Working Woman in American Society

Instructor: Amy Tracy Wells (she/her)
Email: Please use Canvas email
Calls/Texts/Emails will be returned within 24 hours.

In this course we will examine a specific segment of Americans – working women. We will explore ideas/concepts such as:

1. what do we mean by paid and unpaid work;
2. what is meant by gender, equality and, conversely, inequality;
3. what are the historical and current trends (quantitative data) in work;
4. what is the contextual history of women’s work by industry and profession; how have women’s experiences varied by class and race;
5. through worker experiences, what issues and reforms affect women’s work;
6. and consider how your own thinking about gender creates inequality.

Assignments/grades will include participation in Discussion Forums, Brief Response Papers, an Autoethnographic paper, Exams and one extra credit option.

This course includes readings, media, and discussion around topics such as sexual harassment and assault and online violence. I acknowledge that this content may be difficult. Feel free to reach out especially when developing your autoethnography or when we reach Class 11. I also encourage you to care for your safety and well-being.

Rutgers University Core Curriculum Goals addressed and to be assessed through short items on exams:

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experience of work (Contemporary Challenges goal CCD-1)
- Analyze issues of social justice both in the U.S. and globally (Contemporary Challenges goal CCD-2)
- Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories, and concepts (Social analysis goal SCL-1)
- Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments (Social analysis goal SCL-2)
- Assess and critique relevant evidence and research findings (Social analysis goals SCL-2)
- Access high-quality historical, qualitative, and/or quantitative evidence (Social analysis goal SCL-2)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations (Goal 1)
- Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments (Goal 2)
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experience of work (Goal 6)

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories, and concepts (Goal IV)
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experience of work (Goal V)
• Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments (Goal VI)

Instructor:
• Discuss differences between employment law and policy, and workers lived experience.

Subject to change

Unit I. Introduction

Class 1: Introduction to Working Women in American Society
Become familiar with the web site that has the on-line course. This is called the “course shell.”

Assignment:
1. Learn about the instructor and introduce yourself to other students by writing an on-line introduction as well as read the introduction to this course.
4. Read, sign and upload a copy of “How to get an A Writing an Essay” to the Dropbox.

Unit II. Paid & unpaid work

Class 2: What is work?

Assignment:
Brief Response Paper: In the context of this course, how do people and organizations define work? What are the ramifications of this definition for women?

Unit III. Gender equality & inequality

Class 3: Gender

Assignment:
Discussion Forum: Answer either one of the two following questions:
1. Identify and discuss 3-4 ways in which the concept of gender influences everyday life such as education, training, work, health care, wealth etc.
2. How do gender stereotypes affect your own thinking?
Class 4: Equality & Inequality
Assignment: [No assignment this week]

Unit IV. Now & Then

Class 5: Pay
Assignment: [No assignment this week]

Unit V. The History of Women's Work (Paid & Unpaid, by Historical Period, by Occupation, by Education and by Union)

Class 6: Background
Assignment:
Discussion Forum: Answer either one of the two following questions:
1. What is the myth of womanhood and what has been the reality or the trends?
2. Many believe that the issues we've covered to-date are now historical while others believe many of the issues are ongoing. What do you believe and why?

Class 7: 1900-1970
Assignment:
1. Autoethnographic paper – draft due

1 Available for free via the Rutgers University Library
Working Women in American Society
Dr. Amy Tracy Wells
Spring 2023

Class 8: 1970 to present
2. Landsburg, S.E. (2005). The Price of Motherhood Ready to have a baby? You’ll earn 10 percent more if you wait a year. Slate. (1 pp.)

Assignment:
Midterm Exam # 2: (Covers Classes 1 through 8)

Unit VI. Issues & reforms affecting women’s work

Class 9: Wages

Assignment:
[No assignment this week]

Class 10: Sex-segregation, Tokenism & Institutional Constraints

Assignment:
Discussion Forum: Answer either one of the following:
1. Define and discuss the significance of institutional constraints?
2. Is sex segregation diminishing, why or why not?

Class 11: Sexual Harassment & Assault

Assignment: Respond to one of the three following questions.

Brief Response Paper:
1. What are the implications if professional women are threatened, doxed, subject to revenge porn or Cyber Mobs on social media? Identify and discuss 2-3 issues general issues (e.g., workplace, economic, career etc.) or those faced by female actors (e.g., Leslie Jones or Ashley Judd), female politicians (e.g., Kamala Harris and AOC), female journalists (The Chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists) or female students (Brittan Heller), etc.

2 Available for free via the Rutgers University Library
2. What is the status of sexual harassment in the workplace—are the number of incidences rising, decreasing or can we even know?
3. From your own perspective and in your own words, what is the importance of learning the history of working women in the U.S.?

Class 12: Race, Nationality & Work

Assignment:
Discussion Forum: This forum has two parts:
Complete and submit Worksheet Work, Life & Balance and then share specifics and/or observations in the DF.

Class 13: Gendered roles
3. Peterson, A.H. (2020) "Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women." Culture Study. (10 pgs.)

Assignment:
[No assignment this week]

Class 14: Collective Action

Assignment:
Autoethnographic paper due

Class 15: Final Assignments
Assignment:
Final Exam (Covers Classes 9 through 14)
GRADING CRITERIA AND COMPONENTS

Grading Criteria:

A  90-100%
B+ 85-89%
B  80-84%
C+ 75-79%
C  70-74%
D  60-69%
F  59% and below

Grades are based on the following components:

#1 –Discussion Forum: Classes 3, 6, 10 & 12
   20% of the grade
#2 – Brief Reading Response: Classes 2 & 11 (Two-page paper)
   20% of the grade
#3 – Autoethnographic Paper: Classes 7 & 14 (Four-page paper)
   30% of the grade
#4 - Exams: Classes 8 &15 (Exams are True/False, Multiple Choice, and Brief Answer Questions)
   30% of the grade
#5 – Extra Credit Brief Reading Response: Class 6
   Can be used to increase lowest test score by up to 15 points (=> 90 then 15 points,
   =>80 then 10 points & =>70 then 5 points)

Each Discussion Forum is worth 5% of one's grade, which is based on content and timing. That is, readings etc. as well as instructor and other student posts will provide the basis of content and all postings/responses should be provided during the week within which the topic/issues are examined.

Brief Response Papers are worth 10% of one's grade, which is based on content, persuasiveness and readability. Papers must be double-spaced throughout and 2 pages in length, each numbered with standard one-inch margins and 12-pitch font. In addition, papers must include a “References” section of sources cited.

The Autoethnographic Paper is worth 30% of one's grade. For more specifics, see “Autoethnographic Paper” below.

Each Exam is worth 15% of one’s grade and is composed of true/false, multiple choice and brief answer questions. Content will cover the classes specified (i.e., tests are not cumulative). Exams must be completed in 1.5 hours. Though you may consult class materials to complete an exam, you may not consult with another student in any way.

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.

Autoethnographic Paper

Your grade is determined by the content you present, technically how well you present it
and the supportive data, which MUST be from your own life or the life of a parent.

Autoethnography is a form of narrative writing that views the author’s own experience as
a topic of investigation in its own right. Key to this experience and hence the paper is
clarifying how culture (e.g., the sexual division of labor, gendered use of communication
styles & tools, gendered attributes of leadership and/or pay, etc.) shapes norms & events.
This paper will explore

1. your current and/or past working life – compensated and/or non-compensated –
   and/or
2. work/family balance, an issue that affects men and women,

using comparative data you collect (e.g., quotes, pay rates, social security income,
numbers of employees, length of employment, retirement savings, wealth differences,
etc.). That is, while the paper will focus on you, it is important to frame or contextualize
your experience using one (or more) issues we have discussed (or will discuss) in the
course. You will produce and provide a draft for review along the way. Papers must be
double-spaced throughout and 4 pages in length*, each numbered with standard one-inch
margins and 12-pitch font. Late papers may downgraded. Note: data does NOT include
academic references but is from your experience.

Students in the past have written about

- sex-segregation in their home and/or workplace (e.g., females perform unpaid
  work, managers are predominantly male, etc.);
- wage gap (e.g., a parent's experience or your own experience)
- sexual harassment (e.g., a parent’s experience or your own experience of
  harassment or as a bystander);
- wealth gap (e.g., a parent’s experience or your own experience);
- difference experiences in their own home (e.g., parental expectations for male vs.
  female children); and/or
- their personal experience of having a child and returning or not returning to work
  and how this affected them financially and professionally.

Alternatively, students have written about their parent’s experience (M or F) of leaving
the workforce to raise children and how it financially and professionally affected them. It
is also permissible to write about a sibling's experience.
Examples of autoethnographic writing:

- See Files then "Autoethnography Examples" for past student papers.

* I will only read to the end of the 5th page in papers longer than 4 pages, pages after that will not be read/considered when assigning a grade.