

INTRODUCTION TO LABOR STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY 37:575:100:03 Sp.11
SPRING 2011

Professor: Carla A. Katz

Wednesday 7:15 p.m. to 10:105 p.m. Auditorium (137) Labor Education Center, Cook

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Text: Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Pine Forge Press. 2008

Class Readings: All readings, except for the text, are on Rutgers Sakai, which you may access at <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>. To log on, enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right hand corner. Click on the tab: 37:575:100:03 Sp.11. Click on modules on the menu on the left hand side of the page.

NOTE: Be sure your Rutgers email account is working. Communication from the instructors will go to your Rutgers email account; remember you can set it up to forward mail to another email system if you use that.

The syllabus, schedule and assignments are subject to change.

Course Overview

The class is designed to give you an overview of various aspects of labor and employment relations, including the perspective of working people and their labor organizations. We will also study the changing nature of work, workers and workers' institutions and organizations; the impact of technological change, the economic cycle, social class, immigration, race, ethnicity and gender; the role of government in labor policy; the history of unions, the role of unions in politics and challenges the labor movement faces today; and collective bargaining and workers rights issues.

Class will include lectures, small group discussions, simulations, in-class assignments, and media presentations. Students are encouraged to freely express their views. Respect for the appreciation of different viewpoints will be a guiding principle in this class.

Course Requirements

1. **Read entire syllabus** and make sure you understand it. This is your contract with the instructor.
2. **Be prepared for class.** Always read the material assigned for a class before the class. **Bring the material to class with you** in case you need to refer to it (for instance, for an open-book quiz or for a discussion). Check your email Tuesday or Wednesday morning for class announcements.
3. **Be present and be on time.** Attendance is taken at each class (at various times). You start with an “A” for attendance, but your grade for attendance will decline each time you are absent, late, or leave early. If you are late or leave early, you will be charged with ½ class absence. If you have a legitimate reason for absence, lateness or leaving early, it must be provided to me in writing in advance or immediately after the occurrence.
4. **Participate in discussions and group activities.** Students will be divided into groups of six for breakout sessions and projects. The three teaching assistants will supervise the groups. Your participation in these group situations goes to your participation grade. Explain your views. Ask questions. Also listen – don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore other views. Do your share of the work in simulations and in-class group activities. Texting, talking on your phone, FB and Twitter are prohibited in class (unless part of the group activity). We need your attention.
5. **Take careful lecture notes.** Copies of any power points will be posted on Sakai. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are forced to miss a class. These are not provided by the instructor or by teaching assistants.
6. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity requires that all academic work be 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 this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit.

Evaluation

For purposes of grading, there are four components of the course:

- Bargaining exercise (10%)
- Class preparation, attendance and participation (20%)
- Written assignment (20%)
- Exams (50%):
 - There will be two (2) exams that are predominantly “objective” – a combination of short-answer, objective, and short essay items given in class. Both closed

book but you may bring one note card or sheet of paper no larger than 4x6 inches with notes on it. (25%). The second exam will be similar in nature to the first exam but cover material since the first exam. (25%)

Overall Grade: A: 93-100; B+: 89-92; B: 83-88; C+: 79-82; C:73-78; D: 63-72

Attendance Grade: You start with 100 points and will drop seven (7) points for each class missed.

Participation Assignments

- A family history/immigration paper and oral history project. In addition to writing the paper, students will make 5-minute oral presentations on their family background within their groups.
- A public in-class debate on a public policy issue (Each group will participate in a debate on one of the following: Is the gender gap in pay and the glass ceiling justified? Is immigration good for the American economy and American workers? Is free trade good for American worker?)
- A creative presentation to the class taking an advocacy position on another of the four policy issues. Options include, but are not limited to, a political ad, a video, a commercial, a live TV show, a skit or a song.

Bargaining Exercise

A group collective bargaining exercise in which all of the groups will negotiate contracts based on current, high-profile issues. Previous classes have negotiated contracts for New Jersey state employees in a budget crisis, Woodbridge school budget and Trenton public safety budget; the next National Football League, Major League Baseball and National Basketball Association contracts; and a new United Auto Workers-General Motors contract in the midst of GM's bankruptcy.

Written Assignment: DUE IN CLASS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6th, 2011

You will be asked to complete one written assignment – chosen from a list of possibilities. The choices are detailed at the end of this syllabus. Other options may be added as the course progresses. The paper should be well written, typed and completely original – your work, not someone else's. If you have any questions about which written assignment to pursue given your own unique situation, please talk to the instructor early in the semester. All papers should be typed, 12-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins.

The written assignment is to be handed in at class. If you are unable to make class, the assignment may be submitted electronically via email to me or through Sakai. Late papers (after 12:00 noon the next day after they are due) will receive lower grades and will be accepted only at the discretion of the instructor – grades will be reduced for any late assignments that are accepted.

I. Week 1, Wednesday, January 19th: Introduction to the Class and Course Requirements

- Review Syllabus, Discuss expectations, Assignment of groups
- What is Labor Studies and why is it important?
- Discussion of work, family, how job and income security affect workers and their families. Relate the Great Depression and decline of manufacturing in the late 1970's/early 1980s to the recession and globalization today
- Introductory analysis of the jobs that you have held and those of your close friends or family.

Week One Assignment:

- Read all readings for Week 2 prior to class
- Come to the next class prepared to discuss your family's economic history over the past three generations, including: occupations they had, how did they get their jobs and how long did they keep them, did they experience periods of unemployment, has your family wealth increased or decreased over the generations, to what factors does your family attribute their financial or professional success (eg. talent, ambition, persistence, connections, education, mentors...) how you would feel about following in your parents' work path.
- Read this syllabus thoroughly. Learn how to use Sakai and locate readings.

II. Week 2, Wednesday, January 26th: Class, Income and Social Mobility

DISCUSSION: Inequality and stratification in the U.S.

Class, family and the centrality of work

Changing nature of work: What does it mean to say we are in a 'new economy'?

Young workers, the new economy and the economic recession

READINGS: Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, "Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 1, "Mapping the Contours of Work and Chapter 2, How New is the New Economy?"

Studs Terkel, "Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do" (New York: Random House Inc., 1972), interviews with steelworker Mike LeFevre, pp. XXXI-XXXVIII, farm worker Roberto Acuna, pp. 7-13,

and waitress Delores Dante, pp. 293-298

"Class in America: Shadowy Lines That Still Divide" by Janny Scott and David Leonhardt, *New York Times*, May 15, 2005, pp. 1-26.

Michael Zweig, "The Working Class Majority: America's Best-Kept Secret" (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), Chapter 3, "Why is Class Important?" pp. 61-73

AFL-CIO "Young workers: A Lost Decade"

Economic Policy Institute "The Kids Aren't Alright: A Labor Market Analysis of Young Workers"

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Insights from the family interview project

III. Week 3, Wednesday, February 2nd: Power Dynamics, the New Economy and the Future of Work

DISCUSSION: Distribution of Wealth and Power

FILM: "The Big One", Directed by Michael Moore

READINGS: G. W. Domhoff, "Wealth, Income and Power", April 2005.

Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, "Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 5, Who's Jobs are Secure?"

How the Fight Over Tax Breaks Affects Your Bottom Line, Washington Post, August 18, 2010

Shierholz, Heidi, For Four out of Five Unemployed Workers. There are No Jobs, Economic Policy Institute, August 11, 2010.

Greenhouse, Steven, Low-Wage Workers are Often Cheated. Study Says, September 1, 2009, New York Times.

Fact Sheet: Adjusting the Unemployment Rate

REFERENCE: How the Government Measures Unemployment, Bureau of Labor Statistics

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Based on the readings and class materials discussed thus far, discuss and defend your view of class in America. Is our system a "power pyramid" as suggested by G.W. Domhoff or is our system based on egalitarian principles where everyone has the equal chance at making it big? Be prepared to support your argument based on facts and the readings.

IV. Week 4: Wednesday, February 9th, Labor's History of Collective Action/Organizing the Unorganized

FILMS: “The American Experience: Sit Down and Fight-Walter Reuther and the Rise of the UAW

READINGS: Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, “Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 7, “Reshaping the Contours of the New Economy.”

Jack Metzgar, Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). “Getting to 1959,” first part pp. 17-39.

"The Corporatization of Unions", Jim Smith, L.A. Labor News, May, 2002.

"The General Strike Can Teach Unions How to Grow' David Bacon, LaborNet, July 14, 2004.

AFL-CIO Fact Sheets: Unions 101; Union Advantage by the Numbers

Michael Yates, “Why Unions Matter?” pp. 8 - 23; *The Tasks Ahead*, pgs. 130- 152

IV. Week 5: Wednesday, February 16th, Labor and Employment Law

DISCUSSION: Overview of Private Sector Labor and Employment Law

READINGS: Peter Capelli et al. Change at Work (New York: Oxford, 1997), subpart “The Employment System that Died,” and “How the World Began to Change,” pp. 15-29, and “The Restructuring of Organizations,” pp. 44-51.

Lewis Maltby, Can They Do That? (New York: Portfolio, 2009). Chapter 4, “Wrongful Discharge and Employment at Will,” pp. 57-67 and a portion of Chapter 13, “The Rights You Have,” pp. 196-203.

Other readings: TBA

VI. Week 6: Wednesday, February 23rd, Public Sector Labor and Employment Law

READINGS: TBA

DISCUSSION: The Current Trend of Demonizing Public Workers

VII. Week 7: Wednesday, March 2nd, MIDTERM EXAM

VIII. Week 8, Wednesday, March 9th, Work, Race, Ethnicity and Equality:

DISCUSSION: Race, ethnicity and inequality in the workplace

FILM: “At the River I Stand” (1993 documentary on Martin Luther King and 1968

Memphis sanitation workers strike)

READINGS: Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, “Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 4, “Race, Ethnicity and Work.”

Charlie LeDuff “At a Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die” (pp. 96-114)

Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

Upton Sinclair, “The Jungle”, Chapter #3

Charlie LeDuff, "At a Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die", New York Times, June 16, 2000.

Roger Waldinger, et. al., "Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles" (Los Angeles., Calif.: Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, Working Paper No. 15, April 1996), pp. 1-19

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and the article by Charlie LeDuff entitled "At the Slaughterhouse Some Things Never Die. Compare the situation for meat workers now and when Sinclair's novel was published. How are they similar? How are they different? Has the situation improved? Why or why not? Would you want to work in a meat packing plant or slaughterhouse? Why or why not?

SPRING RECESS: MARCH 12TH MARCH 20TH, 2011

IX. Week 9: Wednesday, March 23rd, Work, Gender and Equality

DISCUSSION: Gendered Work and Inequality and Gender Pay Gap

FILM: Bread and Roses

READINGS: Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, “Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 3, “Gender Chasms in the New Economy.”

Ehrenreich, Barbara, Nickel and Dime: On Not Getting By in America (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000): Selling in Minnesota

Gatta, Mary and Yasemin Besen-Cassino, Gender Pay Gap in New Jersey, A report of the American Association of University Women, 2010

Video- Lilly Ledbetter Case from Supreme Injustices

President Obama Signs the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into Law

GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: Based upon reading sections of “Nickel and Dime” and other material, do you think Ehrenreich's experiment was a fair representation of the life of a low-wage worker in America? Ehrenreich asserts that her

experience would have been radically different had she been a person of color or a single parent. Do you agree? Ehrenreich found that some low-wage workers are reluctant to form labor organizations. Discuss.

X. Week 10: Wednesday, March 30th, Work and Family

DISCUSSION: Challenges of integrating work and life; Work hours and ‘overwork’; Family leave; Role of gender and socio-economic class

READINGS: Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, “Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 6, “A Fair Day’s Work.”

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*

Sarah Fass, “Paid Leave in the States”

XI. Week 11: Wednesday, April 6th, Unions and Collective Bargaining today ****Written Assignment Due: Hand in at Class Meeting**

DISCUSSION: What unions do, types of unions; other elements in the labor movement; **process of collective bargaining; union**

READINGS: Martin Jay Levitt (with Terry Conrow), Confessions of a Union Buster, Chapter “Copeland Oaks.” New York: Crown, 1993, pp. 163-200.

Michael D. Yates, Why Unions Matter. New York: Monthly Review Press, "How Unions Form," pp. 30-38; pp. 66-78; and pp. 53-80.

XII. Week 12: Wednesday, April 13th, Immigration Old and New

DISCUSSION: Is immigration good for the American Economy and Workers

FILM: *In America*

READINGS: Gracie Chang, "Disposable Domestic: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy," Chapter 3, “Undocumented Latinas: The New Employable Mother,” pp. 55-92.

Immanuel Ness, Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005). Chapter 2, “The Political Economy of Transnational Labor in New York City: The Context for Immigrant Worker Militancy,” pp. 13-39.

Optional Reading:

Ray Marshall, “Getting Immigration Reform Right,” EPI Briefing Paper #186, March 15, 2007.

Ira N. Gang and Anne Morrison Piehl, Destination, New Jersey: How Immigrants Benefit the State Economy, Report, Program on Immigration and Democracy, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, December, 2008.

XIII. Week 13: Wednesday, April 20^h, Collective Bargaining Exercise

XIV. Week 14: Wednesday, April 27th, Collective Bargaining Exercise

XV. Week 15: Wednesday, May 11th (Second Exam)

Choices for Written Assignment – Each of these assignments require a minimum of 5 typed, double-spaced, pages. Do any one. (OTHER CHOICES TBA)

1. Interview someone over 50 about their work history and work life; then write a paper analyzing it. A parent or other relative is OK but it need not be a parent. A telephone interview is OK but you will probably have a better chance of getting the person to talk and provide the type of details needed if you talk to them in person. If you get a person who doesn't tell you enough to complete the assignment (some people are like that), then go on to a different person.

Chronicle their work history in order. What jobs have they had (paid and unpaid)? How did they get each job; how long did it last? What were these jobs like? What did they do every day? What aspects did they like and dislike? Would they choose to do these jobs again – why or why not? Did they experience extended periods of unemployment? If so, how did it affect them?

How did work affect their self-image, identity, and opportunities? And how would you feel about following their work path?

Were their jobs “Taylorized” or affected by scientific management [Hint: Don't ask this directly but try to figure out if they did a small part of the overall task, supervised people who had this type of job etc.]

How were their jobs or job prospects affected by the trends in American business identified in the Capelli et al. reading? By restructuring of jobs in order to use low-wage or immigrant labor? By periodic recessions? By race, gender, or social class? Your essay should connect the work history of the person interviewed to the larger issues studied in this class.

2. Visit the Museum on Ellis Island in New York City and write a paper comparing what you learn there with the more recent immigration experience of someone you interview.

The person can have immigrated any time in the last 50 years. You may do the interview before or after you go to Ellis Island, but we recommend doing it after.

You can reach the museum by one of two ferries. One goes from South Ferry in Manhattan (take the train to NYC and then the subway to the tip of Manhattan). One goes from Liberty Park off the NJ turnpike. Be sure to examine the exhibit on “Peak Immigration Years,” on the second floor of the museum; also view the third to the last room on the jobs and wages immigrants had (this room has red banners on the ceiling containing occupations and their wages in 1910).

Keep something demonstrating that you went to Ellis Island and include it with your paper (so that we can give you credit for the trip itself in addition to the paper). A receipt or picture of yourself taken at the exhibit is OK.

In the paper that you write, answer the following questions:

Why did people immigrate to the U.S. in the early 20th century? What were the conditions in the countries that people immigrated from?

Why jobs did immigrants do once they got to the U.S.? How did the jobs differ from those in the country of origin? What did the women who immigrated do?

What were the wages and working conditions like for those who worked for pay? Describe the hours worked, the safety conditions, etc.

How were immigrants looked up and treated by non-immigrant Americans?

How did the immigrants survive culturally in the U.S.? Did they simply assimilate immediately or did they try to preserve their culture? Did they establish special organizations? Help each other out? How did they function in a country when they did not know the language?

What is your ancestry? If your ancestry was included in the museum, what jobs did those of your ancestry perform in the U.S.? Where did those of your ancestry settle in the U.S. (hint: see the large map on the ground floor)?

How is the experience of the more recent immigrant you interview similar to, or different from, the experiences of the immigrants to the U.S. in the early 20th century?

3. Fieldwork Paper - Observations of Young Workers in the Mall

For this project you will conduct an observation of young workers in a local New Jersey mall and compare what you see to three articles that explore the experiences of young workers in mall establishments. These articles are available on E-companion:

Readings for this assignment

1. Besen-Cassino, Contemporary Work Experiences, Exploitation or Fun?
2. Besen-Cassino, Consumption of Production

3. Tannock, Why Do Working Youth Work Where They Do?:A Report from the Young Worker Project

Step 1: Make a list of what you expect to see at mall retail stores based on the readings. You will turn this list in with your write-up.

Step 2: Conduct your observation. You should observe at the mall for a minimum of one hour. You are just to observe NOT interview any of the workers or customers. While you are making your observation take field notes. You may want to observe in the store for awhile and then find a place to sit in the mall to write up your fieldnotes. Fieldnotes should include the date and time of the observation, name of store and mall; along with every detail you can record about what you see. (You will be provided with a mall observation sheet to take the notes on). You must pick AT LEAST 3 stores to observe in, based on the descriptions in the readings. You must pick at least 1 store that is similar to the ones described in the readings (for example, Starbucks, Hollister, Gap, Abercrombie and Fitch). The others stores may be similar or different to the stores described in the readings. You will turn in these notes with your write up. Make sure to collect data on:

- The Workers: how many people are working, who is working where, what are the demographics of the workforce (approximate age, gender, race) what are their uniforms/dress like, are they smiling, what do they look like; is there any evidence of emotion work
- The Work: does it look like they have fun; what work practices did you observe; does there seem to be socializing/friendships; what is the nature of the work, what is the condition of the store (clean, dirty, etc); did you observe any hiring signs; were the hiring signs similar to the ones described in the readings;
- The Store Atmosphere: what store are you in; what does the store look like; what music is playing; what is the 'feel' of the store; what customers does the store cater to; how is that displayed; what product is being sold; what type of customers came in the store (age, gender, race, etc) how do customers behave; how do the customers and workers interact' are the customers young/old;

Step 3: Write up your observations and compare them to Besen-Cassino and Tannock's description of mall work. In particular compare the demographics of the workers (gender, race); presentation of workers", the role of consumption and the amount of "socializing" that goes on. Did you see what you expected to see based on the readings? What didn't you see, or what did you see that surprised you? Did your mall stores seem like the model one for teens? Why or Why not? If you chose stores that were different than the readings, how were they different? Why do you think so?

Step 4: You will hand in a completed report including the following.---

1. Your list of expectations and fieldnotes (handwritten is fine)
2. Typed 5 page write-up