

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH****Labor Studies 575:338 – Mondays 3:55 pm – 6:55 pm****Amy J. Bahruth, MS, IH****908-812-0974 (cell)****Email: [abahruth@dceo.rutgers.edu](mailto:abahruth@dceo.rutgers.edu)****Office Hours by Appointment****COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides an overview of the important issues in Occupational Safety and Health. We will not only focus on the Occupational Safety and Health Act and its standards (or lack thereof), but on the larger political agenda of the global economy and how it impacts on the safety and health of workers around the world. The class style will be participatory, including small group discussions and activities. Related videos will supplement our class discussion.

The challenge of providing safe and healthy workplaces in a context of a market economy and global competition that produces pressure for low cost production. Students will consider major types of workplace health and safety problems; review existing public policy in the area; and learn how to conduct a workplace audit. They also consider how employers, unions, and public policy might improve health and safety outcomes.

**Core Learning Objective:** Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. Institutional knowledge encompasses labor, law, and work practices, in the U.S. and other nations now operating in a global framework.

**COURSE READINGS:**

All readings for this class can be found on Rutgers Sakai. <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> To log on, enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right hand corner. Look for the tabs at the top of the next page. Click on the tab: 37:575:338 Fall 2012. **Readings are organized by date.** Homework will also be listed by date due. See Course Requirements for more on homework.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

*Be prepared for class.* Always read the assigned material before the class so that you can fully participate in class discussions and more easily follow the lecture. If necessary, I will ask you to bring the reading material to class with you so that you can refer to it during lectures and group discussions.

*Take careful lecture notes.* Copies of power point slides will be posted on Sakai. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are forced to miss a class. Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, small group discussions, group exercises and student presentations. Students are required to *participate actively* in all aspects of the course, especially small and large group discussions and group exercises. When participating in discussions *respect others' views and listen*. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you must give them your full attention and consideration.

*Texting, talking on your phone and chatting/emailing* are all prohibited during class. Students who repeatedly do these things during class time will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent for the day.

### Communication

Students are expected to check their official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. I will communicate all official course correspondence to students via email/announcements on Sakai. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the instructor. Verbal discussions before or after class will not be considered official unless followed up with written email confirmation. This includes requests for excused absences.

### Assigned Groups:

I will assign students to groups early in the semester and these groups will work together throughout the semester. Groups will discuss course reading, prepare presentations and participate in-group activities together. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance on group assignments will be evaluated both by the instructor and the other members of your group.

### Attendance

Students should *plan to attend every course session*. Students must sign in personally at the beginning of class; failure to do so will result in a loss of attendance points. I recognize that illness, death in the family or other emergencies happen, and will excuse absences as long as the affected student can provide me with proof. Signing in for another student is considered academic dishonesty and can result in failing the course.

*Be punctual.* Students who are late to class two times lose the same number of attendance points as students who miss an entire class. *Stay for the whole class.* Students who leave early without the instructor's permission will be marked absent for the entire class.

The teaching assistant will be taking attendance and will be noting lateness. It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to make sure you sign the attendance sheet each class, so make sure you find it. Attendance will be 10% of your overall grade.

### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

#### Grading Criteria

- a. **Content:** Papers should reflect careful, thorough consideration of the assignment. All papers should have a clear, creative thesis and a strong conclusion. Papers should also demonstrate careful reading of the course material, and should cite all sources that were consulted when preparing the assignment. Quality of weekly written article summaries and reaction papers will be evaluated based upon writing mechanics, content/detail, thoroughness, understanding of material and quality of analysis.
- b. **Mechanics:** Student writing should **demonstrate college level competence** in grammar and style. Students with unsatisfactory writing skills will be encouraged to seek additional assistance from Rutgers writing tutorial resources.
- c. Papers the instructor(s) deem unacceptable in terms of either content and/or mechanics will be returned to the student for revision prior to grading and marked down for each day the paper is late. Failure to use spell check and grammar check to fix basic mistakes will result in automatic return of the paper without grading.

**Assignments:**

You will be responsible for writing one (1) reaction paper to *“Libby, Montana”*, which is a movie about asbestos exposures to workers and community residents of the town of Libby. The reaction paper is to be a minimum of a **full** two-page typed paper and based upon questions I will give you to respond to. You will be graded on how developed your reaction is and how well you grasped the content of the movie.

You also will be responsible for three (3) reaction papers on the following reading assignments, which can be found on Sakai: OSHA’s White Paper on Injury and Illness Prevention Programs, “How NJ Fails Injured Workers”, and one other assignment on combustible dust. The reaction papers are to be a minimum of a **full** two-page typed paper and based upon questions I will give you to respond to.

Additionally, you will be asked to work on assignments in class in your groups or as take-home assignments. These assignments will have to be handed in for credit towards your participation grade and for credit towards your OSHA 30 card.

**EACH WEEK** as noted, you will be responsible for turning in an article from the news regarding health and safety. **You will need to write a brief one page summary of the article AND a reaction to it.** Each week your group will discuss the articles found so make sure you are prepared. **Discussing these articles will count towards your participation grade.** A few good resources for finding articles include: <http://rss.topix.net/us/osha> and <http://weeklytoll.blogspot.com/>.

You **will NOT** get full credit for these articles if you hand them all in at the end of the semester. They are to be done each week and turned in through Sakai. You should bring in a copy of your summary each week so you will be prepared to discuss it with your group. You will need to submit ten (10) articles to get full credit.

**Submitting Papers**

Students will submit all written work electronically via Sakai. Students can submit their papers by clicking on the assignments tab located on the left side of the page and then click on the assignment you wish to turn in. From there, it’s pretty straight-forward. **All papers and homework submitted through Sakai will be checked through “turn-it-in”, which checks for plagiarism, including work from students, both past and present.**

**Deadlines**

All papers will be due on Sakai by the start of class on the due date. All papers turned in after this time will be marked late. Late papers will be marked down points for each day that they are late. I will not accept assigned papers in class or via email.

**Peer Review**

Since you will be working in small groups throughout the semester, an important component of evaluation will be through peer review. At the end of the semester you will be asked to review the contributions of your fellow group members. These evaluations will factor in to your final average of your participation grade, which is 10% of your overall grade.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University

community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. Students are expected to be familiar with all Rutgers University policies regarding academic integrity.

### **Mid-term and Final Exams**

The mid-term exam for this course will cover material (course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, exercises, etc) from the first half of the course. It will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, identifications, short answers and short essay questions. The final exam will cover material from the mid-semester break to the end of the course. Both exams will be take-home exams that **MUST** be hand-written.

### **Class Project:**

You will work in your assigned group of approximately six (6) of your classmates. I will have a list of various locations on the Rutgers Campuses for which you will conduct a hazard analysis. You will be looking at particular buildings and grounds and associated jobs within and around these buildings. You will get checklists of things to look for and some ideas for questions to ask the workers in the buildings.

### **Your analysis should contain the following elements:**

- a.) A brief description of the jobs and work responsibilities of the workers in the buildings or on the grounds and the associated safety and health hazards of these jobs, prioritized by severity.
- b.) A brief description of the buildings and/or grounds, including the safety and health hazards of these areas, prioritized by severity.
- c.) A description of what, if any, OSHA standards apply.
- d.) Recommendations for preventative or corrective measures for controlling hazards associated with the jobs identified and the buildings/grounds assigned.

### **Group Presentations**

Your group should be prepared to present your findings based upon the above elements. Be as creative as you wish in developing your presentations. You can use pictures/video and power point. **A one-page outline/summary of the presentation and/or a copy of your slides is required at the time of your presentation.**

Presentation dates are as listed in the class listings below and will be selected through a numbered lottery (i.e. pulled from a hat!). There will only be 10 possible spots and your presentation should be approximately 10 minutes ... 15 minutes maximum. I will hold you to your time slot unless there is an emergency situation to keep things fair for all class members. If you are unable to present your project on the date you selected, you will forfeit your opportunity and will be required to write a ten (10)-page report instead.

I will be grading presentations on how well you cover the points outlined on the syllabus; how thorough your research and comments are; the quality of your suggested changes or controls and your overall analysis of the assignment you present on. **The group of your peers who have worked with you will also evaluate your participation in this project.** This peer evaluation will be included in the calculation of your individual grade. You will likewise be expected to participate in evaluating your peers. Specifically, peer evaluations will be based upon preparation, presentation and teamwork.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

**Grades will be based on:** 15% project, 5% attendance, 10% participation, 15% weekly articles, 15% reaction papers and 20% on each exam.

**Overall Grade:** A = 92 –100; B+ = 88 – 91; B = 82 – 87; C+ = 78 – 80; C = 72 – 77

**Attendance Grade:** 0 Classes Missed =100; 1 class missed = 93; 2 classes missed = 86; etc. Grade drops by seven points for each class missed.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**See Sakai for Reading Assignments Due**

**Class #1: Monday, September 10th: Introduction & Course Overview**

**Lecture:** History of Occupational Safety and Health in US

**Class #2: Monday, September 17th: NEWS ARTICLE #1 Due**

**Lecture:** Introduction to OSHA; Limitations

**Class #3: Monday, September 24th: NEWS ARTICLE #2 Due**

**Lecture:** The Need for Change

**DISCUSSION FOR CLASS: BE PREPARED**

Make sure you read the White Paper from OSHA on the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (link below). You will be expected to discuss this proposed standard and consider the following:

In your opinion, will the requirements of this proposed standard reduce the likelihood of injury and illnesses in the workplace? Why or Why Not?

Why do you think this proposed standard is so vehemently opposed to by the business community? Think about this from an HR perspective if you're considering a career in that field.

How do you think OSHA, the labor movement, the COSH movement and other organizations should promote and support this proposed standard to get it passed?

<http://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/safetyhealth/OSHAwhite-paper-january2012sm.pdf>

<http://ehssafetynews.com/category/osha-i2p2/>

Based on the readings and this discussion, you'll have to write your reaction as one of your writing assignments, which will be due next class – Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Class #4: Monday, October 1st: 1<sup>st</sup> Written Reaction Assignment Due: Reaction to OSHA’s White Paper on I2P2; NEWS ARTICLE #3 Due**

**Lecture:** Principles of Industrial Hygiene, Personal Protective Equipment - PPE (regulation) and Workers Compensation

**Group Activity:** Reading the PPE OSHA Standard (bring laptop if you have one!)

**Discussion Questions from Criminal Neglect:**

1. Why do you think safety authorities and governments worldwide are soft on corporate safety crime?
2. What is your reaction to this quote: “Is a person who kills another in a bar brawl a greater threat to society than a business executive who refuses to cut into profits to make his plant a safe place to work?”
3. What arguments are presented as to why company directors/executives should be targeted for criminal prosecution? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. What do you think the likelihood is of a corporate criminal law being enacted in the United States? Why?

**Monday, October 8th: 2nd Article Reaction Paper Due: How Jersey Fails Injured Workers; NEWS ARTICLE #4 Due**

**Lecture:** Unsafe Acts vs. Unsafe Conditions; Job Hazard Analysis; How to Conduct a Hazard Analysis

**You Tube:** Canadian Safety Commercials; “Dirty Jobs” episodes

**Group Project:** Requirements of Group Project

**Discussion Questions:** Most workplace fatalities are reported or described as “unfortunate accidents”, “freak occurrences” or “acts of god”. Based upon the readings and what we've discussed in class to date, what is your reaction to these descriptions? After reading these pieces, do you believe “accidents” are “inevitable”? What are Barab’s suggestions for improving H&S conditions in the workplace? Is it enough? Why or why not? What do you think needs to be done to address this "culture of safety" in America's workplaces?

**Monday, October 15th: NEWS ARTICLE #5 Due**

**Lecture:** Hazard Communication Standard and Confined Spaces

**Group Activity:** Reading the Standard; Analysis of MSDS (bring laptop if you have one!)

**Monday, October 22nd: NEWS ARTICLE #6 Due**

**Lecture:** Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans Blood Borne Pathogens

**Group Activities:** Imperial Chicken Plant Fire Exercise and Reading the Blood Borne Pathogen Standard (bring laptop if you have one!)

**Monday, October 29th: NEWS ARTICLE #7 Due**

**TAKE-HOME MIDTERMS DISTRIBUTED – Due November 5th (material from first class through October 22nd)**

**Lecture:** Workplace Violence and Walking and Working Surfaces

**Group Activity:** Reading the WWS standard

**Discussion Questions:** Violence is a major cause for workplace fatalities in America. Is this something that concerns you, as you are about to enter the full-time workforce? What steps will you take to ensure your safety? What policies should be enacted – either nationally or through the workplace – to prevent violence in the workplace from occurring?

**Monday, November 5th: MIDTERM DUE**

**Lecture:** Indoor Air Quality and Ergonomics

**Group Discussion:** Self-assessment of ergonomic risks using checklists

**Monday, November 12th: NEWS ARTICLE #8 Due**

**Lecture:** Health Effects of First Responders Post 9/11; Farmworkers

**Prep time for Group Presentations**

**Monday, November 19th: NEWS ARTICLE #9 Due**

**Lecture:** Electrical Standard and Lockout/Tagout

**Monday, November 26th: NEWS ARTICLE #10 Due**

**Lecture:** Asbestos

**Monday, December 3rd: Movie Reaction Paper Due: Libby, Montana**

**Lecture:** Materials Handling; Teen Workers

**Group Presentations**

**Monday, December 10th: Final Paper Due – Your Assignment Choice**

**Group Presentations**

**Distribution of Final Exam**

**NOTE: Program Purpose.** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Outreach Training Program for General Industry teaches general industry workers about their rights, employer responsibilities, and how to file a complaint as well as how to identify, abate, avoid and prevent job related hazards. **If you attend all classes and complete all assignments, you will be eligible for an OSHA 30-Hour General Industry card.** OSHA student completion cards in the General Industry Outreach Training Program do not expire. **THE CARD COSTS \$5 and, if you meet the requirements, I will need the money at the end of the semester!**

**30-Hour General Industry Outreach Training Program – Designated Training Topics.** The 30-hour General Industry Outreach Training Program is intended to provide a variety of training to workers with some safety responsibility. Training should emphasize hazard identification, avoidance, control and prevention, not OSHA standards. Instructional time must be a minimum of 30 hours. The topic requirements are as follows:

**Mandatory - 13 hours****Introduction to OSHA – 2 Hours**

**Managing Safety and Health – 2 hours.** May include Injury and Illness Prevention Programs, job site inspections, accident prevention programs, management commitment and employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, accident 4 investigations, how to conduct safety meetings, and supervisory communication.

**Walking and Working Surfaces, including fall protection – 1 hour.**

**Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and Fire Protection – 2 hours.**

**Electrical – 2 hours.**

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – 1 hour.**

**Materials Handling – 2 hours.**

**Hazard Communication – 1 hour.**

**Elective - 10 hours.** Must present at least 10 hours of training on the following topics. At least 5 of the following topics must be presented. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.

**Hazardous Materials (Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Spray Finishing, Compressed Gases, Dipping and Coating Operations)**

**Permit-Required Confined Spaces**

**Lockout / Tagout**

**Machine Guarding**

**Welding, Cutting, and Brazing**

**Introduction to Industrial Hygiene**

**Bloodborne Pathogens**

**Ergonomics**

**Fall Protection**

**Safety and Health Programs**

**Powered Industrial Vehicles**

**Optional - 7 hours.** Teach other general industry hazards or policies and/or expand on the mandatory or elective topics. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.

What I'll be covering:

Asbestos – 3 hours

IAQ – 1.5 hours

Ergonomics – 1.5 hours

Combustible Dust – 1.5 hours

Workplace Violence – 1.5 hours