

Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Rutgers University, School of Management and Labor Relations
37:575:100:03
Fall 2019

Instructor: Professor Patricia McHugh

Class Time and Place: Monday and Thursday 10:20-11:40; Beck Hall - 250

Office Location: Labor Center Building Room 137

Office Hours: By appointment.

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Course Overview:

This course gives a basic introduction to the field of Labor Studies and Employment Relations, focusing on an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the nature of work from both national and global perspectives. Incorporating sociology, management systems, labor and working class history, human resources, legal studies, literature, art, media and employment relations, we will analyze the ways that work has evolved from the industrial revolution to the twenty-first century. In this course, we will also focus on the experiences and perspectives of working people and their institutions, as well as those of management and human resources to learn a diverse range of perspectives on the contemporary workplace and how it has evolved over time.

This course addresses the Social Analysis (SCL) Learning Objectives of SAS:

1. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
2. Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

Required Book:

The following required book is available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore, operated by Barnes and Noble. It may also be purchased online.

Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Pine Forge Press. 3rd edition. Sage, 2017.

All readings, except for the text, are available on Rutgers Canvas, which you may access at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>

Once you are registered for the course, you will be granted access to the site. It is your responsibility to access course materials, including the reading assignments.

The syllabus, schedule and assignments are subject to change as the course evolves, and sometimes due to unforeseen schedule changes due to weather. Please note that additional

sets of readings that highlight contemporary issues that develop during the course of the semester will also be added to our activities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance:

You are expected to attend each class session, and to be on time. An attendance sheet will be passed out during each class; it is your responsibility to sign the sheet. Be punctual and plan to stay for the entire class. Students who repeatedly arrive late and/or leave at break will have their grades lowered. If you need to leave early, see me before class; otherwise you are expected to remain until the class is over. As the class is three hours long, we will have periodic breaks built into the scheduled time.

Participation:

This class will utilize a variety of formats, with weekly discussion sessions one of the more important of these. You are expected to have completed the readings assigned before coming to class each week and be ready to take an active role in these discussions. Class participation includes active, respectful listening and well as talking. You may not use any recording devices in this class.

NO Electronic Devices in Class:

Seriously. No laptops, no tablets, no phones. Computers and other electronic devices in class tempt us to multitask (it happens to me!), but you're not here for that. What people do on their computers in a group setting can be distracting. On an exception basis, you may need to have a computer or other device in class, however, I will let you know ahead of time. Plus, best of all, taking notes on paper is better for your understanding! See for yourself:

psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html (Links to an external site.)

scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/ (Links to an external site.)

wsj.com/articles/can-handwriting-make-you-smarter-1459784659 (Links to an external site.)

npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away (Links to an external site.)

pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/body/taking-notes-by-hand-could-improve-memory-wt/ (Links to an external site.)

kon.org/urc/v12/duran.html

Choosing to ignore this policy will negatively impact your grade for attendance and participation.

Disability Statement:

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>.

Cheating/plagiarism

There are serious consequences, including expulsion, for cheating and taking someone else's work without attribution. The university has clear, strict policies on these matters. They include signing in for another student. I will report all violations. If you have not done so already, please familiarize yourself with the university's academic integrity policy by visiting academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/ ([Links to an external site.](#)) The relevant parts are brief and straightforward. If you have any questions, please see me.

Statement on Academic Freedom:

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class will introduce an array of sometimes conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

Use of Class Materials:

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, the syllabus, exams, lecture materials, and assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Code of Student Conduct and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students. You may not make audio or video recordings of any part of this class without my consent.

IN SUM: YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read the syllabus
2. Be here on time
3. Pay attention
4. Do the readings
5. Turn in your assignments on time
6. Make sure your assignments are submitted
7. Find out what you missed if you are unable to attend

STUDENT EVALUATION

1. EXAMS:

There will be 2 exams for this class. There will be a midterm exam and final exam that will be given during the scheduled exam period. The final exam will NOT be cumulative, but will only cover the material we cover from the midterm exam to the end of our class meetings. The exams will be short answer with 1 longer essay. You will be provided with a study guide to prepare for each exam, however, this is a guide only. You must be able to synthesize the material we have covered to answer the questions on the exams.

2. ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION AND QUIZZES:

Attendance and Participation:

As with any college course, you are expected to come to class every meeting, on time, for the duration of the meeting. If you have more than three unexcused absences, your final grade will be reduced by one full grade (e.g. from an A to a B). For every two after that, the same will happen. An excused absence would mean something along the lines of a medical emergency or a funeral and requires documentation. Leaving early and showing up late will count against you as well.

Being physically present is important, but you should strive to be mentally present as well. Being attentive and actively participating in class enhances your learning, as well as that of those around you. Someone (you, your parents, you in the future, Rutgers donors) is paying for you to be here, so try to get the most out of it. Contributing to class discussion is a very easy way to earn a higher overall grade in the course.

Visual Media: I believe in using different media to keep you engaged in class. I particularly think that there are a number of documentaries and other visual media that can allow you to enter the lives and minds of workers, economists and others involved in labor employment issues both in the past and present day. Please engage as actively with these other media as you would with my lectures and our

discussions as they are providing critical material that you will learn from and will be a part of your exams and quizzes. You must be actively attentive, taking notes during these times.

Coming to class every time, on time, which you are supposed to do anyway, and being attentive, meaning not engaging in distractions, including, but not limited to side conversations and use of electronic devices, will earn you 80% of the maximum attendance and participation grade. Actively participating in class will earn you more points.

Quizzes:

The class will have a total of 10 periodic, unannounced quizzes based upon assigned readings. These grades will be evaluated as part of the overall participation grade. Each quiz will be worth 10 points for an overall quiz grade of 100. Each quiz will be graded with the following possible scores: 10, 7.5, 5 or 0.

MISSED QUIZZES/EXAMS:

All students are expected to take the scheduled in-class exams (midterm and final) and quizzes at the designated times. If you miss an exam, you must make up the exam. A make-up exam will only be granted through an excused absence. If you miss a quiz you will not be able to make up the quiz but will be given full credit only if you have an excused absence. As explained above excused absences include documented medical situations or other approved absence due to a personal situation. The latter will be granted at my discretion.

3. ASSIGNMENTS

Other than the exams and quizzes you will also have the following assignments. Each will be described in detail during the semester.

- a. Paper
- b. Bargaining Simulation and Assignment
- c. Bread and Roses Group Project

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION:

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation, Attendance (15%)
Quizzes (5%)
Written Assignment (15%)
Bread and Roses Group Project (10%)
Bargaining Simulation and Assignment (10%)
Midterm Exam (20%)
Final Exam (25%)

Weekly Class Summaries:

Week 1 (September 5): Introduction and Course Requirements

In this first meeting, we will have a chance to introduce ourselves, and to get a sense of what this semester's class will entail. We will discuss our past experiences as workers, and talk about our hopes for satisfying employment. What is a good job? What types of issues currently center on work in America today? How does labor studies, as field, contribute to and help us understand these issues?

Reading:

- Bernard, Tara Siegel, *When She Earns More: As Roles Shift, Old Ideas on Who Pays the Bills Persist* <https://twitter.com/nytimes/status/1015437489929154560>

Film: *I Love Lucy*, "Job Switching." (1952)

Week 2 (September 9 and September 12): Exploring American Working Life: The "Old Economy" and Industrialism and Internships and the Youth Job Market

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 1, Mapping the Contours of Work.
- Teresa L. Morisi, "Teen labor force participation before and after the Great Recession and beyond," *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2017, <https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2017.5>
- The New Economy. By: Alexander, Charles P., Bolt, Gisela, Zagorin, Adam, TIME Magazine, 0040781X, 5/30/1983, Vol. 121, Issue 22
<https://web-b-ebshost-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=9d6a8e57-550d-4023-bbdc-a68862046406%40pdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=54225570&db=aph>
- How the New Economy Hurts Men and Helps Women | Time
<https://time.com/3984017/men-women-economy/>

Film: *American Experience: Triangle Fire*

Optional: Optional: For more background on issues discussed in the documentary see:
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/triangle/>

Week 3 (September 16 and September 19): Class Politics in the United States

Readings:

- Zweig, Michael (2000) *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret*, ILR Press, 9-37 (The Class Structures of the United States)

- Scott, J. and Leonhardt, D. (2005), "Shadowy Lines That Still Divide," in *Class Matters*, Henry Holt and Company, 1-26.

Week 4 (September 23 and September 26): Income and Social Mobility

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 2, New Products, New Ways of Working and the New Economy
- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 3, Economic Inequality, Social Mobility and the New Economy.
- The Age That Women Have Babies: How a Gap Divides America
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/04/upshot/up-birth-age-gap.html?em_pos=small&emc=edit_up_20180806&nl=upshot&nl_art=0&lid=73989095emc%3Dedit_up_20180806&ref=headline&te=1
- Families Go Deep in Debt to Stay in the Middle Class - WSJ
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/families-go-deep-in-debt-to-stay-in-the-middle-class-11564673734>

Film: *Inequality for All*

Week 5 (September 30 and October 7): Power Dynamics, the New Economy and the Future of Work

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 4, "Whose Jobs Are Secure?"
- Boushey, H. and Fremstad, S (2008), "The Wages of Exclusion: Low-wage Work and Inequality," *New Labor Forum*, 17 (2): 9-19
- Zweig (2000) *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret*, ILR Press, 77-93, "Looking at the Underclass."
- Matthew Desmond, "Americans Want to Believe Jobs are the Solution to Poverty. They're Not." <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/11/magazine/americans-jobs-poverty-homeless.html>

******Written Assignment Due: Submitted on Canvas by 10:20 a.m. on October 3******

Week 6 (October 7): Midterm Exam

October 10 and 14 – No Class

Week 7 (October 17): The Role and Function of Unions

Readings:

- Stephen A. Sweet and Peter Meiksins, "Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 8, "Reshaping the Contours of the New Economy."

- Michael Yates, *Why Unions Matter?* pp. 11-82.
- Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). Getting to 1959, 17-57.
- “Union Members 2010,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, January 21, 2011.
- “Union Members 2017,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, January 19, 2018.
- Unions Did Great Things for the Working Class
<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-06-13/unions-did-great-things-for-the-american-working-class>
- Derek Thompson, “‘Unnecessary’ and ‘Political’: Why Unions are Bad for America.” June 12, 2012.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/06/unnecessary-and-political-why-unions-are-bad-for-america/258405/>

Week 8 (October 21 and October 24): Work, Race, Ethnicity and Equality

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 7, “Race, Ethnicity and Work: Legacies of the Past, Problems of the Present.”
- Steve Striffler, “Inside a Poultry Processing Plant: An Ethnographic Portrait,” *Labor History* 43:3 August 2002 305-314.
- Roger Waldinger, et al., “Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles.” (Los Angeles., Calif: Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, Working Paper No. 15, April 1996): 1-19.
- Even With Affirmative Action, Blacks and Hispanics Are More Underrepresented at Top Colleges Than 35 Years Ago - The New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/24/us/affirmative-action.html>
- From Birth to School to Old Age Inequality by the Numbers – National Geographic – The Race Issue <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/04/race-ethnicity-inequality-life-health-wealth-education-infographic/>

Film: *At the River I Stand* (1993)

Week 9 (October 28 and October 31): Work, Gender, and Equality

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 6, “Gender Chasms in the New Economy.”
- Gatta, Mary and Yasemin Besen-Cassino, *Gender Pay Gap in New Jersey, A Report of the American Association of University Women*, 2010.
- Danielle J. Lindemann and Dana Britton, *Controlled Chaos: Focus Groups with Women Warehouse Workers in New Jersey* (2015)

- The Number of Female Chief Executives Is Falling
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/upshot/why-the-number-of-female-chief-executives-is-falling.html>
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2012 85-102
- What ‘Good’ Dads Get Away With, Darcy Lockman, *The New York Times*, May 4, 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/04/opinion/sunday/men-parenting.html?module=inline>
 - **Companion to the above opinion – letters in response:**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/18/opinion/letters/moms-dads-divide-work.html>
- Why Women, but Not Men, Are Judged for a Messy House
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/11/upshot/why-women-but-not-men-are-judged-for-a-messy-house.html?rref=upshot&module=Ribbon&version=context®ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=The%20Upshot&pgtype=Multimedia>
- Millennial women are working more. But they're still doing more of the housework - CNN
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/12/26/success/millennial-women-income/index.html>

Films:

Cheryl Sanberg Ted Talk, *Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders*

https://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_sandberg_why_we_have_too_few_women_leaders

9 to 5 (1980) – If we have time.

Week 10 (November 4 and November 7): Work and Family + Bread and Roses In Class Project

Readings:

- Sweet & Meiksins, “Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy, Chapter 5, “A Fair Day’s Work.”
- Penny Edgell Becker and Phyllis Moen, “Scaling Back: Dual-Earner Couples' Work-Family Strategies” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Nov., 1999), 995-1007.
- Why the U.S. Has Long Resisted Universal Child Care - *The New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/15/upshot/why-americans-resist-child-care.html>
- Four day work weeks sound too good to be true. These companies make it work Kathryn Vasel, *CNN Business* July 1, 2019
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/01/success/four-day-work-week/index.html>
- Netsy Firestein and Nicola Dones, “Unions Fight for Work and Family Policies—Not For Women Only,” in *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble, 140-154

Week 11 (November 11 and November 14) : Unions and Collective Bargaining Today

Readings:

- Yates, Michael (2009) *Why Unions Matter*, "Collective Bargaining," 83-110.
- Michael Mauer, *The Union Members' Complete Guide*, Union Communication Services, Inc. 41-65, 67-85
- Strom, A. (2006) "U.S. Labor Law," in *Current Economic Issues*, edited by the Dollars and Sense Collective, Economic Affairs Bureau, 17-21.

Film: *American Factory*

Week 12 (November 18 and November 21): Collective Bargaining Simulation

- Get Ready to Bargain – Steps to Collective Bargaining
<https://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31406&p=199872>

Week 13 (November 25 and November 26) (Remember University schedule change: Tuesday is Thursday)

Film: *American Dream*
Or Norma Rae

Week 14 (December 2 and December 5): Immigration - Old and New

Readings:

- Gracie Chang, "Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy," Chapter 3, "Undocumented Latinas: The New Employable Mother," 55-92.
- Immanuel Ness, *Immigrants, Unions and the New U.S. Labor Market* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005): Chapter 2, "The Political Economy of Transnational Labor in New York City: The Context for Immigrant Worker Militancy," 13-39.
- John Schmitt and Kris Warner, "The Changing Face of U.S. Labor, 1983-2008," *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society*, 13:2 June 2010 263-279
- Employers Struggle With Hiring Undocumented Workers: 'You Cannot Hire American Here' : NPR
<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/21/752336132/employers-struggle-with-hiring-undocumented-workers-you-cannot-hire-american-her>
- Short of Workers, U.S. Builders and Farmers Crave More Immigrants As a tight labor market raises costs, employers say the need for low-wage help can't be met by the declining ranks of the native-born.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/03/business/economy/immigration-labor-economy.html>
- Actually, the Numbers Show That We Need More Immigration, Not Less By any reasonable metric, "mass" immigration is a myth. The reality is that America desperately needs to pick up the pace of immigration for its economic health.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/15/opinion/trump-immigration-myth.html>

Film: *Amreeka* (2009)

Week 15 (December 9): Wrap Up and Final Exam Review

Week of December 16th: Final Exam TBD as per University Exam Schedule