

# Introductory Seminar in Labor and Employment Relations

Course Number: 38:578:500

Spring 2021

Instructor: Charles Heckscher ([vita and information](#))

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**Description:** This course is designed to introduce Masters students to research and findings in the fields of labor studies, employment relations and human resources, and to raise significant questions that lie at the core of the discipline. It is also designed to help students strengthen their analytical and writing skills; and it will provide students with an opportunity to virtually “meet” a number of SMLR faculty discussing their areas of interest.

We will study the traditional industrial relations system, and also explore new developments in the workplace that have challenged that system, and some possible ways of rebuilding or changing it

The course is unusual in that it will not be based on a single professor; you will get a lot of diversity from the different people who speak. It will try to give an overview of the major topics in the field, but each presenter will have a distinctive point of view.

## Course requirements:

1. The assignment will usually include reading plus a discussion forum.
2. There will be one research paper of about 8-10 pages, double spaced, due on the last day of the course. I will ask you to submit an outline a few weeks before.
3. There will *not* be a final exam.
4. Grades will be based 40% on the final paper and 60% on your weekly discussion forums and other assignments. All grades will be on a 4-pt scale (4=A, 3=B, and so on).

Mechanics:

1. There is no course text; readings will be posted on Canvas each week.
2. **The weekly deadline for assignments will be Saturday at midnight.** But note that in most weeks you will have a **discussion forum: the first post will be due on Thursday at midnight**, and the rest of the week will be for interaction with your teammates.
3. All assignments should be done on time, even when you are absent from class. **If you must miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, or if you have trouble completing an assignment, let me know as soon as possible, preferably beforehand, at [charles.heckscher@rutgers.edu](mailto:charles.heckscher@rutgers.edu).** I will excuse absences for good cause. I will *not* accept explanations that are not timely.
4. I encourage you to meet with me for any reason, including questions about other courses, career options, etc. Just arrange meetings in advance by email ([charles.heckscher@rutgers.edu](mailto:charles.heckscher@rutgers.edu))

## Schedule of Classes

This schedule may change during the semester

|    | End Date | Presenter and topic  | Assignments                 |
|----|----------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Jan 22   | Introduction: history and current challenges   | Forum                       |
| 2  | Jan 30   | Industrial Relations Framework and Employment Relations' Intellectual Approach (Voos)              | Forum / sum                 |
| 3  | Feb 6    | <i>Research, writing, and building an argument</i>   | Short paper                 |
| 4  | Feb 13   | History of Working Class Activism and Social Movements (Williams)                                  | Forum / sum                 |
| 5  | Feb 20   | Collective Representation and Public Sector Voice (Ryan)   | Forum / sum                 |
| 6  | Feb 27   | Rising inequality (Kruse)  | Forum / sum                 |
| 7  | Mar 6    | Globalization: A Comparative Perspective (Schulze-Cleven)  | Forum / sum                 |
| 8  | Mar 13   | Discrimination in the Workplace: Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Disability (Schur) | Forum / sum                 |
| 9  | Mar 27   | The Future of Work and Work Organization (Heckscher)   | Forum / sum                 |
| 10 | Apr 3    | <i>Review of paper drafts; writing and arguing 2</i>   | Final paper outline / draft |
| 11 | Apr 10   | Collaborative school reform (Rubinstein)   | Forum / sum                 |
| 12 | Apr 17   | Labor and Environmentalism (Vachon)  | Forum / sum                 |
| 13 | Apr 24   | Alternative Forms of Worker Voice and Bargaining for the Common Good (Sneiderman)                  | Forum / sum                 |
| 14 | May 1    | Close  | Final paper                 |

# The Fine Print

## Learning Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will meet the following official learning objectives of SMLR and MLER:

- Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional. (Goal I)
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background of a particular work situation (Goal IV)

In addition, successful students will also meet the following course specific goals:

1. Deepen their understanding of key historical and current workplace and social issues through exposure to a variety of research topics and methods; <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
2. Explore the ethical implications of alternative employment systems and relationships; <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
3. Develop and improve analytical and writing skills; <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
4. Be introduced to a number of faculty and through them to the scope of the MLER program so that they can make more informed choices about future course work and research sponsors; <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
5. Create a culture of open discussion, constructive criticism and active collaboration between and among faculty and students. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## Students with Disabilities:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site

at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

***Plagiarism:***

The extensive use of another person's ideas without proper citation is plagiarism and unacceptable. It can result in a failing grade and disciplinary action through University channels. The same is true for any other form of cheating. For information about proper citation of written and web-based material, please read, "Documenting Sources" and "Correct Forms for Citation," which is available on the Canvas site for this course.