38:578:567 Shaping the Future of Work

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Course Overview

The landscape of work is undergoing a profound transformation, with implications that will influence careers for decades to come. This course explores the forces driving these changes, with a particular focus on technology. Advancements such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the rapid expansion of digital platforms serve as catalysts for major disruptions in how work is organized and performed. These shifts are further amplified by structural changes across major economic sectors and by growing disparities in power and wealth distribution. Through case-based analysis and discussion, students will examine these trends and their impact on workers, organizations, and society.

This graduate course provides opportunities for engagement, learning, and discussion on these dynamics, focusing on the diverse prospects for the future of work, workers, and workplaces. In addition, it guides students to analyze the roles of government policies, labor movements, and corporate strategies in shaping these outcomes both in the short term and over the long run.

This course is listed as "Asynchronous content". See Rutgers University's explanation on asynchronous courses here: (https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/442). That is, this course will have a regular schedule of work and assignments due throughout each week, but it will not require you to be online at a particular time. Rather, I will provide materials—readings, videos, assignments, and exams—and you can access these materials and satisfy the course requirements within specified time frames.

One of the key advantages of remote, asynchronous courses is **inclusion** and **flexibility**. Students can learn and complete assignments anytime and anywhere they want, including in any time zone. In addition, asynchronous courses can help increase cognitive engagement, because students will have more time to engage with and explore the course materials. For those who are interested in the benefits and challenges of taking asynchronous courses, here is a nice summary: https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/442.

Course Materials

No textbook is required for this seminar class. All course readings will be available via the Canvas course website. Please check Canvas at least **three times a week**.

Learning Goals

This course is designed to meet the following SMLR and MLER Learning Goals:

VII)   Theoretical Perspectives – Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- o Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
- o Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues

VII)   Understanding Context – Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

- o Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work
- o Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective
- o Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems
- o Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)

VI) Application –Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance
- o Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work
- o Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to Employment Relations

VII) Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations

- o Develop effective presentation skills appropriate for different settings and audiences
- o Develop career management skills to navigate one's career
- o Develop capabilities to work and lead in a multicultural and diverse environment
- o Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- o Develop cultural agility competencies
- o Demonstrate lifelong personal and professional development skills

Student Responsibilities

Completing synchronous courses requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While remote, asynchronous learning offers you flexibility and convenience to learn, you are still expected to:

- • Have access to a reliable computer, and access to the Internet
- • Log in to Canvas for your course **on a daily basis**
- • Check for any announcements, syllabus updates, assignments, and/or discussions and respond accordingly

- Actively participate in the Discussion Forum
- Complete the assigned readings and multimedia, exercises and quizzes
- Adhere to all due dates

Make sure you have **an alternative plan of access to your Canvas course** in case your computer crashes (it happens). Additionally, be sure to backup your important documents and assignments on a flash drive or other external device.

Evaluation Methods

Weekly discussion forum	=	100
Weekly quiz/assignment	=	100
Mid-term and final exams	=	200
Final reflection paper	=	100
Total points	=	*500 points*

Respect for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

It is my commitment that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my commitment to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are always encouraged and appreciated.

Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If you have already established accommodations with Student Accessibility Services, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

Rutgers Academic Integrity

Students in this class and in all courses at Rutgers University are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are among the behaviors that constitute violations of the Academic Integrity Policy. You are expected to be familiar with this policy. If you have questions about specific assignments, be sure to check with the instructor.

Course Plan
(The course plan may be adjusted as needed at the instructor's discretion.)

Part 1: Fundamental Framework and Perspectives (Units 1-3)

Unit 1: A Labor Studies Framework for the Future of Work

Required readings and videos
Schulze-Cleven & Vachon. Building the future of work today: A Labor Studies perspective
What is the future of work? Redefining work, workforces, and workplaces
The Thought of Work

Weekly Quiz - Unit 1
Discussion forum: Thought of work

Unit 2: Economic, Feminist, and Critical Race Perspectives of Technology and Labor

Required readings and videos
Will automation take away all our jobs?
Economic perspectives on technology: Autor et al. 2021
Feminist perspectives on technology: Wajcman, J. 2010
Critical race perspective on technology: Hankerson et al. 2016

Weekly Quiz - Unit 2
Discussion Forum: Inside Walmart's Warehouse

Unit 3: How Technology Shapes Employment

Required readings and videos
Acemoglu & Restrepo. 2019. How technology displaces and reinstates labor
The historic struggle between workers and technology

Weekly Quiz - Unit 3
Discussion Forum: Meet the fast-food robots

Part 2: Economic Sectors, the Future of Work, and Emerging Technologies (Units 4-8)

Unit 4: The Future of Healthcare Work

Required readings and videos
Health Care Jobs Now and Into the Future
AI and the Future of Healthcare

Weekly Quiz - Unit 4
Discussion Forum: The Future of Healthcare Jobs

Unit 5: The Future of Manufacturing

Required readings and videos
The State of Manufacturing in New Jersey
What is Additive Manufacturing?

Weekly Quiz - Unit 5
Discussion Forum: What will manufacturing jobs look like in the digital era?

Unit 6: The Future of Office and Remote Work

Required readings and videos
Cappelli. 2021. The Future of the Office
The Economist. How are offices changing?

Weekly Quiz-Unit 6
Discussion Forum: The Hidden Penalty of Remote Work

Unit 7: Green Transition and The Future of Farming

Required readings and videos
ILO. "Just transition" is not just another transition
Bloomberg. 2023. Leaving No One Behind in a Green Transition

Weekly Quiz - Unit 8
Discussion forum: NJ farmworkers encountering a changing climate

Unit 8: AI and the Future of White-Collar Work

Required readings and videos
UC Berkely Labor Center. 2021. Data, Algorithms, and Worker Technology Rights
Gallup Survey on AI in the Workplace
WSJ. The Lawsuits That Could Shape the Future of AI and Copyright Law

Mid-term Team-Building Activity

Part 3: Technology, Management, and Control (Units 9-10)

Unit 9: Robots, Wearables, and Their Impact on Safety and Surveillance

Required readings and videos
Wearable Technologies in the Workplace
Meet the Amazon Robot
Robots on verge of outnumbering humans at Amazon warehouses?

Discussion Forum: Why So Many Amazon Workers Are Getting Hurt

Unit 10: Algorithmic Management

Required readings and videos
Data and algorithms in the workplace: a primer on new technologies
Workers' Health under Algorithmic Management
Algorithmic wage discrimination: The case of Uber

Weekly Quiz - Unit 10
Discussion Forum: Algorithmic wage discrimination-The case of Uber

Part 4: Worker Agency, Collective Action, and Policy Discussions (Units 11-14)

Unit 11: AI and Labor Movements

Required readings and videos
How AI Took Center Stage in the Hollywood Writers' Strike
NPR. Where things stand two years after the Hollywood actors and writers strike

Weekly Quiz - Unit 10
Discussion forum: What the W.G.A. contract tells us about AI and work

Unit 12: Worker Voice

Required readings and videos
Levi. How Labor Unions Create Worker Power
Economic Policy Institute: The rise of the 'union curious'
Kochan. Worker Voice in America's Working Future

Weekly Quiz - Unit 12

Unit 13: Unions and Work Organizations

Required readings and videos
Trade union strategies on artificial intelligence and collective bargaining on algorithms
Statements about technology by unions and other worker organizations
Union Leaders on AI initiatives

Weekly Quiz - Unit 13

Unit 14 - Final reflection

Final Essay: The Future of Work We Need (Due: Last day of class)