

Youth and Work
Course # 37: 575: 215: 01
Fall 2012
Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Thursday 2:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.
Cook/Douglas Labor Education Center, Room 130/131
Lecturer: Susan Stahl, MBA, J.D.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course explores historical and contemporary issues related to young workers in the U.S. labor market.

Initially, we will discuss the concept of “child labor” in the 19th and early 20th centuries. We will focus on defining child labor within social and economic contexts. In doing so, we will investigate several industries where the use of child labor was common during the pertinent time frame. Discussion will center on the cause and effects of child and youth labor and related reforms. We will also examine continued existence of child labor in the U.S. and globally.

Next, we will explore how contemporary youth view and prepare for work, what expectations they have, and what role education plays in relation to workforce paths and careers. Topics discussed in this section of the course will include, among others; working students, educational opportunities, the young working poor, and different experiences among young workers in our current economic environment vis a vis class, gender, and race. We will also examine the issue of student debt and its ramification.

Finally, the course explores internships and unpaid work, contingent workers, knowledge and skill base requirements and job-hopping as they relate to employment in today’s job market. We will discuss various policies in these contexts and brainstorm ideas for new programs and policies that can improve youth work experience and economic self-sufficiency.

Overall, the course explores several questions, including; why do young people work? What jobs/industries are youth likely to work in, and how has this changed over time? Why and how are young workers concentrated in specific industries/occupations? How does young peoples’ preparation for and participation in the labor market today differ from the role of previous generations of young workers? What are some of the challenges that young people face at work? How are the challenges that young workers face different from or similar to those of adult workers? How can young workers and their advocates improve young peoples’ experiences in the labor market?

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

A. This class has the following **21st Century Challenges** objectives:

Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences and perspective on the world.

Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.

B. It also has the following **Social Analysis** objectives:

Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.

Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

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

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

I will spend a significant part of the class providing a framework or background for each session's topic, however I view this as an interactive course and welcome your input. The quality and effectiveness of the course will depend heavily on your input as a careful reader of the assigned materials and as a participant and leader of discussions. Participating in class discussions is one of the best ways to learn. Contributing to class discussions can take a number of forms. You may answer questions that I ask. You may ask questions. You may comment on another person's contribution, or you may try to encourage others to speak. The goal is to participate (daily & often!) in an intellectually rigorous manner that will help us advance the discussion. You cannot do this if you are not prepared for class. Being prepared means you have read and completed all assignments and have done so thoughtfully and carefully.

In addition, all cell phones, lap tops, iPads, and other devices must be turned off prior to class. I also expect that you will make every effort to arrive on time to class, and it is not acceptable to leave after the break. I expect that barring any emergencies you will be present (both physically & mentally) during the entire class period. Please note that if you chose not to come to class on a particular day you are still responsible for that day's lecture, readings, etc.

Some of the materials covered in this course may be controversial and I anticipate that we will sometimes disagree in our discussions of them. We all must be committed to work hard to create a class culture that will be congenial for each student's participation. You will be expected to respect each of your classmates and their comments, and demonstrate that respect at all times. Remarks that are dismissive of other students or that personally attack anyone in the classroom will not be tolerated and will severely reduce your participation grade. Please do not be concerned that taking a perspective different from mine will in any way negatively affect your grade.

REQUIRED BOOKS

All books are available at Rutgers Bookstore.

Supplemental course readings will be available on the course website, online, or from me.

Hindman, Hugh. 2002. **Child Labor: An American History.** M.E. Sharpe.

Draut, Tamara. 2005. **Strapped: Why America's 20 and 30 Somethings Can't Get Ahead**

CLASS GRADE

Your final grade is based on the following:

Class Exercises/ Participation	20%
2 Quizzes	20%
Personal Experience/Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

*** I will not accept any papers or quizzes by email or fax during the semester. You must be in class to hand in your paper for credit. Absent an extreme emergency, there will be no opportunity to make-up quizzes and no extensions of time to hand in papers. If you experience a significant situation which effects your ability to complete the work in this class in a timely fashion **DO NOT DELAY IN DISCUSSING THE PROBLEM WITH ME.** I will make myself available to meet with students before and after class sessions as needed.

Throughout the course there may be class exercises for certain classes. These will include hands-on projects related to the readings which will be conducted (typically in pairs/groups),

during the class period. **There are NO make-up class exercises.** They must be completed during the class period, and will be handed in before you leave that class. If a given exercise requires out-of-class preparation, I will assign the exercise prior to the class in which it will be conducted.

Personal Experience Paper

Students will write a short (3-4 pages) essay reflecting on their own experiences in the labor market. Papers should address several of the following questions: When did you start working and why? What types of jobs have you held and in what industries have you worked? Has most of your work experience been in the formal or informal sector? Have you worked mostly for individuals, small family businesses, or large companies? What are the best and worst things about the jobs that you have held? How typical do you think that your work experience has been? What are your career expectations and objectives and what steps are you taking to reach your goals? How do you think your work experience to date will help or hinder your future work life? What issues concern you most in preparing for your work life and why? This paper also requires research on the skill requirements and the current market for the chosen field or industry in which you hope to work.

QUIZZES

Two quizzes are scheduled throughout the semester. These quizzes are based on the weekly readings and discussions. The quizzes will require you to construct informed and thoughtful answers to the questions. Therefore, you will be allowed to bring your own personal class and reading notes to each quiz. These notes may be handwritten or typed, but must be in the form of a 'hard copy'- either part of a paper notebook or folder, or just on loose paper. They cannot be on a laptop, phone, or PDA. Additional quizzes will be scheduled or administered spontaneously as necessary if course participants fail to prepare or participate in class.

FINAL EXAM

You will have a final take home exam pulling together the reading from the course, but particularly focusing on current issues regarding youth in today's labor market.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following schedule is subject to revisions at my discretion, if necessary, as the course progresses.

Schedule

September

Week 1

9/6- Introduction to Course

Assignment: (Hindman) The Child Labor Problem, Chaps. 1&2

Week 2

9/13 Lecture/Discussion –Chaps. 1&2

Assignment: (Hindman) Chaps. 4 (Coal Mines)

6 (Cotton/Textiles)

Week 3

9/20- Lecture/Discussion –Chaps. 4& 6

Assignment: (Hindman) Chap. 9 (Agriculture)

Week 4

9/27- Lecture/Discussion Chap. 9

October

Week 5

10/4- Film: The Harvest

Discussion and class exercise

Assignment: (Hindman) Chaps 7 (Homework, sweatshops)

8 (Street trades)

Week 6

10/11 – Quiz

Lecture/Discussion Chaps. 7&8

-Explanation of work experience paper- paper due 10/25

Assignment: “Struggling for Work- The Broken Dreams of a ‘New Generation’.” Diminishing Returns: Philadelphia Inquirer, www.philly.com/phljobs - posted 3/31/2012

Week 7

10/18 Discussion: Philadelphia Inquirer article

Lecture: Teenagers and Work Today

Assignment: (Draut) Chap. 1 “Higher & Higher Education”

Week 8

10/25-

Lecture/Discussion: Education in relation to work/career paths, Chap. 1

Assignment: (Draut) Chap. 3, Debt Generation

-Philadelphia Inquirer, Highly Devoted, Deeply in Debt, posted 4/14/2012

-Philadelphia Inquirer, Young Workers Struggle to Enter the Job Market, posted 4/20/2012

November

Week 9

11/1 Lecture/Discussion Chap. 3 & articles and class exercise: Brainstorm policies to address issues discussed in previous 3 weeks.

Assignment: (Draut) Chap. 7 Changing Course

Week 10

11/8 – Quiz

Lecture/Discussion, Chap. 7

Assignment: (Besen, At Sam’s Club, no girls allowed: the lived experiences of sex discrimination* AND Besen, ‘The Cost of Being a Girl: Gender Earnings Differentials in the Early Labor Market*’) AND Race, Class, and Youth Work (AFL-CIO “Young workers: A Lost Decade*”) AND Economic Policy Institute “The Kids Aren’t Alright: A Labor Market Analysis of Young Workers*”

Week 11

11/15- Race, Class, Gender: Lecture/Discussion based on last week's assigned readings. Class exercise.

No Assignment

Week 12

11/22 OFF FOR THANKSGIVING

Week 13

11/29-Discussion Job Knowledge Requirements & Job Hopping

Assignment: To be determined

Take home exam distributed.

December**Week 14**

12/6 Discussion contingent workers, internships, unpaid work

Week 15

12/13 FINAL EXAM DUE- Must be turned in to me at our classroom no later than 3:30 p.m. on 12/13.