

Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations

Women and Work
Labor Studies 38:578:541:90
Spring 2026

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Course Information

This graduate-level course examines issues related to women's paid and unpaid work in a global context. Students will analyze the role of government policy, institutions, and social movements in raising women's wages, promoting equal opportunity, fighting discrimination in the workplace, and improving working conditions. We will also examine issues related to women's work that does not pass through the market as women continue to perform most of the unpaid work caring for children and the elderly. Economic, political, and social aspects of women's working lives will gain our attention, as we examine a host of important issues ranging from the work-family balance, the glass ceiling, sexual harassment, sexual orientation and gender identity, women in developing countries, and the relationship between women's reproductive health and economic empowerment.

Learning Objectives

This course meets SMLR learning objective IV: Theoretical Perspectives – Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. It also meets learning objective V: Understanding Context – Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions. Differential treatment of employees by gender is a major contextual issue for labor and employment relations. This course explores that problem using theoretical frameworks related to labor supply and demand, the economics of discrimination, occupational stratification, and theories of women and work.

Course Requirements

Evaluation: Grades are determined by memos about the course readings (30%), an occupational data assignment (15%), an interview project (15%), and a final course project (40%).

1. Course reading memos (30%)

The course reading memos are worth a total of 300 points. Students will write a total of 6 course reading memos across the semester. One memo will be due every two weeks and may cover any reading within the previous two weeks. Each memo will be worth 50 points, and should be 400–500 words, to be uploaded as a pdf file.

For each memo, choose one assigned reading. In your own words, discuss:

1. What is the central claim?
2. What evidence does the article use?
3. What is one implication for women's working lives **today** (be specific)? Use at least one link to a news or popular press article discussing this issue.

4. What question or limitation remains?

2. Occupational data assignment (15%)

This assignment is worth 150 points. Your occupational segregation assignment is central to the goal of this course; it requires you to collect data about an occupation. The assignment also includes creating two charts, writing a short report, and submitting a short video recording in which you answer (1) Why did you choose this occupation? (2) What does your data show? (3) What surprised you? The assignment is due by the end of week 5.

3. Interview project (15%)

This assignment is worth 150 points. This project requires that you conduct an interview with a paid employee who has children to critically analyze the tradeoffs between paid and unpaid work. You will analyze the interview using at least two concepts from the course (e.g., work–family balance, occupational segregation, gender bias, policies). You will also upload a 3-5 minute video or audio excerpt of your interview. The assignment is due by the end of week 11.

4. Final Course Project (40%)

The final course project is worth 400 points. Students will prepare a policy brief containing a recommendation for a policy reform they think that Congress should push to legislation. The specific topic is up to each student and should be approved by the professor through email by the end of week 12. The brief should contain two components: (1) A 5-page double spaced written report explaining the background and the need for policy reform, including at least 2 original charts created by the student in excel that have supporting data; and (2) A PowerPoint presentation with 10-12 slides summarizing the key points in the report and in the data. Students will be graded on both content and style. The PowerPoint presentation needs to be accompanied by a voiceover of the student discussing the slides. The completed course project must be turned in during week 14, by the last day of Rutgers classes.

Your writing for all assignments will be assessed on the content of your arguments, your use of assigned materials, and how effectively you express your ideas in writing. For each week late, the grade on the paper will be lowered by one letter grade. I will not give extra credit in this course.

Grading Scale

This is a points-based course. The final grade is based on a 1000 point system. Total points accumulated determines final course grade.

Outstanding	Good	
1000 - 900 Points = A	899 – 870 Points = B+	
	869 – 800 Points = B	
Satisfactory	Poor	Fail
799 – 770 Points = C+	699 – 670 Points = D+	Below 600=F
769 – 700 Points = C	669 – 600 Points = D	

Class Sessions

The course delivery mode is remote asynchronous; meaning that the learning activities take place online (virtually) and students will access the course material on their own timing according to the following guidelines. Each course week begins on Tuesday mornings at 10:00am and ends the following week Monday, 11:59pm

* A weekly message will be published on the course page on Tuesdays. Information about content and assignment procedure is available in the weekly message, and students will also be directed to the relevant module.

* Each week is 7 days in length. Students may enter the course and engage in coursework at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Student Resources

Academic Integrity

You will be held to the Rutgers Policy on Academic Integrity, which can be found online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or related topics, just ask. Cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, or plagiarism will be reported. Depending on the individual case, you might fail the assignment or the class, be required to take an ethics seminar, be placed on disciplinary probation, or be suspended from Rutgers for a semester or more.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

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. Share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

We are utilizing the Canvas learning management system to access learning materials, discuss the readings, post announcements, submit assignments, communicate via the Inbox feature, and view grades. Be sure to check this site frequently as there will be announcements and instructions. Checking your Rutgers email account frequently is also highly recommended.

Schedule of Readings and Assignment Due Dates

Week 1 – Introduction to Women and Work: Can Women Have it All?

* Readings:

Economic Policy Institute – “*Equal Pay Day: Gender pay gap hits historic low in 2024—but remains too large*” (March 25, 2025). [EPI Blog](#).

Ann-Marie Slaughter. 2012. “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All,” *The Atlantic* 2012 (7): 6 pages. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/6/>.

Week 2 –Gender Bias

*** Readings:**

Ben Barres. 2006. “Does Gender Matter?” *Nature* 442, no. 7099: 133-136.

Tinsley, Catherine H., Sandra I. Cheldelin, Andrea Kupfer Schneider, and Emily T. Amanatullah. 2009. “Women at the bargaining table: Pitfalls and prospects.” *Negotiation Journal* 25, no. 2: 233-248.

Week 3 –Theorizing Gender at Work

*** Readings:**

Harmann, Heidi, and Jessica Milli. “Gender Discrimination in the U.S. Labor Market.” In Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*. New York and London: Routledge Press, 2021, chapter 18.

Goldin, Claudia, and Joshua Mitchell. 2017. “The New Life Cycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, Expanding Tops.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31 (1): 161-82.

Week 4 – COVID-19 and Women’s Work

*** Readings:**

Small, Sarah, Yana Rodgers, and Teresa Perry. 2024. “Immigrant Women and the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Intersectional Analysis of Frontline Occupational Crowding,” *Forum for Social Economics*, 53 (3), July 2024, 281-306.

Kabeer, Naila, Shahra Razavi, and Yana Rodgers. 2021. “Feminist Economic Perspectives on the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Feminist Economics*, 27 (1/2), January/April 2021, 1-29.

*** Occupational data assignment due**

Week 5 – Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Women’s Work

Cazzaniga, Mauro, Augustus Panton, Longji Li, Carlo Pizzinelli, and Marina M. Tavares. 2025. "A Gender Lens on Labor Market Exposure to AI." In *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 115, pp. 56-61.

Ellingrud, Kweilin, Saurabh Sanghvi, Anu Madgavkar, Gurneet Singh Dandona, Michael Chui, Olivia White, and Paige Hasebe. Generative AI and the future of work in America. (2023). [McKinsey Global Institute Report](#).

Week 6 – The Intersection of Gender and Race at Work

*** Readings:**

Alonso-Villar, O., & Del Río, C. 2017. "The occupational segregation of African American women: Its evolution from 1940 to 2010." *Feminist Economics*, 23(1), 108-134.

Wingfield, A. H. (2010). Are Some Emotions Marked "Whites Only"? Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces. *Social Problems*, 57(2), 251–268.

Week 7 – Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

*** Readings:**

McDonald, Paula, and Sandra Backstrom. 2008. "Fighting Back: Workplace Sexual Harassment and the Case of North Country," *Australian Bulletin of Labour* 34 (1): 47-63.

The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United Forward Together. 2014. The Glass Floor: Sexual Harassment in the Restaurant Industry. Report. https://chapters.rocunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/REPORT_The-Glass-Floor-Sexual-Harassment-in-the-Restaurant-Industry2.pdf

* Watch film North Country. Log in to: <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/swank>. Then do search on "North Country".

Week 8 – Gender in the Gig Economy

*** Readings:**

Langworthy, Melissa E., and Yana Rodgers. 2025. "Gender and Digital Platform Work During Turbulent Times." *Gender, Work & Organization*.
<http://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.70074>

Cook, Cody, Rebecca Diamond, Jonathan V. Hall, John A. List, and Paul Oyer. 2021. "The gender earnings gap in the gig economy: Evidence from over a million rideshare drivers." *The Review of Economic Studies* 88, no. 5: 2210-2238.

Week 9 – Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation at Work

*** Readings:**

Badgett, M. V., Christopher S. Carpenter, and Dario Sansone. "LGBTQ economics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35, no. 2 (2021): 141-70.

Badgett, M.V. Lee, Kees Waaldijk, and Yana Rodgers. "The Relationship Between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development: Macro-Level Evidence," *World Development* 120 (8), August 2019, 1-14.

Week 10 – Labor Standards and Corporate Social Responsibility

*** Readings:**

Berik, Günseli, and Yana Rodgers. 2010. "Options for Enforcing Labor Standards: Lessons from Bangladesh and Cambodia," *Journal of International Development* 22 (1): 56-85.

Lund-Thomsen, Peter. 2008. "The Global Sourcing and Codes of Conduct Debate: Five Myths and Five Recommendations," *Development and Change* 39 (6): 1005-18.

Week 11 – Women in High-Level Positions

*** Readings:**

Sheryl Sandberg, chapter 1 from *Lean In*; and commentary by bell hooks, in *Feminist Wire*, <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2013/10/17973/>

Rutgers University Center for Women and Work. 2022. Women In Private Law Firms: Slow Progress on Equality of Promotion and Compensation. CWW Issue Brief. https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/CWW/Publications/Women_in_the_Law_Professions.pdf

*** Interview Projects Due**

Week 12 – Women in STEM

*** Readings:**

Kahn, Shulamit, and Donna Ginther. 2018. "Women and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM): Are Differences in Education and Careers Due to Stereotypes, Interests, or Family?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy*, edited by Susan L. Averett, Laura M. Argys, and Saul D. Hoffman.

Rodgers, Yana, "Larry Summers' sexism is jeopardizing his power and privilege, but the entire economics profession hinders progress for women," [The Conversation](#), December 2, 2025.

* Due date: Email professor with topic of final course project for approval

Week 13 – The Intersection of Gender and Disability

* Readings:

Cohen, Jennifer, and Yana Rodgers. 2023. "An Intersectional Analysis of Long COVID Prevalence." *International Journal for Equity in Health* 22, no. 1: 261.

Rodgers, Yana, Lisa Schur, Flora M. Hammond, Renee Edwards, Jennifer Cohen, and Douglas Kruse. 2025. "Disability, Job Satisfaction, and Workplace Accommodations: Evidence from the Healthcare Industry." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*: 1-14.

Week 14 – Women's Reproductive Health and Economic Empowerment

* Readings:

Jones, Kelly, and Anna Bernstein. 2021. "Reproductive Health and Economic Empowerment." In Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*. New York and London: Routledge Press, 2021, chapter 34.

Gammage, Sarah, Shareen Joshi, and Yana Rodgers. 2020. "The Intersections of Women's Economic and Reproductive Empowerment," *Feminist Economics*, 26 (1), January 2020, 1-22.

* Final Course Project due