PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES  
Rutgers University  
37:575:395:91  
Fall 2022  

SYLLABUS

Class Meetings:  
Prof. Tobias Schulze-Cleven  
Rutgers Canvas.  
tobias.schulze-cleven@rutgers.edu  
Asynchronous online.  
Phone: 848-932-1740  
Office: Labor Education Center, Room 171  
OH: Tuesdays, 3-4pm (via Zoom)

Course Overview:

This course engages students in critically analyzing the intellectual traditions of labor studies and employment relations, covering central theories, historical trajectories, and cutting-edge literature. As is indicated in the title of the course, the field draws from a wide variety of perspectives, ranging from classical political economy to the modern social sciences, such as sociology, economics, and political science. Crucially, the course goes beyond inquiring into these different lines of thought to explore how contemporary labor studies brings them together around a set of core thematic concerns and normative commitments. The class works toward an assessment of how labor studies needs to continue to evolve to realize its genuine promise to help societies meet current and future social, political, economic, and environmental challenges.

By taking this class, students will have the opportunity to examine some of the big questions of the field. They will also gain increased proficiency in important skills: reading for analytical insight, debating ideas, and communicating with others. From the theoretical to the practical, students should be able to use what they learn in this class in a variety of contexts, including further academic study, professional development, and at the workplace.

Learning Objectives:  The student is able to…

School of Management and Labor Relations

• Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)

Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations

• Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1)

Additional course objectives from the instructors

• Identify core concepts of the field of labor studies & employment relations.
• Apply those concepts to understanding contemporary developments in work.
• Synthesize information from multiple sources to generate new insights.
How will you learn in this online course?

Most weeks you will:

- Review text, PowerPoint slides, and videos provided by the professors on the page in the online shell. These are like lectures but much shorter, so you have more time for other learning activities.
- Read, view, and listen to theorists and analyses offering a variety of perspectives. There will be an emphasis on reading, but some weeks you will also have the opportunity to review a video or videos, or listen to an audio file.
- Answer questions regarding the ideas that motivate particular lines of interpretation.
- Participate in threaded discussions with other students, posting at least 3 times a week. Alternatively, you might be asked to complete a writing assignment, group project, quiz, or exam.
- Read a weekly message from the professor (posted in Announcements).

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percent of Total Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Forums (weeks 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12) - 50 points each</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice T/F Quiz (week 3)</td>
<td>No points</td>
<td>Just for practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz (week 3)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Essay-Based Exam (week 6)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Assignment (week 7 &amp; 8)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper-Based Exam (weeks 14 &amp; 15)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Points have no “absolute meaning,” – in the end, the professor will use judgment in translating points into grades for the course. For example, typically a B+ is 87-89.9 points, but the professors may decide to use some other range of points.

Keep current – avoid being late!

This is an interactive class – you need to keep current in the reading and forums so that you can interact with others in the class. An online class is somewhat flexible to fit your schedule, but you are responsible for managing your time and for getting online each week no matter what else is going on in your life.

You should inform the professor of serious personal emergencies that arise – for instance, hospitalization that makes it impossible to get online. A trip associated with your job is not such an emergency, nor is a problem with your personal computer. There are many ways to get online in hotels and in campus computing facilities.
Nature of the Exams and Quizzes:

Each week, there will be questions on the posted material for that week. These short-answer questions could be answered in a paragraph or two, but you are not expected to write out answers and turn them in. They are solely for your use in studying.

The midterm and final exams will contain a subset of these questions – so if you take some notes on the answers to the questions as you go along, you should be able to do well on the two exams. The exams will also have some questions not previously distributed.

The quiz has a series of T-F questions on the readings, videos, and PowerPoint decks. The questions are challenging, and time is limited, but this is an open book assignment. If you are familiar with all the material in the course, you should be able to go back and look up the answer to some items that you don’t recall.

Disability:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all University’s educational programs. 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.

Course Organization:

The course is set up in three modules.

- **Module 1 – Big Ideas about the Economy and Work** (weeks 1-3). This module tracks the development of thinking about the economy and work by exploring classic ideas and the historical contexts that gave rise to them.
- **Module 2 – Evolving Theories of Employment Relations** (weeks 4-9). This module explores the evolution of more focused theorizing on employment relations.
- **Module 3 – Labor Studies Today** (weeks 10-14). This module examines the state of contemporary labor studies and its potential role in helping societies meet current and future social, political, economic, and environmental challenges.
Topics and Assignments:

Module 1: Big Ideas about the Economy and Work

Week 1: Classical Political Economy (Sep 6 – Sep 12)

Some core themes: *Laissez Fair*; capitalism, division of labor, exploitation, contradictions/crises of capitalism, etc.

*Adam Smith*


*Karl Marx*

David Harvey. 2010. “RSA Animate: Crises of Capitalism.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOP2V_np2c0 [Applying Marx’s ideas on capital accumulation to the contemporary economy]

*Purpose of College*


**Assignment:** Introductions and Discussion Forum #1

Week 2: Modern Political Economy (Sep 13 – Sep 19)

Some core themes: The power of ideas; Keynesianism, neoliberalism, double movement

*Core Reading*


*John Maynard Keynes | The Managed Economy*


**Friedrich A. von Hayek | Neoliberalism**

**Karl Polanyi | The Double Movement**
- Robert Kuttner. 2014. “Karl Polanyi Explains It All.” *The American Prospect*, April 15. [required]

**Assignment:** Discussion Forum #2

**Week 3: Management and the Labor Process (Sep 20 – Sep 26)**

Core themes: efficiency, alienation, control, emotional labor


**Quiz on Module 1** – take any 50 minutes during the week
Module 2: Evolving Theories of Employment Relations

Week 4: The Wisconsin School in the early 20th Century (Sep 27 – Oct 3)

Core questions:
- How did the field view the challenge?
- What was reform-oriented institutional economics? How did it position itself vis-à-vis Marx?
- How has the Wisconsin School shaped institution-building in the United States?

Central Reading

Empirical Application / Background [optional]

Assignment: Discussion Forum #3

Week 5: ‘Pluralist’ Industrial Relations Theory after WW2 (Oct 4 – Oct 10)

Core themes: Liberalism, Modernization Theory, Logic of Industrialism/Industrialization


Optional
**Industrialism and Industrial Man.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1-29 (“Contents” & “Introduction” & “The Logic of Industrialization”)


**Assignment:** Discussion Forum #4

**Week 6: No Instruction (Oct 11 – Oct 17)**

**Assignment:** Midterm (Essay) Exam – take as much time as you want during the week

**Week 7: Sociology on Social Embeddedness, Status, and Corporatism (Oct 18 – Oct 24)**

Core themes: Beyond liberalism and Anglo-America, Sociology, non-contractual terms of contract, status, industrial citizenship, corporatism


**Further Reading (Optional)**


**Assignment:** Prep Group Presentation | You are also allowed to work alone.
Week 8: Political Science on Comparative Employment Relations (Oct 25 – Oct 31)

Core themes: Political Science, distributional conflict, coordination, cross-national comparison


Optional Background Reading


Assignment: Finish Group Presentation | You are also allowed to work alone.

Week 9: Toward a Global Perspective (Nov 1 – Nov 7)


Optional #1 (Shire’s other two lectures)

Optional #2 (Other takes on the ‘global’)
Assignment: Discussion Forum #5

Module 3: Labor Studies Today

Week 10: Labor Studies and the Future of Work (Nov 8 – Nov 14)


Optional


Richard Wolff. 2022, “Naming the Problem: Capitalism is the Crisis.” Interview for the Mitchell Center, University of Pennsylvania, May 6. [Reflections on the capitalist origin of contemporary crisis]

Assignment: Discussion Forum #6
Week 11: Beyond Class #1 - Race (Nov 15 – Nov 21)


[Take a few minutes to get a basic idea --- it is a complicated text.]

Optional Reading Race & Colonialism / Race in the Welfare State


Optional Reading on Race in Employment Relations Research


Optional Podcasts


Adolph Reed. 2022. “The Jim Crow South: Myths and Realities.” Interview for the Mitchell Center, University of Pennsylvania, March 18. [Reed contests the ideas that 1) racism as an immutable force exerting a uniform influence from the era of slavery to the present day and that 2) American inequality is chiefly defined by race. His new book, *The South: Jim Crow and Its Afterlives*, situates the racial hierarchy of the Jim Crow South in the political economy of the period and in the struggles and negotiations of everyday experience. In the interview, Reed argues that anti-racist historiography and social analysis can miss the distinctive concrete roles that “race relations” has played in different times and places to reinforce social inequality.]

Assignment: Discussion Forum #7
Week 12: Beyond Class #2 - Gender (Nov 22 – Nov 28)

Core themes: Social reproduction, labor market segmentation, social division of labor


Optional

Assignment: Discussion Forum #8 | Extended due date of Dec 5 due to Thanksgiving.

Week 13: An Expanded Lens on Labor and its Struggles (Nov 29 – Dec 5)

Nancy Fraser. 2022. Interview with Deutschlandfunk about her Benjamin Lectures.

Optional: Nancy Fraser’s Benjamin Lectures

Optional: Linking the different labor movements

Assignment: Prepare Final (Paper) Exam

Week 14: No Instruction (Dec 6 – Dec 12)
Assignment: Work on Final (Paper) Exam

Week 15: Exam Week (Dec 13 – Dec 19)
Assignment: Finish (Paper) Exam | The due date for this assignment is December 19.