

Public Sector Employment Issues: 38:578:525:01
Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations
Spring 2025

syllabus subject to change

Instructor: Professor Francis Ryan

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Class Meets Hybrid and Online, Wednesday, 7:20-10:00 pm

Course Overview: The current crisis of the public sector workplace—centered in part on such issues as pension defunding, contract impasses, school reform, civil service and debates over unionization, privatization, and taxation—is at the heart of our national political discussion. This class will introduce some of these important issues, place the contemporary debates in a historical, cultural, and sociological perspective, and define the trends in recent scholarship. While the clash over government services and the work structures that provide them seems new, the origins of this debate have deep roots in U.S. political theory and history. We will explore these matters in depth and examine how contemporary scholars in management and industrial relations have contextualized this dynamic.

Course Guidelines:

Class attendance: As a graduate-level course that meets online once a week, your attendance is critical. Please attend each class meeting, and if you are unable to make it, or need to leave early, please let me know ahead of time. This is a hybrid course, designed for both in-person and online participation.

Participation: This class will utilize a variety of formats. Each week, I will provide an overview of the topic in the first part of the class and invite open dialogue during this process. For the bulk of the seminar meetings, we will engage in a discussion of the assigned readings. Please complete the readings before our meeting each week and be ready to take an active role. After each class, I will provide notes and a general review of our exchanges.

Weekly Forum Posts: A selection of readings have been prepared for each week. Please do all of the assigned reading and post a reflection on the Canvas threaded forum site that gives a general overview of what you gained from the readings, and perhaps a question that you would like to have addressed in class. This allows all of us to have a sense of what we found most interesting or perplexing about the topics for that week's class. Please have your forum response posted by noon the day of our class meeting. The reports are worth 15% of the semester grade.

Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments (midterm exam, the final exam and research paper) should be sent to me via email attachment the day they are due. Out of respect to those who meet this expectation, late reports and final papers will be subject to downgrading.

Research Paper: One of the major projects you will prepare in this seminar is a research paper that explores an issue of the public sector of your choice. Please send me a brief paper proposal that outlines your research topic by class time on February 12. The paper should be at least 15

pages in length and provide at least ten scholarly sources as part of the bibliography. Further details on what is expected will be provided.

Supplementary Sources: Each week I will provide you a list of supplementary readings on the syllabus. You are not responsible for reading any of these listed sources; I provide them merely to give you a fuller sense of the emerging historiography on the public sector, and to give you a sense of where my own lecture notes come from. You might also find these useful sources to refer to if your research paper topic aligns with the topics we cover.

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

Canvass: This course uses the web-based classroom management system. Please utilize Canvass to access each week's readings. Other readings as specified can be downloaded via the Rutgers Library Journal website, or public access online.

Grading:

Take Home Midterm: 20%

Participation: 20%

Take Home Final: 20%

Paper: 25%

Weekly Overviews: 15%

Please note that this syllabus may change during the course of the semester. Additional in-class readings will be handed out from time to time as related to developments in the issues we are exploring from week to week during the semester. I also encourage you to suggest readings from current affairs that you believe will complement our planned seminar discussions.

Weekly Seminar Schedule

January 22: Introduction and Overview of the course.

Introduction to the class. No assigned readings.

January 29: Government Jobs, the Spoils System, and the Rise of Civil Service

Readings:

“Trump’s Schedule F Plan, explained,” *Project Democracy*, June 11, 2024.

Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson, “These Disunited States,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 22, 2022.

F. Ryan, *AFSCME’s Philadelphia Story: Municipal Workers and Urban Power in the Twentieth Century* (Temple University Press, 2011) “Ward Politics and Municipal Labor in Philadelphia in the 1920s.”

Supplementary Sources:

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia, 1898)

Jane Addams, “Problems of Municipal Administration.” (1904)

Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Boston: Harvard, 2000)

J.T. Salter, *Boss Rule* (1935)

February 5: Government Sector Employment: Conflicting Viewpoints

Readings:

Gregory B. Lewis and Sue A. Frank, “Who Wants to Work for the Government?” *Public Administration Review* (July/August 2002) 62:4

F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) “Individualism and Collectivism.”

Milton Friedman, “Why Government is the Problem.” (Hoover Institute, 1993)

Supplementary Sources:

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York and London, Oxford, 2007)

Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2020)

American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century, edited by Nelson Lichtenstein (Philadelphia, Penn, 2006)

February 12: The Federal Service: Spotlight: Federal Park Rangers

Readings:

Micah Ling, “Up Trouble Mountain,” *Esquire*, September 2021, 111-115

Tiya Miles, "A National Tantrum at a National Park: Yellowstone's Anger Management Problem," *The Atlantic*, December 21, 2022.

Toby Beauchamp, "Beyond the 'Pine Pig': Reimagining Protection through the U.S. National Park Ranger," *Radical History Review* (Vol. 137, 2020): 96-118.

David Pitts, John Marvel and Sergio Fernandez, "So Hard to Say Goodbye? Turnover Intention among U.S. Federal Employees," *Public Administration Review*, September 1, 2011, 751-760.

Supplementary Sources:

Eric S. Yellin, *Racism in the Nation's Service: The Colorline in Woodrow Wilson's America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013.)

Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013)

Tae Kyu Wang and Ralph Brower, "Job Satisfaction Among Federal Employees: The Role of Federal Interaction with Work Environment," *Public Personnel Management* (2019) 48:1 pp. 3-26.

Richard A. Ippolito, "Why Federal Workers Don't Quit," *The Journal of Human Resources*, 22:2 (Spring 1987): 281-299.

February 19: The Crisis of the Federal Service: The Post Office

Readings:

Philip F. Rubio, "Unintended Consequences:" The U.S. Postal Service Conundrum of Service, Business, Labor, and Politics," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* (2021): 33: 125-141.

Max B. Sawicky, "The U.S. Postal Service Is a National Asset: Don't Trash It," *Center for Economic and Policy Research*, September 2020.

Laura N. Coordes, "A Path Forward for the Postal Service," *Emory Bankruptcy Developments Journal*, 37:3. June 28, 2021.

Romina Boccia, David A. Ditch, James L. Gattuso and Rachel Greszler, "Congress Should Free the Postal Service, Not Bail it Out," *The Heritage Foundation: Backgrounder*: No. 3495, May 8, 2020.

Supplementary Sources:

Jonathan Franzen, “Lost in the Mail,” from *How To Be Alone: Essays* (2003)

The Great Postal Heist (2019) Director: Jay Gallone

The Mailman (1946)

Peter B. Doehringer Audrey Watson, Linda Kaboolian and Michael Watkins, “Beyond the Merit Model: New Directions in the Federal Workplace?” in *Public Sector Employment in a Time of Transition*, Industrial Relations Research Association Series, pp 163-199.

Philip F. Rubio, *There’s Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality*

Syed M. Qasim Hussaini, MD, MS and G. Caleb Alexander, MD, MS. “The United States Postal Service: An Essential Public Health Agency?” *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 35 (12): 3 699-701, October 2020.

Frederick Gooding, *American Dream Deferred: Black Federal Workers in Washington D.C., 1941-1981* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2018)

February 26: Midterm Take Home

March 5: Blackboard Unionism: Teachers and the Education Sector

Readings:

Eric Blanc, “Breaking the Law: Strike Bans and Labor Revitalization in the Red State Revolt,” *Labor Studies Journal* 45:1 (2020): 74-96.

Rebecca Kolins Givan, “Why Teacher Unions Make Such Useful Scapegoats,” *New Labor Forum* (2014) 32:1 68-75.

Jon Shelton, “Against the Public: The Pittsburgh Teachers Strike of 1975-76 and the Crisis of the Labor-Liberal Coalition,” *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*,” Vol 10:2, 55-75.

Tom Alter, “It Felt Like Community:” Social Movement Unionism and the Chicago Teachers Strike of 2012,” *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas* 12:3 (2013)

Supplementary Sources:

Steve Golin, *The Newark Teacher Strikes: Hopes on the Line* (New Brunswick, Rutgers, 2002)

Jon Shelton, *Teacher Strike!: Public Education and the Making of A New American Political Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010)

Micah Uetricht, *Strike for America: Chicago Teachers Against Austerity* (Verso: New York, 2014)

March 12: Charter Schools and the Future of Public Education

Readings:

Leo Casey, "The Charter School Challenge," *New Labor Forum* 24:1 (Winter 2015): 22-30.

Nicolaus Mills, "The Corporatization of Higher Education" *Dissent* (Fall 2012): 6-9; Aaron Bady and Mike Konczal, "From Master Plan to No Plan: The Slow Death of Public Higher Education," 10-16.

Supplementary Sources:

Jonna Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions and Race in the Battle for School Equity* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012).

Alexia Fernandez Campbell, "West Virginia Teachers are on Strike Again. Here's Why," *Vox*, February 19, 2019.

Waiting for Superman (2010) Director: David Guggenheim

March 19: Spring Break. No Class Meeting

March 26: At the Barricades: Police Unionism in the Twenty-First Century

Readings:

Marvin J. Levine, "Police Union History: A Historical Overview of Police Unionization in the United States," *Police Journal* 61 (October 1988): 334-343.

Aaron Bekemeyer, "The Long tie Between Police Unions and Police Violence—and what to do about it," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 2020.

Eve L. Ewing, "Blue Bloods: America's Brotherhood of Police Officers," *Vanity Fair*, September 2020.

Supplementary Sources:

Women in Blue (2020) Director: Deirdre Fishel

Lynn Zimmer and James B. Jacobs, "Challenging the Taylor Law: Prison Guards on Strike," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 34:4 (July 1981): 531-544.

Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* (December 2010): 703-734.

Heather Ann Thompson, "Downsizing the Carceral State: The Policy Implications of Prison Guard Unions," *Criminology and Public Policy* 10:3 (2011): 771-779.

April 2: "Angels at the Intersections:" School Crossing Guards, Women and Part Time Municipal Services

Readings:

Francis Ryan, "You'll Never Walk Alone:" Crossing Guard Associations and Labor Feminism in Postwar America. (*Labor*, February 2023)

Catherine Bull and Leigh Ann Von Hagen, "The Role of Crossing Guards and Child Safety Pedestrian Safety in New Jersey," State of New Jersey Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, December 2014.

Supplementary Sources:

Janis Appier, *Policing Women: The Sexual Politics of Law Enforcement and the LAPD* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1998)

Joseph E. Hower, "You've Come a Long Way—Maybe": Working Women, Comparable Worth, and the Transformation of the American Labor Movement, 1964-1989, *The Journal of American History* (December 2020): 658-684.

Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Gender and Rights in the Modern American Workplace* (Philadelphia, Penn, 2019)

April 9: Sexuality and Quality of Work Life in the Federal Workplace

Readings:

Peter Stanley Federman and Nicole M. Rishel Elias, "Beyond the Lavender Scare: LGBT and Heterosexual Employees in the Federal Workplace," *Public Integrity*, 19 (2017): 22-40.

Stephanie A. Pink-Harper and Ralph Burnside, "Justice for All:" An Examination of Self-Identified LGBT Job Satisfaction in the US Federal Workforce," *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 34 (2017): 182-197.

Eric A. Cech and William R. Rothwell, "LGBT Workplace Inequality in the Federal Workforce: Intersectional Process, Organizational Contexts, and Turnover Considerations," *ILR Review* 73:1 (January 2020): 26-60.

Mary K. Feeney and Justin M. Stritch, "Family-Friendly Policies, Gender, and Work Life Balance in the Public Sector," *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 39:3 (2019): 422-448.

Supplementary Sources:

David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004)

Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010)

Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009)

April 16: Recent Developments in Public Sector Labor Law

Readings:

Ann C. Hodges, "The U.S. Labor Relations System After Janus v. AFSCME: An Early Assessment," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 33 (2021): 49-60.

Kavitha Iyengar, "Janus V. AFSCME," *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*, 40:1 (2019). 183-200.

Sochie Nnaemeka, "Labor Movement vs. SCOTUS," *New Labor Forum* 26:3 (Fall 2017): 44-49

Joseph McCartin, "A Wagner Act for Public Employees Labor's Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism," *Journal of American History* 95:1 (June 2008): 123-148.

Joseph A. McCartin, "Convenient Scapegoats: Public Workers Under Assault," *Dissent* Spring 2011, 45-50.

Supplementary Sources:

Alexis N. Walker, *Divided Unions: The Wagner Act, Federalism and Organized Labor* (Philadelphia: Penn, 2019)

Heather Heilman, "Janus v. AFSCME and the Future of American Unions," *LERA: Perspective on Work* (2018) 56-59.

April 23: Reinventing Government, Labor-Management Cooperation, and the Future of Public Sector Employment

Readings:

Jeff Keefe, "Can Unions Be Transformational Agents in Public Sector Workplace Redesign?" in *Going Public: The Role of Labor-Management Relations in Delivering Quality Governmental Services*. (Industrial Relations Research Series, 2002), pp 211-234.

Kressent Pottenger and Terrill Haigler, "100 Degrees in the Truck: Sanitation Workers Deserve Better," *New Labor Forum*, January 2022.

Zakia Elliott, Alison Kenner and Morgan Sarao, "Dignity Over Dumping: The Fight for Climate Justice and a Just Transition for Sanitation Workers," *Science for the People* 23:2

Pradeep S. Salve and Suresh Jungari, "Sanitation Workers at the Frontline: Work and Vulnerability in Response to COVID-19," *Local Environment* 25 (2020): 627-630.

Supplementary Sources:

Thomas Byrne Edsall, *The Age of Austerity: How Scarcity Will Remake American Politics* (New York: Anchor, 2012)

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld and Saul Rubinstein, "Innovation and Transformation in Public Sector Employment Relations: Future Prospects on a Contested Terrain," *The Ohio Journal on Dispute Resolution*, 28:1 (2013): 107-144.

Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanson, *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century* (2001).

Rachel Greszler, "How States Can Address Their COVID-19 Budget Shortfalls without Federal Bailouts," *The Heritage Foundation: Backgrounder* No. 3499, June 8, 2020.

David Swindell and Mark S. Rosentraub, "Who Benefits from the Presence of Professional Sports Teams? The Implications for Public Funding for Stadiums and Arenas," *Public Administration Review* 58:1 (January-February 1998): 11-20.

Paul Routledge, Andrew Cumers and Kate Driscoll Derickson, "States of Just Transition: Realizing Climate Justice Through and Against the State," *Geoforum* 88 (2018): 78-86.

Geraldine Terry, "No Climate Justice Without Gender Justice: An Overview of the Issues," *Gender and Development* 17:1 (March 2009): 5-18.

Katie Benner, "The Public Pension Bomb," in *Fortune* May 12, 2009.

Final Paper due

April 30: Pandemic Redux: Public Sector Responses to the COVID and the Future of the Government Sector Workplace

Sue Williamson, Linda Colley, Sally Hanna-Osborne, "Will Working from Home Become the 'New Normal' in the Public Sector? *Australian Journal of Public Administration* (August 26, 2020)

R. Palumbo, "Let Me Go to the Office!": An Investigation in to the Side Effects of Working from Home on Work-life balance," *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, November 4 2020.

Hanna de Vries, Lars Trummers, Victor Bekkers, "The Benefits of Teleworking in the Public Sector: Reality or Rhetoric? *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 39:4 (February 2018)

