

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ONLINE – FALL 2011

Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations
Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department

Course Number: 37:575:338:90 & 91 & 92

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Note: The syllabus may be revised during the course. Students will be apprised of all changes.

Course Description:

Work has an impact on physical and psychological health. In this course, students will explore the health and safety issues of various types of work. Students will gain an understanding of the current state of occupational safety and health in the United States and globally including the enforcement of laws regulating occupational safety and health and the roles of workers, unions, and employers. The historical, economic, and cultural forces contributing to and inhibiting solutions to occupational safety and health problems will be analyzed.

Course Expectations:

This course requires that you

- Write a paper on your family occupational safety and health;
- Complete ten weekly forums;
- Participate in forum discussions;
- Take a midterm exam and a final exam;
- Complete all required course readings and video viewings.

Objectives:

- Gain a historical, economic, and organizational perspective of OSH;
- Investigate current OSH problems and solutions;
- Identify the forces that influence OSH; and
- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to identify and advance safe, healthy work for oneself or others.

Required Books and Videos:

You are not required to purchase books or a text. Materials such as book chapters, articles, and audio or visual clips will be made available in e-college. You may need to rent one video from Netflix or Blockbuster.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on each of the following activities:

| | <u>Points</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Introduction assignment | 50 |
| History Paper | 150 |
| Forums (8 – 50 points) | 400 |
| Midterm Exam | 200 |
| Final Exam | 200 |
| Total | 1000 |

GRADING SCALE (%):

| | |
|----|----------|
| A | 90 – 100 |
| B+ | 85 – 89 |
| B | 80 – 84 |
| C+ | 75 – 79 |
| C | 70 – 74 |
| D | 60 – 70 |
| F | < 60 |

In addition, I may increase or decrease your grade for exceptional (good or bad) class participation and performance – ordinarily by one level (for example, between B and B+).

Forums:

An important way to learn on-line is by participating in *forums*: a discussion group where students interact through a series of posts about a particular topic. Students can communicate their insights and thoughts in a *threaded discussion* pertaining to a topic, as well as learn from one another in the process. Threaded discussions are also a means for the instructor to identify whether or not a student comprehends required reading assignments. Forums include instructor-generated questions and student-to-student interaction.

Points have no "absolute meaning," – in the end, I will use my judgment in translating points into grades for the course. Implicitly, that means that grades are "curved" in the sense that they are comparative. The comparison is both to other students taking the class this semester and with those who took the class in the past.

Assessment of Online Forums

It is possible to earn up to 500 points by excellence in participation in a total of ten forums (each forum is worth 50 points). The forum is like a class discussion with a set of questions (usually two).

A forum is an interactive discussion and your contribution will be evaluated on a scale from minimally adequate to exceptional, with more typical responses being in the good to excellent range. The score reflects:

- How often you participated. Signing on three times to interact with other students regarding one of the questions is *minimally* adequate, whereas more extensive participation earns you more points.
- Was your participation interactive? Remember, this is a discussion – it is better to demonstrate understanding of the ideas of others before going on to your own opinion than to just "splash" your own ideas onto the page and never really interact with others.
- Were your comments thoughtful and based on the readings? Did they reflect an accurate understanding of the material being discussed or were they riddled with errors regarding the course material.
- Were your opinions backed by personal experience or other types of evidence? Did you draw on readings from other courses, current news, or online sources of information in a manner that contributes to the discussion?
- Were your comments expressed clearly and appropriately? Do they show mastery of persuasive written English? *Please do not "flame" in these forums; be courteous of others who will be reading your comments.*

Keep current – avoid being late!

This is an interactive class – you need to keep current in the readings, viewings, and discussion forums to effectively interact with others in the class. You can only participate in forums when they are open.

You should inform me 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, in campus computing facilities, or public libraries. An online class is somewhat flexible with regard to your schedule but 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, I recommend that you sign into the class AT LEAST 3 times a week and that you check your Rutgers email each day.

For more information on forums refer to the Forum Guidelines document in e-college.

Midterm and Final Exams:

The midterm exam (200 points) will cover concepts and competencies students learned in the first half of the semester. The exam will consist of true/false; multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions.

The final exam (200 points) will cover concepts and competencies students learned in the second half of the semester; however, concepts from the first half of the class will be needed to answer some questions correctly. The exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions.

Writing Assignment:

Students will write one paper – an essay on your family occupational safety and health history (150 points).

Grading Criteria for Written Submissions (paper and forums):

Content. Writing should reflect careful, thorough consideration of the topic. Writing should also demonstrate careful reading of the course material and cite all sources that were consulted when preparing the assignment. Paper should have a clear thesis statement and a strong conclusion.

Mechanics. Writing should demonstrate college level competence in grammar and style. Students with unsatisfactory writing skills will be encouraged to seek additional assistance from tutorial resources.

Late submissions:

- 25% point deduction for late submissions up to one week after due date
- 50% point deduction for late submissions more than one week and up to two weeks after the due date
- No points will be given for late submissions in excess of two weeks
- Forums posts will not be accepted once the forum is closed and the discussion is over

Extra credit:

No extra credit assignments will be allowed except in extraordinary circumstances.

Honor Code and 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. Any such issues will be submitted to the Dean of the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department, as appropriate. 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 abide by the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct. They are to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity.

Review the Rutgers' academic integrity statement at this link:

<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>

Most academic integrity problems that arise are not intentional but are the consequence of failing to appropriately and carefully cite sources. Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written work (forums and the paper) may 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.

| Unit 1 | Building a Foundation for Study | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Week 1 | Course Overview and Introduction Assignment | <p>Introduction:</p> <p>Group introductions.</p> <p>Submit introduction worksheet to instructor in drop box and to your group - due</p> |
| Week 2 | <p>Historical OSH Overview</p> <p><i>Learning objective: Review historical events from an OSH perspective.</i></p> | <p>Asbestos</p> <p>Videos:</p> <p>PBS, American Experience. <i>Triangle Fire</i> (51:53). Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/triangle/player/</p> <p>OSHA. 1970. <i>Can't Take No More</i> (26:57). Retrieved from: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4897690520976827985#</p> <p>Jeffries, M. 2007. <i>U.S. Child Labor 1908 – 1920</i> (9:22).</p> <p>Assignment: Family OSH History Paper – due</p> |
| Week 3 | <p>OSH Concepts</p> <p><i>Learning Objective: Comprehend and interpret the basic principles and concepts of OSH, including frequently used terms.</i></p> | <p>Asbestos</p> <p>Videos:</p> <p>High Plains Films (2004). <i>Libby, Montana</i> (124:00).</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Brodeur, P. 1968. <i>Reporter at Large - The Magic Mineral</i>. The New Yorker.</p> <p>NIOSH. <i>Take Home Toxins</i>.</p> <p>Assignment: Forum #1 – due</p> |
| Week 4 | <p>OSH Power Dynamics</p> <p><i>Learning Objective: Identify the forces influencing OSH and analyze those forces.</i></p> | <p>Diacytyl</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>New York Times. 2010. <i>OSHA Leaves Worker Safety in Industry Hands</i>.</p> <p>TBA</p> <p>Assignment: Forum #2 – due</p> |

| Unit 2 | Regulatory Realities | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <p>Week 5</p> | <p>OSH Act and OSHA</p> <p><i>Learning objective: Gain an understanding of the scope of the OSH Act and the role of OSHA.</i></p> | <p>McWane Revisited</p> <p>Videos:</p> <p>PBS, FRONTLINE. <i>A Dangerous Business Revisited</i> (57:00). Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/mcwane/view/</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>CATO Institute. <i>Handbook for Congress: Occupational Safety and Health Administration</i>.</p> <p>Silverstein, M. 2008. <i>Getting Home Safe and Sound: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration at 38</i>. American Journal of Public Health.</p> <p>Assignment: Forum #3 - due</p> |
| <p>Week 6</p> | <p>Economics</p> <p><i>Learning Objective: Learn how market theory impacts work safety and health and analyze the effects of economics on injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.</i></p> | <p>BP Gulf Oil Disaster</p> <p>Videos:</p> <p>PBS, FRONTLINE. <i>The Spill</i>.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Levenstein, C. and Dunn, M. 2005. <i>Show Me the Money: Cost-Benefit Analysis in the Work Environment</i>. New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Safety and Health Policy.</p> <p>Rosner, D. 2000. <i>When Does a Worker's Death Become a Murder?</i> American Journal of Public Health.</p> <p>Forum #4 - due</p> |
| <p>Week 7</p> | <p>Right to Know and Workplace Health & Safety Committees</p> <p><i>Learning Objectives: Gain an understanding of the role information plays in occupational safety and health and learn how to access health and safety information. Examine the role of health and safety committees.</i></p> | <p>Videos: TBA</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Bingham, Eula. 1983. <i>Right to Know Movement</i>. American Journal of Public Health.</p> <p>ILO Encyclopedia of Occupational Safety and Health. From Chapter 23: <i>The COSH Movement and Right to Know</i>.</p> <p>Schor, E. 2010. <i>Twin BP Disasters Complicate Push for Safety</i>. New York Times.</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Forum: #5 - due</p> |
| <p>Week 8</p> | <p>Workers' Compensation</p> <p><i>Learning Objectives: Gain an understanding of workers' compensation.</i></p> | <p>Videos:</p> <p>Nimitz High School History Competition Entry (2008). <i>Workers' Compensation History</i>. (10:08)</p> <p>New York Times video: <i>The World of Hurt: The Examination</i>. (5:20) Retrieved at: http://video.nytimes.com/video/2009/03/31/nyregion/1194838956105/a-world-of-hurt-the-examination.html</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Calderone, P. (2011). <i>NJ Workers' Compensation Program: A Century of Cooperation, Innovation</i>. New Jersey Law Journal.</p> <p>New Jersey Policy Research Organization (2007). <i>Workers' Compensation in New Jersey</i>.</p> <p>Receive midterm study guide.</p> <p>There is not a discussion forum to participate in this week.</p> |
| <p>3/12-3/20</p> | <p>Spring Recess</p> | <p>No class</p> |

| Unit 3 | 21 st Century Work | |
|---------|--|--|
| Week 9 | Midterm Review | Review for midterm exam Take midterm exam – open – closes |
| Week 10 | Linkages – Unions and the Environmental Movement <i>Learning Objective: Identify occupational safety and health partnerships and critique their effectiveness.</i> | Fukushima Daiichi Readings: TBA Viewings: PBS, FRONTLINE (2010). <i>The Spill</i> (53:37). New York Times (2011). <i>Last Defense at Troubled Reactors: 50 Japanese Workers.</i> Assignment #6 – due |
| Week 11 | Tripartite Responsibilities and Solutions <i>Learning Objective: Identify the roles of government, employers, and unions in occupational health and analyze global efforts to improve work safety and health.</i> | Readings: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. 2007. <i>National economics and safety and health fact sheet.</i> Kleinman, G. 1984. <i>Occupational Health and Safety: The Swedish Model.</i> Journal of Occupational Medicine. Weil, D. 1991. <i>Enforcing OSHA: The Role of Labor Unions.</i> Journal of Industrial Relations. Assignment: Forum #7 – due |
| Week 12 | Globalization <i>Learning Objective: Gain a global perspective of occupational safety and health.</i> | Videos: ABC, John Stossel (2009). <i>Sweatshops</i> (6:17). National Labor Committee (2010). <i>Triangle Returns</i> (9:19). National Labor Committee (2009). <i>Sweatshop Warriors</i> (9:49). Readings: Arnold, D. and Hartman, L. (2006). <i>Worker's Rights and Low Wage Industrialization: How to Avoid Sweatshops.</i> Human Rights Quarterly. Bloomberg BusinessWeek. <i>The Debate Room: Sweatshops.</i> Assignment: Forum #8 – due |
| Week 13 | Work Transformation, Psychosocial Issues, and Terrorism <i>Learning objectives: Recognize psychosocial OSH factors and identify prevention and mitigation measures. Critique response efforts of 9/11 and examine the OSH implications.</i> | 9/11 World Trade Center Responders Readings: TBA Viewings: Sundance Channel. <i>Dust to Dust.</i> Assignment: No assignment – receive study guide |
| Week 14 | Evaluation Week <i>Learning objective: Synthesize and apply OSH knowledge by writing a case study.</i> | Take final exam – exam opens X exam closes X |

Videos:

Note: The videos contained in the syllabus may be changed or augmented.

Readings:

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