

LABOR & DEMOCRACY

Labor Studies and Employment Relations 575:301
Fall 2024

SYLLABUS

Class Meetings:

Room 114, Scott Hall
College Ave Campus
Monday, 2-5pm

Prof. Tobias Schulze-Cleven

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OH: after class or by arrangement (including online)

Course Overview:

A central issue of our time is the strength of democracy, especially in light of a variety of economic and social pressures that have made many countries, even in the West, turn to authoritarian parties and governments. This course probes the role that labor movements play for democracy in comparative perspective. Students will be introduced to workers' collective action as a worldwide phenomenon that has been central to the political economic development of capitalist democracies. Providing a multi-disciplinary perspective anchored in core propositions of historical institutionalist political science, the course emphasizes how countries' unique histories and their institutional contexts have shaped both the political opportunities for workers' evolving collective action and the effects that such social mobilization has had on the relationship between capitalism and democracy.

With reference to two centuries of transatlantic history, the class covers both key political achievements of the working class as well as labor's contemporary challenges. Among the achievements, we focus in particular on the extension of democratic rights and the expansion of welfare states; among the challenges, we probe the needs to accommodate shifting social cleavages, respond to economic globalization, and devise strategies for revitalization.

Learning Objectives: The student is able to...

Core Curriculum – Contemporary Challenges / Our Common Future:

- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Goal 1).

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Analyze a contemporary global issue in labor & employment relations from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Goal 7).
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (Goal 8).

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).

Additional Course Objectives from the Instructor:

- Use the comparative approach to develop a solid understanding of labor movements' origins, nature, and effects.
- Improve professional competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving, verbal and written communication, and interpersonal skills.

Course Requirements (details at the end of the syllabus):

In-Class Participation	20% of the course grade
Quizzes	20%
First Exam	30%
Second Exam	30%

I reserve the right to adjust these numbers to support teaching and learning. In-class participation includes “active” contributions and attendance. In general, “active” contribution is about speaking up (based on reading, thinking, and good listening).

Course Outline:

Week 1: Building a Foundation (September 9)

What Counts as Workers’ Collective Action? What is the Role of Markets?

Paul Frymer and Dorian T. Warren. 2011. “What NBA Stars and Occupy Wall Street Protesters Have in Common.” *Washington Post*, October 28.

Abraham Kahn. 2020. Let’s Call Athletes ‘Workers,’ and Let’s Call these NBA Protests What They Were – Strikes.” *The Conversation*, August 28.

How Do Racial (or Gender) Structures Shape Capitalism’s Impact on Labor?

Barbara Ransby. 2015. “The Class Politics of Black Lives Matter.” *Dissent*, Fall.

How Do Workers Act Collectively in Democracy? What are the Effects?

Unite Here. 2020. Press Release on Canvassing. November 7.

Joseph A. McCartin. 2019. “How Air Traffic Controllers Helped End the Shutdown – and Changed History.” *Washington Post*, January 26.

SECTION I: TOOLS FOR ANALYZING LABOR MOVEMENTS

This section of the course probes how we can conceptualize labor movements and their actions: Who belongs to them? What does a labor movement seek to do? Why does a movement end up doing what it does?

Week 2: Work & Collective Action (September 16)

Is Collective Action Necessary?

Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss. 2004. *Hard Work. Remaking the American Labor Movement*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1-33 (Chapter 1: “Why Labor Matters”).

Eyal Press. 2021. “America Runs on ‘Dirty Work.’” *New York Times*, August 13.

Different Forms of Collective Action

Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streeck. 1994. “Workplace Representation Overseas: The Works Councils Story.” In Richard Freeman, ed. *Working under Different Rules*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, only read pages 97-117.

Mike Elkby. 2013. “VW Isn’t Fighting Unionization—But Leaked Docs Show Right-Wing Groups Are.” *Bill Moyers & Company*, November 14.

Week 3: Labor as a Social Movement (September 23) – QUIZ!

Illustration (I): The California Farm Worker Movement

Cletus E. Daniel. 1987. “Cesar Chavez and the Unionization of California Farm Workers.” In Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, eds. *Labor Leaders in America*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, only read pages 350-373; remaining pages of the chapter are recommended but not required.

Theory (I): The Dynamics of Building Social Movements

Sidney G. Tarrow. 2011. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (3rd Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-15 (Introduction).

Week 4: Institutions & Workers’ Collective Action (September 30)

Illustration (II): Organized Labor & Immigration

Janice Fine and Daniel J. Tichenor. 2009. “A Movement Wrestling: American Labor’s Enduring Struggle with Immigration, 1866-2007.” *Studies in American Political Development* 23(2): 218-248 (focus on introduction, conclusion & one time period).

Theory (II): Context Shapes Social Action

Sidney G. Tarrow. 1998. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2nd Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 71-73 (part of Chapter 5).

SECTION II: LABOR MOVEMENTS IN COMPARATIVE HISTORY

In this section of the course, we move beyond the United States to probe how labor movements have played pivotal roles in many countries' histories. We focus on the role of labor in shaping the fate of democracy and capitalism during the 1930s, and in the consolidation of welfare states after World War II.

Week 5: Promoting Social Democracy (October 7) – QUIZ!

Establishing the Primacy of Politics

Sheri Berman. 2009. "The Primacy of Economics versus the Primacy of Politics: Understanding the Ideological Dynamics of the Twentieth Century." *Perspectives on Politics* 7(3): 561-575.

The Swedish Path to Social Democracy

Sheri Berman. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 162-176 (Chapter 7: "The Swedish Exception").

Week 6: Limits to Social Democracy in Germany and the United States (October 14)

The German Path to National Socialism

Sheri Berman. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 125-151 (Chapter 6: "The Rise of Fascism and National Socialism").

The American Labor Movement and the New Deal

Sean Farhang and Ira Katznelson. 2005. "The Southern Imposition: Congress and Labor in the New Deal and Fair Deal." *Studies in American Political Development* 19(1): 1-30.

Choose one:

- Duncan Kelly. 2013. "Beyond the Politics of Fear (Review of Ira Katznelson's book *Fear Itself*)." *Financial Times*, May 11/12.
- Omer Aziz. 2019 "America Through Nazi Eyes." *Dissent*, Winter.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1936. Address at Madison Square Garden, New York City. October 31.

Week 7: Consolidating Welfare States (October 21)

Theorizing the Class Bases of Interwar Regimes Outcomes

Gregory Luebbert. 1991. *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1-14 (Introduction). – [Try to get the basic ideas.](#)

Bringing in the Middle Class after World War II

Peter Baldwin. 1990. *The Politics of Social Solidarity. Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*. Cambridge: CUP, [pages 107-133 only](#) (Chapter 2: “The Triumph of the Solidaristic Welfare State: Britain and Scandinavia”).

Week 8: The Constitutive Role of Race (October 28) – QUIZ!

Racial Differences and the Challenges of Post-Industrialism

Enobong Hannah Branch and Caroline Hanley. 2022. *Work in Black and White: Striving for the American Dream*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (Introduction, 1-18)

Voluntary: Video presentation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34OSRhOjxqw> (Start at 11 minutes; stop at 48 minutes but encouraged to watch longer)

Organized Labor, Democracy, and Race in the United States

William P. Jones. 2013. “The Forgotten Radical History of the March on Washington.” *Dissent*, Spring.

Week 9: The Gendered Division of Labor (November 4)

Mobilizing for Gender Equality: The British Case

In class, we will watch and then discuss the movie “Made in Dagenham” (2010). [No need to watch at home. To prepare for the discussion, please read the two pieces below.](#)

The Lens of Reproductive Labor

Emily Callaci. 2018. “Seizing the Means of Reproduction.” *Dissent*, Summer, 128-131.

Dorothy Sue Cobble. 2009. “It’s Time for New Deal Feminism.” *Washington Post*, December 13.

Week 10: First Exam | No Class (Nov 7 - 15)

Prepare for Midterm Exam

Go over review sheet, readings, and notes from the preceding weeks.

Voluntary: Watch part of “Commanding Heights – Battle of Ideas.” Start at 18:22 min. and watch for 29:01 min., covering chapter 4 (“A Capitalist Collapse,” 8:48 min.), chapter 5

(“Global Depression,” 5:26 min.), chapter 6 (Worldwide War,” 7:00 min.) and chapter 7 (“Planning the Peace,” 6:47 min.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfRTpoYpHfw>

SECTION III: LABOR AND DEMOCRACY TODAY

In this section, we review the state of labor and democracy today. A close look at the United States will be complemented by exploration into how both other countries and labor activists have responded to key challenges. We also where societies and labor movements could go in the future, including what steps are necessary for progressive outcomes.

Week 11: Democracy at the Crossroads (November 18)

High Stakes

Timothy Snyder. 2021. “The American Abyss.” *New York Times*, January 9.

Brandon Tensley. 2019. “How the American Dream Went from Meaning Equality to Meaning Capitalism.” *Pacific Standard*.

Timothy Snyder. 2021. “The War on History Is a War on Democracy.” *New York Times*, June 29.

(While the readings will be on the US, the class will take a comparative view.)

Week 12: A Future for Social Democracy? (November 25)

Comparative Perspectives

Kathleen Thelen. 2019. “The American Precariat: U.S. Capitalism in Comparative Perspective.” *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1): 5–27.

Tony Judt. 2009. “What is Living and What is Dead in Social Democracy?” *New York Review of Books*, December 17.

Week 13: Toward a 21st-Century Labor Movement (December 2)

New Organizing Models

Tamara Lee. 2018. “From Melting Pots to Intersectional Organizing.” *Perspectives on Work*, 70-71.

Sarita Gupta, Stephen Lerner and Joseph A. McCartin. 2019. “Why the Labor Movement has Failed – And How to Fix It.” *Boston Review*, June 6.

Bargaining for the Common Good

Marilyn Sneiderman and Secky Fascione. 2018. “Going on Offense during Challenging Times.” *New Labor Forum* 27(1): 54-62.

Week 14: Tasks Ahead & Course Wrap-Up (December 9)

Re-envisioning Democracy

Aziz Rana. 2018. "Goodbye, Cold War." *n+1*, Winter.

Jedediah Purdy. 2018. "Normcore." *Dissent*, Summer, 121-128.

Developing a Reform Strategy

Sasha Abramsky. 2011. "A Conversation with Marshall Ganz." *The Nation*, February 2.

Marshall Ganz. 2009. "Why Stories Matter: The Art and Craft of Social Change." *Sojourners*, March, 18-19.

Adjusted Exam Week: Final Exam (December 10 - 19)

Prepare for Second Exam

Go over review sheet, readings and notes from the preceding weeks.

Voluntary: Watch the video on crises and dilemmas of democracy at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcx0mabB3dY>

Appendix: Further Information on Course Assignments & Class Rules

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Be prepared for class and always read the assigned materials before our meetings. You are expected to bring questions and comments about the course material so that you can participate in class discussions. With much of our time spent learning through discussion, it is necessary for everybody to participate. I might ask students to use their questions to stimulate discussions and will ensure broad participation. It is critical that we respect one another's thoughts and address our comments at others' ideas, not at people themselves. This course is not a forum for demeaning or threatening language. Rather than measuring the frequency with which you speak in class, your participation grade reflects how you balance reasoning, reading, and listening. Also, do not forget to take careful notes to complement my PowerPoint slides.

Students should plan to attend every course session. If for some unavoidable reason you must miss a class, please let me know in advance through the university's absence reporting website (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>) so that your absence will not remain unexplained. If you are late or leave early repeatedly, and if you miss class unexcused, your participation grade will suffer.

QUIZZES

There will be three short take-home quizzes during the semester (administered via Canvas). If you do the assigned readings, you should have no problem doing well on the quizzes. There will be no trick questions, nor will a complete understanding of the reading be required. Rather, the quizzes are geared to helping you engage with the provided materials by asking you to answer some very basic questions. Your performance in the quizzes will become part of your in-class participation grade.

EXAMS

The midterm exam on the material from the first half of the course will be given via Canvas. You will be able to independently pick the most suitable time for you during the week to take it. You will be asked to define key terms, provide short answers to questions, and write an essay. Students should take at least two hours to complete the exam. There will likely be a word limit for the essay portion.

The final exam will also be given via Canvas. You will again be able to independently pick the most suitable time for you to take it. This exam will test you on the second half of the course, and you will be expected to use what you have learned in class to advance clear arguments in two essays. You should again plan to spend at least two hours on the exam. There will be a word limit. I will give you more information about the exam a few weeks before the end of the semester.

COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to check their Rutgers email accounts regularly for class announcements. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the instructor. Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. When emailing the instructor, always include “Labor & Democracy” in the subject line of your email.

INTELLECUAL PROPERTY

Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, visual presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university’s [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

As the instructor for this course, I have the responsibility to protect students’ right to privacy. Classroom recordings of students will therefore be treated as educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that governs access to educational information and records. Instructors and students must provide notification if any part of sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Students are expected to generate and submit original, personally composed tasks for each assignment. The use of Artificial Intelligence to create and submit work under the guise of original work is not acceptable. Students feeling the need to consult an Artificial Intelligence site to generate ideas or to suggest alternative wording may do so by emailing the professor before submitting the work and explaining how and why the AI will be used. The student will then insert a footer to the assignment containing a statement noting the degree to which AI was used in the completion of the task.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

While I encourage students to work together to understand theories and concepts, all written work must be your own. If you cite an author or use his/her ideas, please cite properly. Plagiarized assignments or evidence of cheating will result in a failing grade in the assignment and possibly in the course. Moreover, plagiarism may result in disciplinary action by the university.

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.

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>.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology

Email: <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support>

Call: 833-OIT-HELP