WOMEN AND WORK
(38:578:541:90)
Fall 2014
Fully Online course

Professor Mary Gatta
Dept. of Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Email: gatta@rci.rutgers.edu  And if we need to set up a phone call, skype or google hangout to talk individually, I am happy to do that

Course Overview:

This graduate level course focuses on women in the workforce. As current statistical data demonstrate women make up a significant and growing portion of the American and global labor force. However despite women’s large numbers in the workforce fifty percent of women are concentrated in just 26 occupational categories, or only five percent of the 504 occupations tracked by US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and over two-thirds of women are concentrated in just 51 occupations. Today, as was true 60 years ago, ‘secretary’ ranks as the top occupational category for women in the US. Other leading occupations include cashiers, retail salespersons, home health aides, and jobs in the hospitality sectors, such as waitresses and housekeepers at hotels. Many of these jobs are among our economy’s lowest-paying. With average wages of between $8 and $12, these jobs do not enable women to afford the basics, let alone care for their families. Men, on the other hand, with similar levels of education are much more likely than women to access training in the trades or STEM fields, which generally offer higher pay and better career prospects.

In addition, women’s positions and experiences in the workforce in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, and class are very diverse, as are the culturally constructed meanings of those positions. As such women’s experiences differ greatly based on the specific social and historical contexts in which they work. But while specific conditions of gender based workplace oppression manifest differently, they are structured in systematic ways. The goal of scholars of women and work is to uncover the patterns of inequality in order to find ways to address them.

This course will look at how workplace conditions affect women. The study of women and work is an interdisciplinary endeavor and we will explore this topic using literature from such disciplines as sociology, economics, labor studies and psychology. While the topic of women and work is quite broad, we will focus in on some of the main aspects of this topic, organized into three parts of the semester. In Part 1, we will explore forms of sex inequality in the workplace, such as sex-segregation, sex-based pay gap, the gendered workplace, and the glass ceiling. In Part 2, we will then expand this study by focusing on the interaction of sex, race, ethnicity and class in different occupations. Finally in Part 3, we will conclude the course with a study of women and social policy, focusing on work/family, wage and welfare policy, and unionization. While this course will focus on
the US workforce, we will also include global references and comparisons to ground the experiences of gender and work we are focusing.

**Course Accessibility for Disabled Students**

"Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form."

**Course Materials/Books**

All reading, videos and assignments are located in our course website on Rutgers ecollege platform. The **only exceptions** are 2 books that you need to purchase, both of which can be purchased on online book websites (amazon, etc) or local bookstores.

- Barbara Ehrenreich’s 2001. *Nickel and Dimed*
- Sheryl Sandberg’s 2014. *Lean In*

You should make yourself familiar with the features of ecollege during the first week of class.

**How will you learn in this online course?**

Most weeks you will:

- Review material written by the professor on the page in the online shell. These are like lectures but much shorter, so you have more time for other learning activities.
- Throughout the material are questions to guide you. You want to be sure you can answer them—they may show up on exams!
- Read a variety of research based papers and articles.
- Answer questions regarding the readings and forums in exams.
- Participate in an online threaded discussion with other students, posting at least 3 times a week.
- Write short papers
- Some weeks you will also have the opportunity to review a video or videos, or listen to an audio file. Some weeks you will take an exam (open book).

Keep current – avoid being late!

An online class is somewhat flexible with regard to your schedule but if you must be responsible for managing your time and for getting online each week no matter what else is going on in your life. **In general, you should sign into the class AT LEAST 4 times a week and check your email each day.**
You should inform the professor of serious personal emergencies that arise – for instance, hospitalization that makes it impossible to get online. A trip associated with your job is not such an emergency, nor is a problem with your personal computer. There are many ways to get online in hotels, libraries, restaurants (Starbucks, Panera, etc) and in campus computing facilities.

**Class Expectations—Yes it’s online but it is still very interactive!**

I am strongly committed to a mode of learning that is shared and collective in an online environment. I want you to form a learning community for one another. Participating in class discussions is one of the best ways to learn and there will be forums EACH week we have readings. Contributing to class discussions can take a number of forms, and often each week you will be engaging in several of these different forms. You may answer a question that I ask. You may ask a question. You may comment on another person’s contribution. Or you may try to encourage others to speak. The goal is to participate in an intellectually rigorous manner that will help us advance the discussion. You cannot do this if you are not prepared for class. As such, you must began each week of class with the readings done --- and done carefully. Our online weeks will begin on Fridays and end on Thursday nights. That means you should have the readings/videos completed by Sunday (unless I designate otherwise in the week), so that you can contribute to the forum throughout the week. If you neglect that responsibility the seminar will suffer. However, with responsible preparation the seminar will be interesting, informative and FUN!!

The materials we cover consider the relationship of gender to other important lines of differentiation in society, including race/ethnicity, social class, political orientation and geographic location. Some of the materials covered tend to 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, personal attacks on anyone in the classroom, or excessive reliance on personal experiences (rather than the readings) 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. **What I seek to create in this seminar is an environment where you can be free to ask questions and share thoughts without fear of censure or ridicule.**

**Grade Distribution (out of 1,000 points)**

- **Course Information Sheet:** 25 points
- **IceBreaker Forum:** 25 points
- **Forums (Weeks 2,3,5,6,7,9,10 11)**: 400 points (50 points each)
- **Forum (Weeks 12/13-Thanksgiving)**: 100 points
- **Exams (3 exams total)**: 450 points (150 points each)
Assessment of online forums

There will are forums EACH WEEK (except exam weeks) throughout the semester. A forum is an interactive threaded discussion. In addition, you will have an ICEBREAKER forum starting the FIRST day of class to help you get comfortable with the forum format and meet your fellow students. This first forum will give you an idea of how to use the discussion forum feature, and will be a graded "ice-breaker" forum to begin the day the class starts. The forums are found with each of the units they are associated with. Each of the forums will start on Friday of the week (the day the week begins) and end on the following Thursday (the day the week ends). There are specific dates and number of times within the week were you need to post for each forum. That information is explained in each forum. Forums are the MAIN way I will evaluate how you understand the materials and applying them each week.

***NOTE—FOR ALL THE FORUMS YOU NEED TO POST YOUR COMMENT BEFORE YOU CAN SEE OTHER STUDENTS COMMENTS***

Your contribution will be evaluated as follows:

- **How much you participated in a substantive way.** In general, you can think of this as 1 point per substantive post that adds to the discussion.
- **Was your participation ongoing and interactive?** You can interact with others by asking or answering questions, or by agreeing or disagreeing with them, but remember you must add to the discussion, not simply agree. EACH FORUM WILL HAVE SPECIFIC DATES AND NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE WEEK YOU NEED TO POST BY IN ORDER TO KEEP THE DISCUSSION FLOWING. BE SURE TO CHECK THIS IN THE FORUM.
- **Were your comments thoughtful and based on the readings?** Did you understand the ideas correctly or did you make errors? Did you connect the ideas of readings to those of others? In other words, what was the quality of your comments?
- **Were your opinions backed by personal experience or other types of evidence?** Persuasive opinions are backed by a variety of types of evidence – from other academic sources, from current events, and from personal experience.
- **Were your comments expressed clearly and appropriately?** Please don’t “flame” in these forums. Informality is OK, but use standard written English of the sort that would be appropriate in a work setting.

Forum Groups--

You are assigned to a Forum group at the beginning of the semester. While there are often dozens of students enrolled in a course, you will only interact with your group. To identify your group letter, look to the left of the screen under any unit tab in the course. You will only be able to see your group – Example: Group J. At the beginning of the course, make sure you memorize your group letter. It may be referred to by the instructor in weekly messages when she wants to bring something from one group to all students in the class!
Exams:
Three exams are scheduled throughout the semester. These exams are based on the weekly readings and discussions. The exams will require you to construct informed and thoughtful answers to the questions.

Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to “Turnitin.com” to insure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from another student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words!

General Information For Forum Posts and Exam:

The papers are to be your own original work. You should use your books and notes as a reference. Be sure to cite any direct quotations that you use. You may discuss ideas with other students in the class, but the final product must be your own work. Any papers that are conspicuously similar are automatically sent to the Dean. The focus is on how what we have read and talked about in class can be used in order to critically examine the issues/arguments presented in the papers. Therefore you will be graded on your understanding of the scholarly information, theories and concepts that we have discussed. Simply regurgitating class notes is not a thoughtfully constructed paper.
Course Schedule: (This is just an overview of readings and forums. More detailed information is included in the e-course on the readings and forum assignments)

Week 1 September 5 to 11: Introduction to Women and Work and IceBreaker Forum

Course Information Sheet-- Upload this by Sunday September 7 at 12 midnight

Reading:


Forum:
Icebreaker: Let’s get to know each other—

What interesting things happened on your birthday in women’s history? What did you know about the events that happened prior to reading about them now? How does it make you feel? Are there any connections to what happened in history and your present life?

You need to post your “Birthday and Women’s History no later than Sunday September 7th at 12 midnight. Then you need to comment at least once on 4 different students’ post by Thursday September 10th at 12 midnight.

Part 1: Labor Markets and Sex Inequality

Week 2 September 12 to 18: Gender Pay Gap

Readings:
Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn. 2007. “The Gender Wage Gap: Have Women Gone as Far As They Can?”

Forum:
Make the Case: Gender Pay Gap. You are to locate a TV interview/discussion online that occurred the in the past 12 months on one of the following stations: ABC News, CBS News, CNN, FOX News, MSNBC, NBC News. In the news clip the subject matter experts need to be discussing the gender pay gap. You are to watch the video, and then write about a 300 word response---grounded in the data and articles from this week. You can agree/disagree with the interview but you must ground that discussion in the evidence you read about this week. You need to post the video (or a link to the video) and your response by Sunday September 14th at 12 midnight, and then comment on at least 2 other students’ posts by Thursday September 18th at 12 midnight.
Week 3 September 19 to 25: Occupational Sex Segregation

Readings:
Beth Mintz and Daniel Krymkowski. 2011. The Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender in Occupational Segregation

Forum:
Blog on Gender Inequality. In this forum each student will write a 300-400 word blog on sex segregation in the labor market. You want to use the readings to make one large point about sex segregation and then back that point/argument up with evidence. Guidelines on writing the blog are in the forum. You need to post your blog by Monday September 22nd at 12 midnight. Students will then comment at least once on 2 other students’ blogs by Thursday September 25th at 12 midnight.

Week 4 September 26 to October 2: Exam 1

Details for the exam are found in the course shell. The Exam is due by Thursday October 2nd at 12 midnight.

Part 2: Women’s Experiences in Occupations

Week 5 October 3 to 9: Women in the Professions:

Readings:
Sheryl Sandberg’s 2014. Lean In (entire book)
Responses to Lean In : Susan Faludi:

Forum:
Lean In Circle- Choose 3 of the videos on the Lean In page. Watch them and then write a post from the perspective of Sheryl Sandberg responding to the video and then from the perspective of Susan Faludi. So you will have 3 posts this week, and within each post you will have 2 responses (one from Sandburg’s perspective and one from Faludi’s perspective. You need to complete all 3 posts by Thursday October 9th at 12 midnight.

Week 6 October 10 to 16: Women and Service Sector Work

Readings:
Updated afterword on Huffington Post 2011.
2011 NPR interview with Barbara Ehrenreich:
Interview with Ai-Jen Poo, Domestic Worker Advocate.
Forum:
Your Experiences in Service Work—either as a worker or customer. For this forum you want to think about work you performed (or currently perform) in the service sector. Ideally, I want you to focus on work in retail, restaurant/hospitality or housekeeping/cleaning (the occupations Ehrenreich studied). If you did not perform this work as a paid job, I want you to choose of the sectors and your experiences as a customer. For the first post, you want to reflect on those experiences and write a 500 word response based on how your experiences are similar to/differ from/expand upon the readings/videos for the week. This first post is due by Monday October 13th at 12 midnight. I then want you to comment on at least 2 other students’ posts by Thursday October 16th at 12 midnight.

Week 7 October 17 to 23: Women in Nontraditional Occupations

Readings:
Barbara Bergmann.2011. Sex Segregation in the Blue Collar Occupations; Women’s Choices or Unremedied Discrimination

Forum:
Interview a woman who works in a nontraditional job! For this week, I want you to interview a woman in a nontraditional job. You can use the BLS data to determine if the job is nontraditional (25% or less female). Sample interview questions are found in the forum. You then want to write up your interview, using that interview as a case study, to reflect upon and respond to the readings/videos for the week. If you cannot identify a woman to interview by Monday of this week, EMAIL me and I will alter the assignment slightly for you. Your write-up should be about 400 words and is due by Thursday October 23rd at 12 midnight.

Week 8 October 24 to 30: Exam 2

Details for the exam are found in the course shell. The Exam is due by Thursday October 30th at 12 midnight.

Part 3: Addressing Gender Equities via Unions and Public Policy

Week 9 October 31 to November 6: Unionization

Readings:
Heidi Hartmann and Jeffrey Hayes, 2011 “The Union Advantage in Wireline Telecommunications for African-Americans, Hispanics, and Women”
John Schmitt, and Nicole Woo, 2013. “Women Workers and Unions”
Forum:  
*Review of Union Women Union Power for Young Girls.* For this forum you want to write a review of the film “Union Women. Union Power”. However this review is going to not be whether you like the film or not, but instead you want to write the review to your younger daughter/niece/neighbor to share with them the ways that being a union member can help address gender equity. You want to write this post in a way to educate young women. Build on the stories of the women in the film and use the data from the readings to make your point. Your post should be no more than 400 words. And you need to post the forum by Thursday November 6th at 12 midnight.

**Week 10 November 7 to 13: Work and Family (Paid Family Leave)**

Readings:  
Karen White, Linda Houser and Elizabeth Nisbet 2013.“Policy in Action: New Jersey’s Family Leave Insurance Program at Age Three”

Forum:  
*Family Leave Policies in the NJ.* As you learned this week, New Jersey is one of just a handful of states with Paid Family Leave Insurance. For this week’s forum you want to post a letter to your state senator (you must first determine who your senator is), about the impact of Family Leave Insurance in NJ and what (if anything) you think should be changed/adapted. Be specific and post your letter by Sunday November 9th at midnight. You then want to comment 2 times on other students’ letters by Thursday November 13 at midnight.

**Week 11 November 14 to 20: Welfare Reform and Workforce Development**

Mary Gatta, 2014. “All I Want is A Job: Chapter 1: Navigating the Workforce System”  
Mary Gatta, 2014.“All I Want is a Job: Chapter 3: Understanding the Back Story of Welfare and Workforce Development”

Forum:  
*Reflecting on Our Beliefs*  
For this forum I want you to reflect upon your beliefs about unemployment and welfare policy. You want to post how they may have changed/been confirmed etc after completing the readings and videos this week. You want to post this by Sunday November 16th at 12 midnight. Then I want you to comment on at least 2 other students’ posts by Thursday November 20th at 12 midnight.

**Week 12 and 13 November 21 to December 4 (includes Thanksgiving break): Wage Policy (Equal Pay and Minimum Wage)**

Readings:  
Mary Gatta and Matt Unrath. 2014.“Down the Shore, Everything's (Not) All Right: The Economic Insecurity of Restaurant Workers on the Jersey Shore”
White House Report. 2014. The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women
National Women’s Law Center, 2013. “50 Years & Counting: The Unfinished Business of
Achieving Fair Pay”
Heidi Hartmann, Jeffrey Hayes, and Jennifer Clark, 2014. “How Equal Pay for Working
Women would Reduce Poverty and Grow the American Economy”

Forum:
This forum covers 2 weeks (including the Thanksgiving break). For this forum you want
to choose one state (NOT New Jersey), and determine what are the minimum wage laws
and the gender pay gap for that state. To determine minimum wage laws visit the US
DOL- http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/americ.htm and for the gender pay gap visit
the AAUW- http://www.aauw.org/resource/gender-pay-gap-by-state-and-congressional-
district/ Both sites have interactive state maps. You then want to post in the form of a
letter to the Governor of the state (you will have to search to see who the Governor is!)
on what you recommend he/she does to address the minimum wage and gender pay gap;
and HOW it impacts women in the state. Your letter should be 500 words or so. You
need to post you letter in the forum by Saturday November 29th at 12midnight. You then
should comment on at least 2 other students’ letters by Thursday December 4th at 12
midnight.

Final Week December 5 to 11: Exam 3

Details for the exam are found in the course shell. The Exam is due by Thursday
December 11th at 12 midnight.