Syllabus
37:575:355:01 Current Labor Problems
School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University
Spring 2011

Course Number: 37:575:355:01
Day and Time: Mondays 10:55-1:55 pm
Location: Ruth Adams Building RM 208

Professor: Carmen Martino
Office Location: Labor Education Center, 50 Labor Center Way,
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine current labor problems in the context of the global economy. We will examine the economic and political power of multinational corporations and the important role that unions have played historically as a counterweight to rising corporate power. We will analyze labor markets and the long-term implications of rising levels of income and wealth inequality. And we will take a close look at what unions need to do in order to organize workers and communities in local, regional, national and international labor markets.

II. EXPECTATIONS

Preparation

Do your reading assignments before class! Bring the assigned material to each class and take good notes.

Participation

Class sessions will include short lectures along with small group discussions and problem solving exercises. The expectation is that everyone will actively participate in the class.

When participating in discussions, comments should:

- Relate to your own experience, the readings, topics of discussion and to the comments of others;
- Clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments;
- Synthesize the main components of the discussion;
- Support the collective learning process of the class; and
- Go beyond the commonplace and bring fresh analytic perspectives.

Texting, or talking on cell phones and emailing are all prohibited during class.

Communications
Check your Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. I will communicate all course correspondence via email. Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. When emailing always include "Current Labor Problems" in the subject line of your email.

III. EVALUATION
Final grades will be based on the following:

1.	Class preparation and attendance	(35%)
2.	Current Events	(5%)
3.	Mid-Term	(30%)
4.	Final Exam	(30%)

Attendance
Thirty-five percent (35%) of your grade will be based on attendance and participation so it is vitally important to attend every class. Failure to sign the sign-in sheet will result in a loss of attendance points. You can only be excused for an illness, death in the family or other *real* emergencies.

Students who are late to class will lose attendance points so please be punctual. Also, if you leave early without permission you will be marked absent for the entire class.

Current Events
Five percentage points (5%) of your final grade will be based on a current event that you will discuss in class. You will receive half of the grade when you bring in an article (from a newspaper, magazine, web page etc.,) that focuses on the topic being discussed for the week your current event is due and the other half for presenting/discussing the topic in class.

Mid-Term and Final Exams
The mid-term and final exams will include written take-home questions that will cover all course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, small group discussions, etc.

IV. COURSE READINGS
All reading assignments are available on the course Sakai website. You can access the site by following these directions:

- Go to http://sakai.rutgers.edu
- To log on, enter your Rutgers net ID and password in the upper right hand corner.
- Look for the tabs at the top of the next page. Click on the tab: 37:575:355:01 Sp11.
- Click on "resources" on the menu on the left hand side of the next page. You should see the course syllabus and all of the course readings.

VI. SYLLABUS

PART I: JOBS AND INCOME INEQUALITY

W1. MONDAY, JANUARY 24TH - COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Read: The syllabus

In-Class: Introduction: Our expectations for the class and review syllabus

For Group Discussion: Defining "Current Labor Problems"

W2. MONDAY, JANUARY 31ST – LOW WAGE WORK

Read: Bernhardt, Milkman, Theodore, Heckathorn, Auer, and DeFilippis, González, Narro, Perelshteyn, Polson, Spiller, *Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers, Violations of Employment Labor Laws in American Cities;*

Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed, *Serving in Florida;*

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on dead-end conditions of work in low-wage labor markets

Film: Waging a Living

W3. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH - JOB POLARIZATION

Read: Sweet and Meiksins, Changing Contours of Work, *"How New is the New Economy?"*

The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) *Tough Choices or Tough Times, The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 2007;

David Autor, MIT Dept. of Economics and National Bureau of Economic Research, *The Polarization of Job Opportunities in the U.S. Labor Market, Implications for Employment and Earnings*, April 2010;

Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research, NJ DOL, *Projections 2016, New Jersey Employment and Population in the 21st Century*, November 2008.

In-Class: Lecture/Group Discussions on jobs, class and career choices

W4. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH – INCOME INEQUALITY

Read: Hacker and Pierson, *Winner Take All Politics, How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, 2010;

Timothy Noah, Slate, *The United States of Inequality*, 2010.

In-class: Group Discussion: Does Income Inequality Matter?

PART II: Globalization

W5. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST - THE CORPORATION

Read: Joel Bakan The Corporation, Chapters 3-4

In-Class Lecture/Discussion on the evolution of the corporation
Group discussion on the role of corporations in society

Film: The Corporation

W6. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH - WAL MART

Read: Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution, How Wal Mart Created a Brave New World of Business*, Chapters 3, and 5;

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion and small group discussion on Wal Mart

Film: Is Wal Mart Good for America?

W7. MONDAY, MARCH 7TH – CHINA SWEATSHOPS AND LOW PRICES

Read: Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution, How Wal Mart Created a Brave New World of Business*, Chapters 6;

EPI Briefing Paper Unfair China Trade Costs Local Jobs

NY Times, Nicholas D. Kristof, Where Sweatshops Are a Dread

NY Times, Steven Greenhouse, *A Factory Defies Stereotypes*, But Can It Thrive?

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion and small group discussion on Cheap Labor

Film: China Blue

MID-TERM TAKE HOME TEST (DUE MARCH 21ST)

W8. MONDAY, MARCH 21ST – NEO-LIBERALISM AND GLOBAL TRADE

Read: Lori Wallach, *Introduction to Whose Trade Organization, It's Not About Trade*

David Harvey, *Neo-Liberalism as Creative Destruction*

Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo García, *"What Is Neo-Liberalism?" A Brief Definition*

Web Link to WTO:
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/tif_e.htm

In-Class: Lecture/Small Group Discussion on Neo-Liberalism and Global Trade

MID-TERM TO BE HANDED IN AT THE START OF CLASS

W9. MONDAY, MARCH 28TH - PRIVATIZATION (WATER)

Read: Robert Glennon, *Water Scarcity, Marketing and Privatization;*

International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth, *Water Privatization and Renationalization in Bolivia: Are the Poor Better Off?*

Jim Shultz, The Nation, *The Politics of Water in Bolivia*, January 2005;

In-Class: Lecture/small group discussion on privatization, water and human rights

Film: Blue Gold: World Water Wars

W10. MONDAY, APRIL 4TH - IMMIGRATION

Read: Mae M. Ngai, *How Grandma Got Legal*, July 2006;

Susan B. Carter, Richard Sutch, *Labor Market Flooding? Migrant Destination and Wage Change during America's Age of Mass Migration*, March 2007;

Richard Alba, *Looking Beyond the Moment: American Immigration Seen from Historically and Internationally Comparative Perspectives*, July 2006;

Alejandro Portes, *NAFTA and Mexican Immigration,* July 2006.

In-Class: Lecture/group discussions on why 12 million people came looking for jobs and how to solve the problem

Film: Farmingville

PART III: UNIONS, ORGANIZING AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

W11. MONDAY, APRIL 11TH – JOB SECURITY AND THE UNION ADVANTAGE

Read: Sweet and Meiksins, *Changing Contours of Work*, Chapters 5 and 6, Who's Jobs Are Secure and A Fair Day's Work

In-Class: Lecture/group discussions on your expectations of work.

W12. MONDAY, APRIL 18TH – WHEN UNIONS SUCCEED

Read: Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*

Voos and Slott, Labor History

In-Class: Lecture/group discussions on why unions were able to organize workers in the 1930s and '40s

Film: Sit Down and Fight

W13. MONDAY, APRIL 25TH –UNIONS, ORGANIZING, AND WORK ORGANIZATION

Read: Gonos and Martino, *Temp Agency Workers in New Jersey's Logistics Hub: The Case for a Union Hiring Hall*

Reading on Worker Centers (to be announced)

In-Class: Lecture/discussion on organizing immigrant workers in local low wage labor markets

W14. MONDAY, MAY 2ND - THE FUTURE OF WORK

Read: William Greider *Work Rules*

In-Class: Lecture/small group discussions on the future of work

Review for final

Final Exam Take Home Test (Due May 9th)

W15. MONDAY, MAY 9TH - FINAL EXAM DUE