LABOR & DEMOCRACY
Labor Studies and Employment Relations 575:301
Fall 2014

SYLLABUS

Class Meetings: Prof. Tobias Schulze-Cleven
Room 105 tschulzecleven@work.rutgers.edu
Tillett Hall Phone: 848-932-1740
Livingston Campus Office: Labor Education Center, Room 171
Tuesday and Thursday, 1:40 – 3:00pm Office Hours: Before & after class on
Livingston C.; or by appt.

Course Overview:
This course probes the causes, nature and effects of labor movements in comparative perspective. Students will be introduced to workers’ collective action as a worldwide phenomenon that has been central to the political economic development of capitalist democracies. Taking a historical institutionalist approach to labor as a social movement, the course emphasizes how a country’s unique history and its institutional context have shaped the political opportunities for workers’ evolving collective action.

With reference to three centuries of transatlantic history, the class covers both key political achievements of the working class as well as labor’s contemporary challenges. Among the achievements, we focus in particular on the extension of democratic rights and the expansion of welfare states; among the challenges, we probe the needs to accommodate shifting social cleavages, respond to economic globalization, and devise strategies for revitalization.

Learning Objectives:
• Analyze the degree to which different contexts shape a person’s experience of and perspective on work (as well as the world more broadly) – SAS(a) & LSER(6).
• Analyze issues of social justice locally and globally – SAS(d) & LSER(8).
• Use the comparative approach to develop a solid understanding of labor movements’ causes, nature and effects.
• Improve professional competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving; verbal and written communication; and interpersonal skills.

Course Requirements (details at the end of the syllabus):
In-Class Participation 35% of the course grade
Midterm Exam 30%
Final Exam 35%
Class Materials:
- Students are not required to purchase any books. All readings will be made available on Rutgers Sakai (http://sakai.rutgers.edu).

Course Outline:

Week 1: Building a Foundation

Introduction (Sept 2)
No reading. We familiarize ourselves with the main themes of the course.

Labor & Democracy (Sept 4)

SECTION I: TOOLS FOR ANALYZING LABOR MOVEMENTS
This section of the course probes how we can conceptualize labor movements: Who belongs to them? What does a movement seek to do? Why does a movement end up doing what it does?

Week 2: Work & Collective Action

Markets for Labor (Sept 9)

Is Collective Action Necessary? (Sept 11)

Week 3: Labor as a Social Movement

Illustration (I): The California Farm Worker Movement (Sept 16) – QUIZ!

Theory (I): The Dynamics of Building Social Movements (Sept 18)
Week 4: Institutions & Workers’ Collective Action

**Illustration (II): Organized Labor & Immigration (Sept 23)**

**Theory (II): Context Shapes Social Action (Sept 25)**
Prepare for guest speaker, Thomas Haipeter (University of Duisburg-Essen): Q&A on how social context shapes the actions of the German labor movement (differences w/ US)

SECTION II: LABOR MOVEMENTS IN COMPARATIVE HISTORY

In this section of the course, we move beyond the United States to probe how labor movements have played pivotal roles in many countries’ histories. We focus on the role of labor in shaping the fate of democracy and capitalism during the 1930s, and in the consolidation of welfare states after World War II.

Week 5: Promoting Social Democracy

**Establishing the Primacy of Politics (Sept 30) – QUIZ!**

**The Swedish Path to Social Democracy (Oct 2)**

Week 6: Limits to Social Democracy in Germany & the United States

**The German Path to National Socialism (Oct 7) – QUIZ!**

**The American Labor Movement and the New Deal (Oct 9)**
Available Student Presentations:

**Week 7: Consolidating Social Democracy & Welfare States**

**Cross-National Comparisons (Oct 14)**

**Bringing in the Middle Class after World War II (Oct 16)**

**Week 8: Workplace Democracy**

**How Much Should the Welfare State Do? (Oct 21)**


**MIDTERM (Oct 23)**
Prepare.

SECTION III: KEY CHALLENGES FOR LABOR MOVEMENTS

In this section, we review how contemporary labor movements have reacted to some of the key challenges they face around the world today. We also reflect on how they might do better, addressing such questions as: How should labor movements adopt their strategies? Who and how should they seek to organize and mobilize for “contentious collective action”? Which goals should they pursue? How can they be revitalized?

**Week 9: Shifting Gender Roles**

**The British Case (Oct 28 & 30)**
No reading. We will watch a movie and complete a worksheet.
Week 10: Responding to Shifting Gender Roles

**Socio-economic Changes (Nov 4) – QUIZ!**

**Labor’s Responses (Nov 6)**

Week 11: The Rise of Neoliberalism

**Social Democracy in Question? (Nov 11 & 13)**

Week 12: Barriers to a Unified Labor Movement

**Defining the Status Quo (Nov 18) – QUIZ!**

**Intraclass Conflicts, Cross-Class Alliances and “Dualization” (Nov 20)**
Three short readings from the Policy Network on recent developments in Sweden:

Week 13: Framing Labor’s Responses to Neoliberalism (I)

**Preparation for Debates: This class believes that… (Nov 25)**
1. … “Rising Economic Inequality Threatens Democracy.”
2. … “The Best Way for Labor Unions to Revitalize Is to Embrace Social Media.”
Research. No Required Reading.

Week 14: Framing Labor’s Responses to Neoliberalism (II)

**In-Class Debates (Dec 2)**
Research. No Required Reading.
Developing a Reform Narrative (Dec 4)
Sojourners, March, 18-19.

Week 15: Union Revitalization

Linking Vision and Strategy (Dec 9) – REVIEW! (Bring Questions.)
John Wojcik. 2013. “Amazon Workers Battle Their Bosses in Seattle and Germany.”
People’s World / Deutsche Welle, December 16.

Week 16: Final Exam online Dec 10-20

Appendix – Further Information on Course Assignments & Class Rules:

ACCESS TO READINGS
All readings will be made available on Rutgers Sakai (http://sakai.rutgers.edu). These directions lead you to the course site:

• Go to http://sakai.rutgers.edu
• To log on, enter your Rutgers NetID and password in the upper right-hand corner.
• Look for the tabs at the top of the next page. Click on the tab: 38:575:301.
• Click on “Resources” on the menu on the left-hand side of the next page. You should see the course syllabus and all of the course readings.

SPECIAL RULES ON ENGAGING WITH THE READINGS
Students are required to print out all assigned readings to allow for effective engagement with the material. Moreover, students are expected to bring hard-copy versions of the assigned texts to class meetings. After instructor’s individual approval, electronic versions may be used as substitutes. These measures will help with in-class discussions of the readings.

SPECIAL RULES ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES
There will be no use of laptops, tablets or smart phones during class sessions without special permission. While such instruments are important tools for research, they have also become distractions in the classroom. For in-depth learning in the course, students are asked to pay focused attention and contribute critical thought in class discussions. I will prepare PowerPoint presentations that will include the main points of each class session. The slides from these presentations will be shared with students through Sakai after each class session.
IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Be prepared for class and always read the assigned materials before our meetings. You are expected to bring questions and comments about the course material so that you can participate in class discussions. With much of our time spent learning through discussion, it is necessary for everybody to participate. I might ask students to use their questions to stimulate discussions and will ensure broad participation. It is critical that we respect one another’s thoughts and address our comments at others’ ideas, not at people themselves. This course is not a forum for demeaning or threatening language. Rather than measuring the frequency with which you speak in class, your participation grade reflects how you balance speaking, reading, and listening. Also, don’t forget to take careful notes to complement the PowerPoint slides.

Students should plan to attend every course session, and I ask you to sign in personally at the beginning of class. If for some unavoidable reason you must miss a class, please let me know in advance through the university’s absence reporting website (https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) so that your absence will not remain unexplained. If you are late or leave early repeatedly, and if you miss class unexcused, your participation grade will suffer.

GROUP DEBATES

The session on December 2 will be used for in-class group debates. On November 20, groups will be formed and time will be provided in class for groups to coordinate their preparation for the debates. Your performance in the debate will become part of your in-class participation grade.

QUizzes

There will be very short in-class quizzes in 5 of the 14 weeks during the semester. If you do the assigned readings, you should have no problem doing well on the quizzes. There will be no trick questions, nor will a complete understanding of the reading be required. Rather, the quizzes are geared to helping you engage with the reading by asking you to answer some very basic questions. Your performance in the quizzes will become part of your in-class participation grade. However, I will not count your worst quiz grade.

MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will be held in class. It covers material from the first half of the course and will require you to define key terms and provide short-answers to questions.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be given via SAKAI. It will be two hours in length, and you will be able to independently pick the most suitable time for you to take it. The final exam covers material from the entire course, and you will be expected to use what you have learned in class to advance clear arguments on two issues. I’ll give you information about the content and structure of the final exam a few weeks before the end of the semester.
COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to check their Rutgers email accounts regularly for class announcements. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the instructor. Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. When emailing the instructor, always include “Labor & Democracy” in the subject line of your email. When available, grades will be posted on the course’s Sakai site under the “PostEm” tab.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

While I encourage students to work together to understand theories and concepts, all written work must be your own. If you cite an author or use his/her ideas, please cite properly. Plagiarized assignments or evidence of cheating will result in a failing grade in the assignment and possibly in the course, and may result in disciplinary action by the university.

KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

Throughout the course, students should keep up with current events by reading at least one quality newspaper (e.g. Financial Times, The New York Times) and one news magazine (e.g. The Economist, The Atlantic) on a regular basis. You may also choose foreign-language publications, or fulfill this assignment by checking online news sources regularly. In addition, you will be expected to read any newspaper clippings handed out in class or emailed by the instructor.