

Introductory Seminar in Labor and Employment Relations
Fall 2011
Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 p.m.
Labor Education Center room 115
Syllabus

Professor Janice Fine

Office: LEC 152

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-4:30 p.m., 7:10-8:30 p.m. or by appointment

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This Masters course is designed to deepen our understanding of the main paradigms or systems of employment relations that co-exist in the United States today and to explore some of the major issues and challenges these systems and the workers within them, confront. The course will be taught by core members of the SMLR faculty who will take turns each week presenting in their area of expertise.

We will begin the semester with overviews of the individual employment rights regime as embodied in employment law, the collective employment rights regime as embodied in our system of industrial and labor relations and the American welfare state regime or system of public social provision embodied in our unemployment, pension, disability and health insurance policies. We will then explore six key strategic areas these systems engage including: union organizing and collective bargaining, human resource management (HRM), inequality, employee ownership and human capital or education of the U.S. workforce. With these main ideas and concepts under our belts, we will turn to a consideration of how different groups of workers—women, African-Americans, immigrants, the disabled and low income people—are experiencing these systems in their day to day working lives.

The goals of the course will be to:

1. Develop students' abilities to understand and critically analyze systems of employment relations and current workplace issues
2. Develop students' analytical and writing skills
3. Orient students to the field and the program and introduce students to a number of faculty to help them make informed choices about future course work and research sponsors
4. Establish a deliberative community in the classroom

There is no text. Each week, all students will access the articles that are posted on the sakai website for the course and one or two students will be assigned to formally present and comment on the readings and lead off a discussion with the presenter. Please bring hard copies of the articles to class. You can retrieve and print out the readings by doing the following:

1. Go to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
2. Enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right corner
3. Click on the tab that says "38:578:500:01 S10"

4. Click on “Resources” at the left
5. Click on the folder titled “38:578:500:01 S010 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>

Course Requirements:

1-Class Attendance and Participation (25%): In a course like this, attendance and class participation are absolutely essential. Unexcused absences *will* affect your grade.

Everyone must read the material and be prepared to discuss it in class and pose thoughtful questions to the presenters. Each week, two of you will be asked to lead the discussion by preparing and presenting brief summaries of the reading along with your critical reflections and a set of discussion questions for the speaker and for the larger class.

2- Short Papers (40%): Each student will write two 3-5 page double-spaced papers, each one based on a topic covered in class. Each paper should summarize the main arguments of the readings (see below for questions to cover) and provide some thoughtful reactions, evaluations and counter-arguments that relate the readings to your personal experience, additional readings you have done for this class or other classes although you are not required to do outside readings for these short papers.

3-Long Paper (35%): Each student will write one 12-15 page paper on one of the topics we have covered or will be covering that you find especially interesting. For the long paper you will need to use at least four additional academic sources (books or articles) beyond those discussed in class. The long assignment may build on one of your short papers, but you cannot include the short paper as part of your long paper. You can write on an outside topic if you get prior permission from the instructor. Please submit both a hard copy and an electronic version of your long paper on the Sakai site. You will do this assignment in three phases. First, on October 19th you will submit a written proposal about what you intend to explore in your paper. It need not be longer than a few paragraphs but should address the following question: If you are writing an analytical¹ or expository² paper: What is your question or puzzle? If you are writing an argumentative³ paper: What is the claim you intend to make and how will you justify this claim? Second, you will submit a draft paper on November 30th so that I can provide feedback. Third, you will submit a final draft on December 16th. Papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com to ensure that they are original and there is no plagiarism.

¹ An analytical paper breaks down the issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.

² An expository paper explains something to the audience.

³ An argumentative paper makes a claim about a topic and then justifies this claim with specific evidence.

Norms:

- Read and think about all of the assigned readings before each class.
- Please participate actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully—listen and engage appropriately.
- Please be ready to begin at 4:30. Some lateness is inevitable but it is disruptive so please keep it to a minimum.
- Please minimize absences—this is a class that depends on participation. If you must miss class please call or email me in advance.
- Please turn in assignments when they are due. There will be a penalty for late papers.

Class Schedule:

Class 1 (September 7th)

Introduction to the Course/Introduction to each other
Paradigms of Employment and Critical Issues in Industrial Relations
Reading for the Argument

Class 2 (September 14th)

The Collective Employee Rights Regime: Philosophical and Historical Underpinnings of Industrial Relations
Prof. Paula Voos

Class 3 (September 21st)

Lost Ways of Unionism
Prof. Sue Cobble

Class 4 (September 28th)

Human Resource Management: A Critical Appraisal
Prof. Jeff Keefe

Class 5 (October 5th)

Inequality, Labor Economics, Public Policy and the Employee/Employer Relationship
Prof. Doug Kruse
Overview on writing an academic paper
Proper Research Sources (and plagiarism)
Donna Schulman, LSER Librarian

First Short Paper due

Class 6: (October 12th)

The Individual Employment Rights Regime
Prof. James Cooney

Class 7: (October 19th)

Human Capital: Education and the U.S. Workforce
Dean David Finegold

Proposal for Long Paper Due

Class 8: (October 26th)

What is the relevance of unions for professional and managerial employees?

Prof. Adrienne Eaton

Class 9: (November 2nd)

Race and the Labor Market

Prof. Niki Dickerson

Class 10: (November 9th)

Immigration and the American Workforce, Alternative Forms of Organization Among Immigrant Workers

Prof. Janice Fine, LSER

Class 11: (November 16th)

International Comparative Labor and Employment Relations: China

Prof. Mingwei Liu

Second Short Paper Due

Class 12 (November 21st NOTE CLASS MEETS ON MONDAY THIS WEEK):

Employee Ownership

Prof. Joseph Blasi

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Class 13: (November 30th):

Draft of Longer Paper due

The “Crisis” of the Public Sector

Prof. Jeff Keefe, LSER

Class 14: (December 7th)

Closing Discussion and Evaluation

Final Paper due December 16th, 5 pm.