

Working Women in American Society

Spring 2011

12:35-3:35 p.m.

Room: Labor Education Center, Rm 130-131

Office hours: Thurs 9:30-11:30 a.m. & by appointment

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Labor Education Center, Rm 147

Dates to remember

Week 3 (2/3): autoethnographic data draft due at start of class

Week 4 (2/10): first quiz

Week 8 (3/10): second quiz

Week 10 (3/4): thesis statement/lit review worksheet due at start of class

Week 12(4/7): third quiz

Week 13 (4/14): final paper due at start of class

Week 15 (4/28): fourth quiz

Course description

In this course we will examine work as an important site of gendered meaning and authority. We will also look at how the institution of work itself has been powerfully shaped by ideas about gender difference. We will examine histories of women's work—both paid and unpaid—with a careful eye to the differences produced by class, ethnicity/race, nationality, and sexuality. We will examine the extent of workplace gender inequality, and explore various theories of its cause, including segregation, tokenism, sexual harassment, the gendering of jobs and organizations, and work/family balance. Finally, we will explore alternatives and sites of resistance to the barriers to women's equitable participation in the workplace.

Course goals

Students will aim to understand their own position within the world of work, using theoretical and historical tools from the class to better illuminate understanding. That is, what social facts contributed to the paths that have shaped students' work experiences thus far, and what will shape future outcomes? What do these social facts tell us about the institution of work? A primary aim of this course is to provide students with analytical tools to make better sense of the working world and their interaction with it. This aim is supported with smaller-scale goals:

- Connecting “private troubles” and “public issues” that shape work organizations and the institution of work
- Recognizing and describing interconnected patterns of gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality inequalities

Major assumptions of the course

- We are social beings who both shape and are shaped by the social worlds in which we live. We do not have *complete* autonomy and self-determination, but neither are we merely the products of institutions and structures.
- There is nothing natural or inevitable about the institution of work or the arrangements of power in workplace organizations. They were made by people and they can be changed by people. Therefore, it is worth our while to consider how such work and workplaces are constructed and maintained in order to imagine how they might be different.

Description of requirements

Weekly reading response. You will summarize and discuss the course readings each week of class. The weekly response should be 1-2 pages long, with at least one paragraph identifying the main argument(s) and/or point(s) of each reading you cover, and at least one paragraph connecting these ideas to what you have observed about your own working life or that of others. *At least half of your reading responses must compare and contrast the weekly readings; no more than half can focus on one reading only.* These reading responses must be uploaded to Sakai and you must bring copy to class each week. The uploaded version should be a .pdf or .doc(x) or .txt file called [yourlastname][month][day]. Thus, my first reading response would be **meyers0125.docx** (my last name, Meyers, 01 for January, and 25 for the 25th). Reading responses must be uploaded through the Assignments tab of our class Sakai page 24 hours before the start of class, and cannot be uploaded after class begins. I will provide guiding questions for each week's readings, but these should not stop you from exploring other aspects of the texts that interest, excite, or upset you.

Weekly media analysis. In addition to the reading responses, each week you will bring to class a media item on issues affecting working women in the United States (news clipping, printout of web article, advertisement, etc.). It can connect to the week's readings or course concepts more generally. Along with the item (either a clipping or printout), you must write one page explaining a) what is important about the media item, and b) how it connects to the course concepts or the week's reading. Media analyses will be collected each week.

Participation. Everyone is expected to participate in class, which obviously requires being present in class. I believe that students can learn best by actively engaging with material from course rather than simply memorizing names and concepts. This includes asking as many questions as are needed to understand the material, and working through the implications of new ideas. However, there are a variety of ways to do this.

Participation includes asking questions or making comments in class, facilitating small group work, writing thoughtful questions and comments to me (email or paper notes), posing or responding to questions on the Sakai course discussion board, and participating in group activities. If you're wondering about something, it's likely there are other students who don't fully understand either. There are no stupid questions! Discussion is a way to experiment with ideas. Participation can also sometimes mean *not* talking to allow quieter classmates to speak. It means engaging with ideas that are different from your own in a respectful manner, even if you have serious disagreements. Criticism is encouraged, but personal attack will not be tolerated.

Quizzes. There will be four in-class, non-cumulative quizzes (dates on first page). Each will consist of two terms that must be defined and illustrated with examples. Quizzes will be based on readings, lectures, and in-class viewings and exercises. Essay questions will be distributed in advance. There may also be pop quizzes that will count towards participation credit.

Autoethnographic paper. Over the semester you will develop an analysis of factors affecting your future (and/or perhaps past) working life. This will explore your own experience through course texts and concepts. The final paper will be in a standard social science format, and you will produce segments of it along the way: drafts of the autoethnographic data (your projected career path), the thesis statement, and the literature review.

Writing mechanics will be part of assessment and grading. You may come to my office hours to discuss this, but be aware of other resources, particularly the Rutgers Learning Centers. (<http://lrc.rutgers.edu/>) These were established to assist students with writing projects. This is a great resource for students who wish to improve their writing—which is a goal for all of us. Contact them early for help with your assignment.

Final grade breakdown

Reading responses	15 percent
Media analyses	10 percent
Quizzes	30 percent
Participation	20 percent
Final autoethnographic paper	25 percent

Make sure to complete *all* assignments; missing assignments count as 0 percent, not F.

Instructor meetings

All students are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss questions or concerns, or simply to continue discussions that piqued your interest in class. If you have a conflict with office hours, we may be able to find another meeting time that fits your schedule.

Course format and policies

Students are expected to complete all required readings before class, and come to class prepared to discuss what they do and do not understand about them.

I will do what is in my power to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, but you must let me know what is needed (preferably after class or during office hours). Contact the Office of Disability Services for Students at 151 College Ave, Suite 123, Mon-Thurs, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. and Fri 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for examples of services and accommodations available on campus. (732) 932-2848)

Don't plagiarize. Be sure you know the difference between *citing* a text, *quoting* a text, and *stealing* from a text (whether published, on the internet, or from another student). For more information, see the official policy at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml> or use the online tutorial at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/cir_tutorial.shtml. You can also get help at the Rutgers Learning Centers.

Diverse ideas and beliefs will come up during the course, and you may find yourself disagreeing with fellow students or me. That's normal and expected, and the discussion of our difference analyses makes for a lively classroom and more sharply honed opinions for everyone. However while passionate intellectual debate is welcome, personal attacks or insults are not. Please refrain from making faces while someone speaks, using an angry or sarcastic tone in addressing their ideas, or snickering.

The only excuses for missing a deadline or an exam are a *legitimate* illness or family emergency. There are no exceptions to this policy in the interest of fairness to the whole class. Be sure to contact me *ahead of time* if you foresee difficulties meeting a deadline.

I will discuss your questions about assignments, including papers, during office hours. Bring a paper copy for me to read and review. *Do not send papers as attachments by email.* You are strongly urged to discuss your final paper at least one week in advance of the due date.

Papers must be uploaded into Sakai (Assignments tab) before the start of class on the day they are due. Late papers will be docked by half a grade for each day it is late *beginning from the start of class the day it is due*. That is, a B paper would become a C+ paper after one day. Do not miss class to finish a paper! Nothing will be accepted a week past its due date.

If you believe you have received a lower grade than you should, you may contest it within two weeks by following these steps. 1) Allow a *24-hour "cooling off" period* so that you will be calm and collected when you ask for reconsideration of your work. 2) *Write out* the reason you think the grade should be changed. Describe *how* your work fulfills the assignment. We're all human and make mistakes but, "I just think I deserve better" doesn't tell me what I might have missed. 3) Understand that grades for any work that is reviewed may go up *or* down.

Course Texts

All course readings are available for download on the class Sakai page.

Course reading list

Part I History and contexts

Week 1: no readings other than the syllabus

Week 2: Histories of women's work in the United States

- "A Brief History of Working Women." 2005. Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Carter, G. L. *Working Women In America: Split Dreams* (Second ed.). New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pp. 20-45)
- "The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood." 1981, 1983. Davis, A. Y. *Women, Race & Class* (First Vintage Books ed.). New York: Vintage Books. (pp. 3-29)
- Bao, X. 1994. When Women Arrived: The Transformation of New York's Chinatown. In J. Meyerowitz (Ed.), *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (pp. 19-36).

Week 3: Theorizing gender

- Lorber, J. 1994. "Night to His Day": The Social Construction of Gender. *Paradoxes of Gender*, New Haven: Yale University Press (pp 1-11).
- Collins, P. H. 2004. Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection. *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthropology*, 5th edition. (pp 45-56).

Autoethnographic data draft due in class

Week 4: Theorizing work

- Weber, M. 2006. Bureaucracy. In A. S. Wharton (Ed.), *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change*. New York: McGraw Hill. (pp. 51-56).
- Marx, K. (2006). Alienated Labour. In A. S. Wharton (Ed.), *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change*. New York: McGraw Hill. (pp. 44-51).

First quiz

Part II Gender Inequality and Work: How, What, Why**Week 5: What is gender inequality in workplaces?**

- Cotter, D. A., Hermsen, J. M., & Vanneman, R. (2006). Gender Inequality at Work. In A. S. Wharton (Ed.), *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change*. New York: McGraw Hill. (pp. 189-201).

**ALSO READ THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDY
(BUT DO NOT USE FOR READING RESPONSE)**

- DeLaat, J. (2007). *Gender in the Workplace: A Case Study Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (pp. 3-7, 10-11)

Week 6: Occupational Segregation

- Padavic, I. and B. Reskin. (1993). "Sex Segregation in the Workplace" in *Women and Men at Work*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press. (pp. 57-96)

Week 7: Minority status and sexual harassment

- Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books. (pp. 206-242)
- Texeira, M. T. (2002). "Who Protects and Serves Me?": A Case Study of Sexual Harassment of African American Women in One U.S. Law Enforcement Agency. *Gender and Society*, 16(4), 524-545.

Week 8: Gendered jobs, gendered organizations, and gendered occupations

- Williams, C. L. (1995) *Still a Man's World: Men Who Do "Women's Work."* Berkeley: University of California Press (excerpt) (pp. 69-72)
- Pierce, J. L. (1995). *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. (Chaps 3 & 5; pp. 50-82, 103-142)

Third quiz

Week 9: SPRING BREAK! No reading.

Week 10: Valuing motherhood

- Crittenden, A. (2001). *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC. (pp. 65-86)

Thesis statement/lit review worksheet due in class

Week 11: Home/work balance

- Gerson, K., & Jacobs, J. A. (2004). The Work-Home Crunch. *Contexts*, 3(4) 29-37
- Hochschild, A. R. (1997) *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC. (pp. 35-52)

No media item this week: home/work balance worksheet due in class

Week 12: Domestic labor as commodity

- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2001, 2007). *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. (Chap 1, 5; pp. 3-28; 114-134)

Third quiz

**Part III Towards Change:
Alternatives, Transformation, and Resistance,****Week 13: Alternative workplaces**

- Rothschild, J., & Tomchin, A. (2006). Can Collectivist-Democracy Bring Gender Equality? The Efforts at Twin Oaks. In V. Smith (Ed.), *Worker Participation: Current Research and Future Trends* (Vol. 16, pp. 239-262)

Final paper due in class

Week 14: Transformations through policy

- Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope Careers: An Alternate Explanation for the Opt-Out Revolution. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1), 106-23.
- Kelly, E. L., Ammons, S. K., Chermack, K., & Moen, P. (2010). Gendered Challenge, Gendered Response: Confronting the Ideal Worker Norm in a White-Collar Organization. *Gender & Society*, 24(3), 281-303

Week 15: Resistance through collective action

- Milkman, R. (2007). Two Worlds of Unionism: Women and the New Labor Movement. In D. S. Cobble (Ed.), *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor* (pp. 63-80). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University ILR Press *Labor*
- Fine, J. (2007). Worker Centers and Immigrant Women. In D. S. Cobble (Ed.), *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American* (pp. 211-230). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University ILR Press.

Fourth quiz