

PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES, Fall 2023

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

37:575:395

Class: Thursdays, 5:40 to 8:40 p.m.

Teresa Poor, Instructor – Preferred communication via Canvas, also teresa.poor@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom

Course Introduction

This course will allow students at the end of their studies in labor and employment relations to take a broader perspective on some of key concepts and issues related to labor, employment, and the economy. Students will explore historical and contemporary scholarship that will challenge assumptions and deepen understanding of issues like the divisions of labor, interests, wealth, work and leisure, opportunity and inequality, and power and freedom. Students will be asked to: 1) read the assigned scholarship for the arguments and to take a position on those arguments, 2) scrutinize the argument and its relationship to the evidence, 3) participate in discussions, and 4) lead at least one class discussion; and 5) reflect on the issues through writing, discussion, and a take-home final. Throughout the course, we will notice that the boundaries between the workplace and its outside are blurred.

Learning Objectives and Inclusion

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate learning in the areas below.

- ***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 & employment relations
 - Apply those concepts to understanding contemporary developments in work

- Synthesize information from multiple sources to generate new insights
- **Reasonable Accommodation Requests**
 - 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>.

Course Readings and Videos

- All course readings and videos will be posted on Canvas.

Course Schedule and Topics

INTRODUCTION

September 5

- Distribute syllabus
- Introductions
- Discuss class goals and logistics

September 12 – Introduction to the course and the first topic - “the economy”

In Class Assignment

- In class film and discussion, no homework

September 19- Value and Economics

- *In Class Assignment*

- Facilitator will lead small group discussion during class.
 - Prior to Thursday's class, facilitator will submit written part of assignment on Weds. and receive feedback from the professor
 - All other students submit weekly entry before class.
- *Reading/Video Due*
 - "Introduction" and "Value in the Eye of the Beholders" The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy, by Mariana Mazzucato (2018).
 - *Watch:*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bar0rTzIUKI>
 - If you have a problem with this link, search for "Mariana Mazzucato" and "value of everything". The video is by @5x15, and it is about 22 minutes long

September 26: Free market ideology and the language of price

- *In Class Assignment*
 - Facilitator will lead small group discussion during class.
 - Prior to Thursday's class, facilitator will submit written part of assignment on Weds. and receive feedback from the professor
 - All other students submit weekly entry before class.
- *Reading/Video Due*
 - "The Relation between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom" in Capitalism and Freedom, by Milton Friedman
 - Watch - <https://youtu.be/qJCeofxrDn0?si=v3E2LIPXwUSEMzJn>**
 - If you have problems accessing this link, search for "Milton Friedman" find Free Trade: Producer vs. Consumer

October 3: Critiques of free market ideology – price is a limited freedom

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class.
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- “Turning the Tables: Polanyi’s Critique of Free Market Utopianism”, from The Power of Market Fundamentalism by Fred Block (2016).
- <https://revealnews.org/podcast/the-great-arizona-water-grab/>
- If you have problems accessing this link, then search for “reveal Arizona water”; this search should get you to the link to the podcast

October 10: Innovation and Progress

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class.
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- “The Process of Creative Destruction”, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, by Joseph Schumpeter (1942).
- Selected chapters from The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking the Public vs. Private Sector Myth, by Mariana Mazzucato (2015).

TOPIC 2 - WORK

October 17: Workers as the force of progress

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class.
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- Selected readings from Karl Marx
- “What does labor want”. By Samuel Gompers

October 24: The Absence of Work

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class.
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- “Kellogg’s Six-Hour Day: A Capitalist Vision of Liberation”, by Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt (1999).
- “When Work Disappears”, by William Julius Wilson (2010).

October 31: Alienation

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class.
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- “Work”, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, by C. Wright Mills (1952).
- “Exploring the Managed Heart”, “The Commercialization of Feelings”, and “The Search for Authenticity”, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 3rd ed., by Arlie Hochschild (2021)

November 7: Merit

In Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- Watch - https://youtu.be/n_vcNTXjMYw?si=Tjx8eVD-z3bEbLKI - Even a Perfect Meritocracy Would Be Bad: Michael Sandel Interview
- Read: “The Myth of Meritocracy, according to Michael Sandel”, Harvard Gazette, January 2021.

TOPIC 3 - ORGANIZATION

November 14: Thinking About Merit

Class Assignment

- Watch and listen to lecture on “Merit”.
- No weekly entry or facilitation due.

Readings/Videos

- Watch - https://youtu.be/n_vcNTXjMYw?si=Tjx8eVD-z3bEbLKI - Even a Perfect Meritocracy Would Be Bad: Michael Sandel Interview
- Read: “The Myth of Meritocracy, according to Michael Sandel”, Harvard Gazette, January 2021.

November 21 (Tuesday): Solidarity and Mutualism

Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class
- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.

Readings/Videos

- “Mutualism in the Age of Entrepreneurial Capitalism”, by Dorothy Sue Cobble.
- Selected chapters from *Rivthead: Tales from the Assembly Line*, by Ben Hamper
- “Shiftless of the World, Unite!”, in *Race Rebels*, by Robin D. G. Kelley.

November 26: Bureaucracy

Class Assignment

- Facilitators will lead small group discussion during class

- Facilitator submit written part of assignment on Weds.
- All other students submit weekly entry before class.
- Review for Final, hand out Final.

Readings/Videos

- “Bureaucracy”, by Max Weber.
- “Uses of Industrial Power”, by David Brody

December 5 – Review and hand out final

FINAL DUE, 6 p.m., Thursday, December 19, 2024.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, Etc.

Attendance (2 points per class)

- We will meet 13 times this semester, by Zoom. You are allowed one unexcused absence.

Weekly Entries (6 points per entry)

- You will turn in a short response to the readings. The response will include: 1) answers to questions posed by the professor; 2) your reflections and thoughts on the topic; and 3) your attempt to connect elements of the reading or the week’s topic to current events.

Take Home Final (100 points)

- You will be given one take-home final. It will be a short answer/short essay final that will help you retain some of the core concepts.

Facilitation Assignment (100 points)

- Each student will Facilitate once during the semester. The Facilitation assignment is made up of two parts:

1. Written response to the assigned readings and list of questions provided by the professor, due on the Weds. before the student is assigned to facilitate discussion. Basically, the student will write a response to the readings and questions and will submit the written response by Wednesday evening. The professor will provide written feedback by Thursday morning.
2. Facilitate a small group discussion. The student will then lead a small group discussion during class on Thursday.

Participation (50 points)

- During the semester, the professor will assess each student's participation in class discussion. At the end of the semester, the professor will assign the participation points. Students are expected to attend class, to discuss the readings, and to engage their classmates during small group discussion.

Office Hours

- Please let me know if you want to meet with me. I will schedule a Zoom meeting.

Timeliness and Academic Integrity

- All assignments must be submitted by the scheduled due date and time. Assignments may be turned in one week from that due date and time; however, those late assignments will be docked points. I will not accept assignments that are turned in any later than one week past due the date. Please also review Rutgers University's Academic Integrity policy. Visit academicintegrity.rutgers.edu for information on this policy. The policy must be applied in this class. Thanks.

Troubleshooting Problems

- We are conducting the course via Zoom. We might run into many problems with this format, including the ability to maintain a continuous connection, audio and visual quality, an inability to find a quiet location, etc. Please know that we will work through these problems. If you are experiencing any issues with the online/Zoom format, please let me know. I will work with you to ensure that you can access the class.