Course Expectations and Requirements

This course will explore important topics in labor studies. We will read and compare classic writings on economic, social, and political theory, as well as current theories and research. Through these writings we will analyze historical developments and view current events and problems from new angles. You will have the opportunity to examine some of the major issues in the field and to decide what you think about them. This class is designed to strengthen your ability to summarize texts, pick out key ideas, read critically, formulate arguments, debate different points of view, and work in groups.

Classwork and Preparation for Class

Class attendance is mandatory and reading assignments are expected to be completed before class. Please bring hardcopies of the readings to class. Assigned readings are on the Sakai website. Supplemental material will also be handed out in class or added to the Sakai website.

Please turn off cell phones during class time. Also, you may use computers for notes, but do not check email or text during class (it is rude and distracting, and you won’t learn as much). If you have a health problem or another emergency that requires you to miss a class, please inform the professor of the situation before the class if possible, or as soon after the class as you can.

It is important to participate in discussions and group activities. Explain your views. Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Also listen – don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore other views.

Requirements

Paper
Students will pick a class reading on which they would like to write a paper of at least 5 pages. This paper should: a) summarize the main points of the reading, b) relate it to other relevant readings, including at least one academic book or article from outside the syllabus, c) evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the authors’ arguments, and d) draw your own conclusions based on the evidence, and e) relate the readings to your own experiences or current events if
relevant. You should submit both a hardcopy in class, and an electronic copy to the Sakai website (see instructions below). The paper will determine 25% of the grade for the semester. Papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com to ensure that they are original and there is no plagiarism. Late papers will be downgraded by a third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) for 1-2 days late, two-thirds of a grade (e.g., A to B+) for 3-4 days late, and a full grade for 5 or more days late.

**Participation**

This course emphasizes student participation. All students are expected to attend class and discuss the readings. To prepare for participation students are asked to write one-paragraph summaries of the main points of each weekly reading and 1-2 reactions and/or questions they raise. You are encouraged to bring in information on current events that relate to the class readings. You can also email interesting articles to the professor, who will post them on Sakai for the whole class. Information on current events may be gleaned from newspapers, magazine articles, websites, or television programs.

You should hand in a hardcopy of your summaries in class, and also submit an electronic copy to the Sakai website (see instructions below). You may skip handing in summaries for two weeks of readings during the semester (you choose which weeks you want to skip). Students are responsible for handing in at least 9 summaries by the end of the semester. Extra credit will be given to those who hand in 11 summaries. Attendance, the weekly summaries of the readings, and participation in discussions will determine 25% of the grade for the semester.

**Exams**

Final grades will also be based 25% on the first exam and 25% on the second exam.

**Readings**

Readings are available on Sakai. To obtain the readings do the following:

1. Go to [http://sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)
2. Enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right corner
3. Click on the tab that says “Perspectives on Labor Studies 37:575:395:01 Sp11”
4. Click on “Resources” at the left
5. Click on the folder titled “Perspectives on Labor Studies 37:575:395:01 Sp11 Resources”
6. Click on the folder for the week you want, then the file you want to download. Many of the readings are in Adobe Acrobat format. If your computer doesn’t have it, you can download the reader for free at [http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)

If you have technical problems with Sakai, please contact Laura Walkoviak at 732-932-9503 or Walkoviak@smlr.rutgers.edu.

**Submitting paper and weekly summaries to Sakai**
You should submit hardcopies of the paper and weekly summaries in class, and also upload these to Sakai so there is a permanent record. Follow the directions above to get onto the Sakai site, and click on “Assignments” on the left so that you can see a list of the weekly assignments. You can submit your summary and paper either by copying text into the “Submission” box or by attaching a file.

Also, please check “Announcements” on the left of the Sakai site each week for any updates on the class and assignments.

Opening Class: January 24

Overview of the course and course requirements, plus initial discussion.

Second week: January 31

An Initial Contrast in Perspective:


Rius, Marx for Beginners (London: Two Continents Publishing Group, 1976), pp. 127-140.

Third Week: February 7

Exploitation and Alienation

Selected readings from Karl Marx, The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts and Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production

Rius, Marx for Beginners (London: Two Continents Publishing Group, 1976), pp. 73-83.

Edward S. Herman, “Karl Marx and the Reopening of His System,” excerpt from New Politics.

Fourth Week: February 14

Scientific Management and Human Relations


Fifth Week: February 21

Motivating and Managing Employees


Sixth Week: February 28

Race and the Labor Market


Optional: Barack Obama speech on race, March 18, 2008: Either read text on Sakai website, or watch video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWe7wTVbLUU


Optional: Studs Terkel obituary

Seventh Week: March 7

First Exam

Eighth Week: March 21

First exams to be returned and discussed.

Democracy and Social Capital


Ninth Week: March 28

Education and the Labor Market

Guest speaker: David Finegold, Dean, School of Management and Labor Relations
Readings to be announced

**Tenth Week: April 4**

**Paper topics due**

*Gender and Disability in the Labor Market*


**Eleventh Week: April 11**

*The Role of the Corporation*

Excerpt from film to be shown in class, "The Corporation"


Optional:  Milton Friedman obituary

Twelfth Week:  April 18

*The Role of Unions in a Changing Society*


Thirteenth Week:  April 25

*Inequality and the Future of Work: High-road and Low-road Employment Strategies*


Fourteenth Week:  May 2

**Final papers due**

**Second Exam – covering material since the midterm**