Instructor: Professor Francis Ryan  
Office: 114 Labor Center Building,  
Office Hours: Monday 11:30-12:30, Wednesday 1-2  
Email: fryan@work.rutgers.edu  
Classroom: Labor Education Center 166, Wednesday 7:20-10pm

Course Overview: The current crisis of the public sector workplace—centered in part on such issues as pension defunding, contract impasses, school reform, civil service and debates over unionization, privatization and taxation—is at the heart of our national political discussion. This class will provide an introduction to some of these important issues, place the contemporary debates in a historical, cultural and sociological perspective, and define the trends in recent scholarship. While the clash over government services and the work structures that provide them seems new, the origins of this debate have deep roots in U.S. political theory and history. We will explore these matters in depth and examine how contemporary scholars in management and industrial relations have contextualized this dynamic.

Course Guidelines:

Class attendance: As a graduate-level course that meets in seminar once a week, your attendance is critical. You are expected to attend each class session, and to be on time. Please be punctual and plan to stay for the entire class. If you are unable to make it to class, or need to leave early, please let me know ahead of time.

Participation: This class will utilize a variety of formats. Each week, I will provide an overview of the topic in the first half of the class, and invite open dialogue during this process. After the break period, the class will engage in discussion of the assigned readings for the week. Of course, you are expected to have completed the readings assigned before coming to class each week and be ready to take an active role in these discussions. Class participation includes active, respectful listening and well as talking. Please keep notes of you readings and class discussions. I ask that you do not use any recording devices in this class.

Missed Exams: All students are expected to take the scheduled in-class exams (midterm and final) at the designated times.

All writing assignments will be collected at the beginning of class the day they are due. This also applies to the first draft and peer review sessions. Out of respect to those who meet this expectation, late papers will be subject to downgrading. Unless otherwise specified, it is expected that hardcopies of the paper be handed in, rather than by email attachment.
Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class 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.

Sakai: This course uses the web-based classroom management system. Please utilize Sakai to access each week’s readings. Other readings as specified can be downloaded via the Rutgers Library Journal website, or public access on line.

Grading:

In class mid-term exam: 20%
Participation: 25%
In class final: 25%
Final paper: 30%

Separate handouts will explain the expectations for the final paper.

Please note that this syllabus may change during the course of the semester. Additional in-class readings will be handed out from time to time as related to developments in the issues we are exploring from week to week during the semester.

Sept 4: Introduction and Overview of the course.

In Class Reading: Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (1835) "Public Officers Under the Control of the Democracy in America," 167-173.

Discussion Theme: Cultural perceptions of government sector employment.

Sept 11: Government Jobs, the Spoils System and the Rise of Civil Service


Excerpt from J.T. Salter, Boss Rule (1935)

(continued on next page...)

**Sept 18: Government Sector Employment: Conflicting Viewpoints**


Milton Friedman, “Why Government is the Problem.” (Hoover Institute, 1993)


**Sept 25: Public Sector Employee Issues and the Law**


**Oct 2: Collective Bargaining and Arbitration in the Public Sector**


Steve Adubato “Binding Arbitration Doesn't Add Up, “ March 2009 (available on line)

Scott Weingart, “The Police State: Will Christie Take on New Jersey Cops,” March 1, 2010 (available on line)


Oct 16: The Crisis in Federal Service: Contract Administration, Personnel Practices and the Merit System


Oct 23: Public Sector Unions and the Fiscal Crisis

**Readings:** Jeff Keefe, Research on public vs. private sector pay differentials in NJ.


**Readings:** Vice President Al Gore’s National Partnership for Reinventing Government

“Reinventing Your Government,” by David Osborne

Introduction to 1995 Report of the New Jersey Commission on Privatization and Competitive Contracting

Nov 6: The Public Sector Pension Crisis

Readings: Katie Benner, “The Public Pension Bomb,” in *Fortune* May 12 2009


Nov 13: Tenure, Teacher Militancy and Education Issues


In Class Discussion: Blackboard Unionism: History and Debate

Film: *Up the Down Staircase* (1968)

Nov 20: Charter Schools and Public Finance

First half of class: Peer Review Writing Exercise

Film: *Waiting for Superman*

In Class Readings: Selected critical responses to *Waiting for Superman.*

Nov 27: Thanksgiving Break: No Classes

Dec 4: Taxation and the Challenge of Regionalism


Dec 11: Final exam in class