

**PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**

37:575:395

Spring 2013

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COURSE SUMMARY

Labor is a broad topic that can be approached from a variety of perspectives. This course is designed to familiarize students with some of the key traditional perspectives, and to give students an opportunity to apply these perspectives to contemporary issues in Labor Studies. Students will be asked to read the assigned scholarship for the arguments, to take a position on those arguments, and to scrutinize the arguments' logic and relationship to the evidence. Students will also be required to participate in discussions and give presentations. Some of the readings are difficult. And, students who enroll in the course must be labor studies majors or minors, and must have earned 15 or more credits in labor studies. A student who does not meet these requirements must seek permission from the instructor in order to take this class.

COURSE READINGS

All course readings will be posted on Sakai.

CLASS 1, January 24: Introduction and Orientation

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Bring a copy of the syllabus/syllabus provided. We will review the syllabus.
2. Sign attendance sheet to secure your position in class and in a group.
3. Introductions.
4. Discuss the January 31 class.

CLASS 2, January 31: Introduction to Our Object of Inquiry: Labor

READINGS DUE:

1. "World of Work Report, 2012: Better jobs for a better economy", Summary. International Labour Organization.
2. State of Working America, 12th Edition, by Lawrence Mishel, Josh Bivens, Elise Gould, and Heidi Shirholz. Economic Policy Institute, Cornell University Press (November 2012).
3. "Lessons for Resisting Useless Vices", in Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking Glass World, by Eduardo Galeano.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Submit answers to questions related to readings.
2. Discuss answers in class and watch movie Darwin's Nightmare or Commanding Heights.
3. Bring the list of questions related to the movie to class. These questions are posted on Sakai and shall serve as a guide to the movie.
4. Receive facilitation and group assignment.

CLASS 3, February 7: Capitalism Promotes Freedom and Prosperity?

SUMMARY: In its capitalistic form, the market of exchange has been linked to freedom and prosperity. We will explore how two key classic scholars, Adam Smith and F.A. Hayek, establish these links and we will summarily place their theories into historical context.

READINGS DUE:

1. Chapters 1, 2, 3, and pgs. 216-220. An Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations, by Adam Smith.
2. Chapters 3, 9, and Conclusion. The Road to Serfdom, by F.A. Hayek

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 4, February 14: Capitalism Promotes Oppression, Destruction, and Inequality?

SUMMARY: In its capitalistic form, the market of exchange and production has also been linked to inequality, oppression, and destruction. We will explore how two classic scholars, Karl Marx and Joseph Schumpeter, establish these links and will summarily place their theories in historical context.

READINGS DUE:

1. Chapters 4, 5, and 6. A Critique of Political Economy: Capital, Vol. 1, by Karl Marx
2. "Creative Destruction", Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, by Joseph Schumpeter

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 5, February 21: Contemporary Arguments on Labor, Markets, Freedom, and Inequality

SUMMARY: We turn to contemporary scholarship on markets and labor. Will unregulated markets and global divisions of labor increase prosperity and freedom? Will the trajectory of capitalism lead to increasing inequality, instability, and oppression? Are the links and conclusions made by scholars today similar to the links and conclusions made by past scholars?

READINGS DUE:

1. “Globalization: A Long-Term Trajectory of the World-System”, in The Decline of American Power, by Immanuel Wallerstein.
2. “Thirty Little Turtles”, by Thomas Friedman, NYT, Feb. 29, 2004.
3. “Freedom is Just Another Word”, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, by David Harvey.
4. “The Case for Free Trade”, by Milton and Rose Friedman

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Group Assessments Due

CLASS 6, February 28: Movie, Review, and First Take-Home Test

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Movie: “Commanding Heights” or “Life and Debt”
2. Review
3. Hand Out Take-Home Test

CLASS 7, March 7: More than an economic input: meanings and experiences of work.

SUMMARY: Human beings labor and work. What are our labor and work experiences and expectations, and why would these experiences and expectations matter?

READINGS DUE:

1. “Feeling Rules”, “Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses” and “The Search for Authenticity”, The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling, by Arlie Russel Hochschild (fyi - a female, not a male).
2. “Work”, from White Collar, by C. Wright Mills.

3. Selected Essays and Songs:
 - “Lose Yourself”, by Eminem (find lyrics and video on YouTube)
 - “Working Class Hero”, (find lyrics and video on YouTube, and you may choose to listen and watch John Lennon’s original, or Ozzy’s take, or Marianne Faithful’s take, or Green Day’s take, or any other take you may find.)
 - “Turn the Radio to a Gospel Station” and “Groundskeeper Busted Reading in the Custodial Water Closet” in Working Words: Punching the Clock and Kicking Out the Jams, ed. M.L. Liebler. (Readings on Sakai).

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Review the readings and Simpson’s Episode
2. “Homer’s Enemy”, The Simpsons, Season 8, Episode 23.
3. Take Home Test due. It must be submitted to me before the start of class, by email to tpoor@aleph-naught.net, as a Word or PDF doc.

CLASS 8, March 14: More than an economic input: motivating people to work

SUMMARY: Do people need to be motivated to work? If so, why and what are the drivers that motivate people to work?

READINGS DUE:

1. “The Human Side of Enterprise”, by Douglas McGregor from J. Steven Ott, ed. Classic Readings in Organization Behavior
2. “Motivation”, in Classic Readings in Organization Behavior, ed. J. Steven Ott
3. “Where We Are Now”, How to Tell When You’re Tired: A Brief Examination of Work, by Reg Theriault.
4. “Sisters of the Craft”, Dishing it Out, by Dorothy Sue Cobble.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings assigned for March 21 and March 28.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

SPRING BREAK: March 16 to March 24

CLASS 9, March 28: More than an economic input: citizens, consumers, and agents of progress

SUMMARY: Are people more than just workers? Do we simultaneously occupy different roles, even while we are at work? If so, what are these roles and what influence do they have on labor, work, and society?

READINGS DUE:

1. “Producers as Consumers”, American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society, by Lawrence Glickman.
2. “The Politics of ‘More’: From Gompers to Dubois”, Against Thrift: Why Consumer Culture is Good for the Economy, the Environment, and Your Soul, by James Livingston
3. Gompers’ Argument in “Gompers v. Allen Debate”, Sam Gompers vs. Governor Allen, 1920 debate.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Group Assessments Due

CLASS 10, April 4: Organizing Labor and Work

SUMMARY: Do managers and unions share similar organizational methods? Yes, sometimes. We will explore bureaucratic approaches to organizing labor at work, and into unions. We will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of this approach.

READINGS DUE:

1. “Bureaucracy”, by Max Weber.
2. “Uses of Industrial Power”, by David Brody
3. Selected excerpts from Scientific Management, by Frederick Winslow Taylor.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 11, April 11: How Should We Organize Labor?

SUMMARY:

1. “A Theory of the Labor Movement”, by Selig Perlman

2. “Moving Innovation from the Margins to the Center for a New American Labor Movement”, by Janice Fine in A New Movement for the New Century, by Gregory Mantsios, editor, Monthly Review Press, 1998.
3. “Open Source Unionism: Beyond Exclusive Collective Bargaining”, by Richard Freeman and Joel Rogers
4. WATCH: Walter Reuther: The Mike Wallace Interview at www.hrc.utexas.edu/mltimedia/video/2008/wallace/reuther_walter-t.html

CLASS 12, April 18: Freedom to Associate and the Liberty of Contract

SUMMARY: People are now caught up in debates about “the right to work” and the “right to join a union”. Recent legislation and political battles in states like Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana define the parameters of these debates. The issues and arguments, however, are not necessarily new. They have deep historical and legal roots found in ideas like “the liberty of contract” and the “freedom of association”. We will explore some of these roots in this class.

READINGS DUE:

1. Excerpts from “Contract, Race, and Freedom of Labor in the Constitutional Law of “Involuntary Servitude”, by James Gray Pope, The Yale Law Journal, Vol. 119, pp. 1474-1567, 2010.
2. Excerpts from “Constitutive Commitments and Roosevelt’s Second Bill of Rights: A Dialogue”, by Randy E. Barnett and Cass R. Sunstein, 53 Drake L. Rev. 205-229 (2005)
3. “Defining Economic Freedom”, by Ambassador Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim. Posted at [www.heritage.org/index/chapter -7](http://www.heritage.org/index/chapter-7)
4. “What “Right to Work” Would Mean for Michigan”, by Roland Zullo, Institute for Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan
5. “The Power of the Market” from Free to Choose: A Personal Statement, by Milton and Rose Friedman.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 13, April 25: In Class Debate

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

1. Review debate scenario on liberty of contract and freedom of association and prepare an argument for both sides. Prepare to be placed on one of the teams. The winning team will receive extra credit points. Each team will select a “most valuable player”, who will receive additional extra credit points. Finally, there will be one other opportunity to receive additional extra credit points.

MAY 1 – REMEMBER TO CELEBRATE THE SHORTER WORK DAY

CLASS 14, May 2: Social Movements and Everyday Forms of Resistance

SUMMARY: Sometimes workers join social movements which change the political and economic landscape. What is a “movement”? We will explore this question in this class by reviewing a primary theory that defines a “social movement” and by exploring instances of “daily forms of resistance”.

READINGS DUE:

1. Chapters 3 and 4, Rivthead: Tales from the Assembly Line, by Ben Hamper.
2. “Shiftless of the World Unite!”, Race Rebels, by Robin Kelley
3. “Structuring of Protest”, Poor People’s Movements: How They Succeed, Why They Fail, by Piven and Cloward

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Everyone submit answers to the questions related to the readings.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Hand out final, and review.

FINAL And FINAL GROUP ASSESSMENTS DUE, May 9:

The final and the final group assessment are due by 6 p.m., on May 9. Submit them to me at tpoor@aleph-naught.net. Submit it as a Word document. It may not be longer than eight pages, and it must be typed and double spaced.

GRADING AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance (10% of your total grade)

Rutgers University has an attendance policy:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled course meetings, although no special provisions are normally made for reporting occasional absences from class. It is the policy of the university to

excuse without penalty students who are absent because of religious observance and to allow the makeup of work missed because of such absences. A student absent from an examination because of required religious observance will be given an opportunity to make up the examination without penalty.

We will abide by this attendance policy.

Group Participation and Facilitation Assignment (40% of your total grade):

The Group

Students will be broken down into separate Groups on the second day of class. Students will remain in these Groups for the entire semester. The objectives of this Group assignment are: (1) ensure that each student has read the material and has come to class prepared to discuss the material; (2) encourage students to assess other students' performance and to give helpful and constructive feedback; and (3) receive feedback from the professor.

The Group Facilitator Assignment

During the semester, one student in each group will act as the facilitator. This facilitator role will rotate throughout the semester. The student who acts as the facilitator must do the following:

- a. The facilitator is responsible for leading the other students in the group through that week's reading assignment.
- b. By 10 p.m. on the Tuesday before each class, the facilitator will submit his or her typed answers to one of the questions posted on Sakai, and send it to me at tpoor@aleph-naught.net and to the other students in the Group. I will review and comment on that answer by Thursday at 10 a.m. My review and comments will be given to the facilitator and will be geared toward helping the facilitator lead the group discussion scheduled for later that night.
- c. The facilitator will then lead the group discussion.

The Group's Responsibility for Weekly Questions and Answers

- a. Each member of the group must also answer the questions related to the reading assigned to the Group.
- b. Each member of the group must submit his or her answer to the facilitator and to me by 7 p.m. on the Tuesday before each class.
- c. Each member of the group will receive the facilitator's answer by 10 p.m., on the Tuesday before each class.

The Group Assessment Assignment

- a. Each student will provide a written Assessment of each other student in the group three times over the course of the semester. Due dates are listed on the syllabus and the Assessment format is posted on Sakai.
- b. The written Assessment will be submitted to the professor and to the student who is being assessed.
- c. The goal of the Assessment is to provide constructive and honest feedback to each group member, and to give the professor a better understanding of the Group's dynamic.

Midterm: (25% of your total grade)

The midterm will be a take-home test comprised of short essay answers. The test will cover all of the readings, not just the readings that your Group focused on.

The Final (25% of your total grade)

The final will be a take-home test comprised of short essay answers. The test will cover all of the readings, not just the readings that your Group focused on.

“Office Hours”

If you email me anytime between Monday and Tuesday, I will respond to your email before Thursday morning. I will respond to all other email when I am able. Speak with me after class if you need to arrange a time to meet.

I WILL DOCK POINTS FROM ALL UNEXCUSED LATE WEEKLY WRITTEN ANSWERS, FACILITATION ANSWERS, GROUP ASSESSMENTS, AND TESTS. TIMELY SUBMISSION OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS IS IMPORTANT. THANKS.