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 23rd: Introduction

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Introductions
2. Hand out syllabus

CLASS 2, January 30th:

READINGS DUE:


IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Submit answers to questions related to readings. Questions posted on Sakai.
3. Review syllabus.
4. Receive facilitation and group assignment.

**CLASS 3, February 6th: Political Economy Pt. 1**

**SUMMARY:** In its capitalistic form, the market of exchange has been linked to freedom, prosperity, and development. We will explore how three scholars, Adam Smith, F.A. Hayek, and Joseph Schumpeter establish these links.

**READINGS DUE:**

2. Chapters 3, 9, and Conclusion. *The Road to Serfdom,* by F.A. Hayek

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT**

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions and present the groups’ answers in class.

**CLASS 4, February 13th: Political Economy, Pt. 2**

**SUMMARY:** In its capitalistic form, the market of exchange and production has also been linked to inequality, oppression, and unequal development. We will explore how three scholars - Karl Marx and Andre Gunder Frank - establish these links.

**READINGS DUE:**

2. “The Unequal and Uneven Historical Development of the World Economy,” by Andre Gunder Frank

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT**

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
CLASS 5, February 20th: Political Economy, Pt. 3
Take Home Hand Out, Movie, and Review

SUMMARY: We turn to contemporary scholarship on markets and labor. Will unregulated markets and global divisions of labor increase prosperity and freedom? Or, 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. ONLY THIS CHAPTER - “Freedom is Just Another Word”, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, by David Harvey.
2. “The Case for Free Trade”, by Milton and Rose Friedman

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Šakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Movie: “Life and Debt” - Parts
4. Review
5. Hand Out Take-Home Test

CLASS 7, February 27th: More than economic inputs, Pt. 1

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

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Movie: “Office Space” or “Up in the Air”
2. Discuss movie
3. Mid Term Due

CLASS 8, March 6th More than economic inputs, Pt. 2

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

READINGS DUE:

2. “Work”, by C. Wright Mills
3. Chapters 3 and 4, Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line, by Ben Hamper.
IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 9, March 13th: Labor, Consumption, and Service

SUMMARY: Are we simultaneously workers and consumers? If so, what does this mean?

READINGS DUE:


IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

SPRING BREAK – March 15 to 23

CLASS 10, March 27th: Organizing Labor and Work

SUMMARY: Do managers and unions share similar organizational methods? 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:

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

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 11, April 3: What Do We Want?

READINGS DUE:

1. Selected readings from “The Right to Be Lazy”, by Paul LaFargue
2. Selected readings from Against Thrift, by James Livingston

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT**

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

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**CLASS 12, April 10: Do Workers Want a Union?**

**READINGS DUE:**
2. “Do Workers Still Want a Union”, by Richard Freeman and Joel Rogers

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT**

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

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**CLASS 13, April 17th: Freedom to Associate and the Liberty of Contract – An In-Class Debate**

**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”. The below readings and the debate scenario will help us to explore “the right to work” and the “freedom of association”.

**READINGS DUE:**


**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:**

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Assign students to debate teams.

**CLASS 14, April 24th** – In-Class Debate on “Freedom of Association” and “The Right to Work”

**CLASS 15, May 1: Daily Forms of Resistance and Social Movements/Review for Final**

**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:**

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. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your answers to the week’s questions on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Hand out final, and review.

**FINAL DUE, May 8:**

The final is due by 6 p.m., on May 8. Upload your final to Sakai’s “Assignment” site. It may not be longer than eight pages, and it must be typed and double spaced.

**GRADING AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

**Attendance and Weekly Entries (20%) (120 Points)**

a. *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.

b. Weekly Entries

All students who are not assigned to facilitate must submit a weekly entry, which should be posted on Sakai at the “Assignments” site. The weekly entry must be posted 10 minutes prior to each class. The entry must respond to each reading assigned for the week. For example, if there are three readings assigned then there must be three responses. A response should be no more than five sentences long and should summarize the main points or themes of each assigned reading.

**Group Participation and Facilitation Assignment (30%): (180 Points)**

**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 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. The facilitator will also briefly present a biographical sketch of the author. Search the internet for this information
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 will upload the answer to the “Assignment” site. I will review and comment on that answer by Thursday morning. 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 and present the group’s answers and questions to the larger class.

**The Group’s Responsibility for Weekly Questions and Answers**

a. Each member of the group must be prepared to discuss answers to the Group’s facilitation questions. These facilitation questions will be posted on Sakai.
b. T.A. Phil and Prof. Poor will be assessing each student’s participation, and that assessment will be incorporated into each student’s grade.
c.
Midterm: (25%) (150 Points)

The midterm will be no more than 8 pages, typed and double spaced.

The Final (25%) (150 Points)

The final will be no more than 8 pages, typed, and double spaced.

Grading

Total 600 Points

A = 540 - 600
B+ = 522 - 539
B = 480 - 521
C+ = 462 - 479

C = 420 - 461
D+ = 400 - 419
D = 358 - 399
F = 358 or below.

“Office Hours”

If you email me anytime between Monday and Tuesday, I will respond to your email by Wednesday evening. 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. Individual meetings with either Prof. Poor or T.A. Phil will be by appointment.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TIMELY SUBMITTED. POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS.