

**INTRODUCTION TO LABOR STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS**  
**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY 37:575:100:06, Index #38450**  
**FALL 2011**

Instructor: Carla A. Katz

Thursday: 3:55 p.m. to 6:55 p.m. (5/6), Room 130/131, Labor Education Center,  
Cook/Douglass Campus

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Office Hours by appointment.

**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.

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

All readings, except for the text, are available 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: 37:575:100:05. Click on modules on the menu on the left hand side of the page.

**The syllabus, schedule and assignments are subject to change as the course evolves.**

**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 regularly for class announcements.
3. **Be present and be on time.** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, **please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence.** An email is automatically sent to me. Please note: My attendance policy is that students

begin with an “A” for attendance. However, the grade for attendance will decline each time a student is absent, late, or leaves early. If you are late or leave early, you will be charged with ½ class absence. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence, lateness or need to leave early, it must be provided to me in writing in advance or immediately after the occurrence. Even excused absences must be reported via the University absence reporting website indicated above.

4. **Participate in discussions and group activities.** Students will be divided into groups for breakout sessions and projects. The teaching assistants will supervise the groups. Your participation in these group situations goes to your participation grade. Explain your views. Ask questions. 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).

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 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%)

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

Learning Objectives: This is a social science course; the following SAS learning objectives are particularly relevant:

**h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.** *One learning objective involves understanding how U.S. workers have reacted to the changing nature of work, to their class position in American society, and to particular contingencies like immigration. You will gain an overview of the history of the American labor movement, how it fits into a global context, and how race, ethnicity and gender affect workers. You will demonstrate knowledge through writing assignments and examinations.*

**m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.** *A second objective involves understanding theories regarding the relationship between economic organization (e.g., the extent of economic markets and corporate structures) and the type of worker organization and public policy responses that are needed to improve the lives of workers. You will demonstrate this knowledge through writing assignments and examinations.*

**n. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.** *A third objective will be for you to apply these theories to current policy debates. You will demonstrate this through participation in class debates and through participation in a collective bargaining exercise based on current situations.*

**Collective Bargaining Exercise:** The entire class will participate in a collective bargaining game spanning a couple of weeks. Students will be assigned to union team or to a management team and will be required to negotiate a contract by a set date and time. You will be graded as a team on this exercise.

**Written Assignment--Due in Class on November 17, 2011**

You will be asked to complete one 5 page written assignment chosen from a list of possibilities. The instructor will provide the choices. 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 the beginning of the November 17, 2011 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, September 1, 2011: Introduction to the Class and Course Requirements**

- Review Syllabus and 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, September 15, 2011: 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, September 22, 2011: 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?"

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.

**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: September 29, 2011: Labor's History of Collective Action/ Organizing the Unorganized**

**FILM:** Harlan County USA, by Barbara Koppel (partial showing)

**DISCUSSION:** Role-plays and Discussion on Organizing the Unorganized

**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.”

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

“Union Members 2010”, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, January 21, 2011.

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

“The Risk of Dismissal for Union Organizing and the Need to Modify the Process”, Testimony by Dean Baker, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research.

“Proposed Rule Changes by Labor Board Would Make Workplace Elections More Democratic”, Policy Memorandum by Gordon Lafer, Economic Policy Institute, July 2011

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

#### **IV. Week 5, October 6, 2011: Labor and Employment Law**

**DISCUSSION:** Overview of Private Sector Labor and Employment Law

##### **READINGS:**

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.

Basic Guide to the National Labor Relations Act: General Principles of Law Under the Statute and Procedures of the National Labor Relations Board.

Sloan Work and Family Research Network, Selected U.S. Labor Laws and Regulations Timeline, July 2004

#### **VI. Week 6, October 13, 2011: Public Sector Labor and Employment Law**

**READINGS:** David P. Twomey, *Labor and Employment Law: Text and Cases* (14<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Chapter 10, Public Employment and Labor Law (pp. 321-351).

“Public Sector Unions Under Fire”, New York Times, July 12, 2011

**DISCUSSION:** Why are public worker unions and members under siege across the country? In what ways has the collective bargaining process for public workers suffered as a result of legislative changes being made in numerous states, including New Jersey?

Midterm Examination Review

## **VII. Week 7, October 20, 2011: MIDTERM EXAM**

## **VIII. Week 8, October 27, 2011: 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

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?

## **IX. Week 9: November 3, 2011: 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 Dimed: 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

**GROUP BREAKOUT DISCUSSION:** Based upon reading sections of “Nickel and Dimed” 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: November 10, 2011: 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: November 17, 2011: 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: TUESDAY, November 22, 2011: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.

**THANKSGIVING RECESS: WED, NOVEMBER 23-SUNDAY NOVEMBER 27**

**XIII. Week 13: December 1, 2011: Collective Bargaining Exercise**

**XIV. Week 14: December 8, 2011: Collective Bargaining Exercise**

**XV. Week 15, December 16, 2011: Final Examination**