargaining in the Private Sector

IN CLASS Lecture on Collective Bargaining
Team Preparation for Collective Bargaining Simulation

DUE: Written assignment 3

WEDNESDAY NOV. 14. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SIMULATION

Monday NOV. 28. GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING EXPERIENCE

READINGS: TBD

DUE: Group Presentation

WEDNESDAY DEC. 5. PUBLIC POLICY AND POLITICAL ACTION

READ: To Be Determined

IN CLASS: Legislation Simulation

DUE: TESTIMONY SUMMARY (KEY POINTS, 1 PAGE)

WEDNESDAY DEC. 12. COURSE WRAP UP AND FINAL EXAM (covers second half of course)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1 – Due Sept. 19

Understanding your own family history in the economy. Write a short descriptive paper (2-3 pages, double spaced) about your family's economic history over the past three generations (your grandparents, parents and yourself/siblings). For example:

- What jobs/occupations have they held?
- Did your grandmother or mother work outside the home?
- If you have had jobs, briefly describe them
- How have cultural attitudes about gender, race, ethnicity, national origin or religion affected your family's work and economic history?

You may need to make a phone call home to collect information. After you have written your first draft, re-read Scott and Leonhardt's "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide" (on *Sakai*). Then write a concluding paragraph describing where you think your family falls on the generational income change graph located here:

http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/national/20050515_CLASS_GRAPHIC/index_01.html

Assignment 2 – Due Oct. 17

Your Personal Work and Career Aspirations: Write a short (2-3 pages, double spaced) paper describing your own aspirations for meaningful work and a satisfying career. You should address the following questions:

- What features of a job and career are most important to you?
- Based on the readings and discussions from this course so far, what do you believe you will have to do to prepare yourself to achieve your aspirations?
- What obstacles do you expect to face and how will you overcome them?

Assignment 3 – Due Nov. 7

Understanding changing views about labor unions and collective action. First, interview a friend or family member who is 40 or older, and a friend or family member who is younger than 40, about their views about unions. Sample questions could include:

- Have you ever been a union member? If so which union?
- What do you think unions do well? What do you think unions do poorly?
- How do you think that labor unions have changed in the recent years?

- What role do you think that unions have played in the economy in the U.S.? What role do you think that unions should play in the economy?
- What role do you think that unions have played in the political system in the U.S.? What role do you think unions should play in the political system?

Using your interviews as a guides, and also drawing upon the class readings and discussions about the history of labor relations, write a short analytic paper (2-3 pages, double spaced) about the role of about the role of unions and collective action in the U.S. Your paper should address the following questions;

- How do you think that perceptions of unions have changed over time?
- Did you find differences of opinion in your interviews? If so, what reasons do you think account for the difference?
- On balance, what do you think the role of unions and collective action has been in the social and economic development of the US?

Group Presentation Assignment – Due Nov. 28

Each group should prepare a 15-20 minute presentation about what you learned from the collective bargaining simulation. The presentations should be lively, interesting and not simply a summary of what happened. Groups may use visuals, PowerPoint, skits or any other tools in your presentation, although they do not have to. Each member of the group must participate in the planning, execution and presentation itself (in addition to a group grade from the instructors, each student will be graded by the members of his/her group).

Your presentations should address at least two of the following questions about your experience:

- What did you learn from this experience, as individuals and as a team?
- What did your team do well during the simulation? What would you do differently next time?
- How did individual personalities on your team affect your own and the team's performance?
- What did you learn about working collaboratively with others?
- How will you use this knowledge in the future?
- What would you like to see the instructors change next time?

Legislation Simulation Assignment –Due Dec.5

This assignment aims to demonstrate the link between political philosophy, partisan politics, public employment relations policy and important workplace outcomes – compensation and benefits, working conditions, safety and health, advancement opportunities. The simulation will take the form of a legislative hearing where different important interest groups and organizations present testimony on their view of an important legislation or public policy (topic to be determined). Students will be assigned to represent a Senate Subcommittee and different key interested stakeholder groups and to prepare to present testimony to the Subcommittee. Each group is required to submit in class a 1-page summary covering the key points of their testimony.