

Black Workers in American Society

FALL 2025

37:575 303

Section 98

Section 99

Instructor: Dr. Neel Khichi

Contact Information: neel.khichi@rutgers.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This online course will examine the evolving position of Black workers in the U.S. economy: how it has changed at key points throughout history to the present day, and how access to opportunities in the labor market is informed by racial stratification in the larger society.

We will discuss various dimensions of racial labor market stratification (wages, mobility, benefits, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment) to assess Blacks' economic position in the labor market. The goal of the course is to challenge common notions of how people succeed in the labor market and to explore how systemic patterns of exclusion limit opportunities for Blacks. The course will focus on structural explanations for racial inequality in the labor market rather than purely individualistic ones. We will examine the social constructs of race and class to understand how Blacks at all levels in the labor market face common challenges in navigating the labor market.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES. The student is able to:

Core Curriculum: 21C and SCL

- CCD-1: Analyze the degree to which forms of human differences and stratifications among social groups shape individual and group experiences of, and perspectives on, contemporary issues. Such differences and stratifications may include race, language, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, abilities or other social distinctions and their intersections.
- SCL-1: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- SCL-2: Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

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, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (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 relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world. In this class we will explore how racial categorization, created through the social construction of race, affects one's position in the labor market and consequently produces racial labor market inequality. Through this approach we will examine the socioeconomic dimension of the claim that although race is not a scientifically "real" concept, it is real in its consequences.

Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts. You will develop an understanding of concepts such as hierarchy, power and hegemony to developing a working knowledge of social change, particularly one that uses a complex, nuanced analysis of a social problem to devise effective policies to end social and economic inequality.

Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.

Through forum discussion and analysis of readings, we will take apart the author's thesis, arguments and supporting evidence to critically evaluate the claims presented and compare them across other readings/authors drawing linkages and distinctions among different approaches and strategies for building arguments and supporting them.

Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. We will use the idea that the labor market, as well as society at large, is organized in such a way that it can be examined using a structural approach. Through this lens we can view blacks' position in the U.S. economy as part of a racial structure fortified by mechanisms such as institutional discrimination, exclusion, and access. We will explore this idea through multiple media: films, class readings chosen to represent a variety of perspectives, class discussions, and group exercises exploring hypothetical situations designed to bring your own experiences and perspectives into the discussion.

Apply concepts about human and social behavior to questions or situations. We will approach issues such as the labor market consequences of persistent school segregation, resistance to integration, affirmative action, racial disparities in unemployment, the persistence of a racial wage gap amidst a shrinking education gap, using concepts such as social structure, social closure, hegemony, bias, and homophily.

COURSE DELIVERY

- Course written lectures.
- Research based papers and articles.
- Answer questions regarding the readings.
- Online threaded discussions with other students
- Course videos, and/or listening to audio files.



COURSE MATERIALS

Kelly, Blair (2023) Black Folk: The Roots of the Black Working Class

Publisher : Liveright (June 13, 2023)

ISBN-10: 1631496557

(available via Amazon)

PDFs (which will be posted on the class Canvas site)

All required readings, videos and assignments are located on the course website within Canvas.

A Note About AI and Writing in This Course

Use of AI such as ChatGPT is only permitted to help you brainstorm ideas and see examples on writing assignments. All material you submit must be your own. When grading assignments, I will be looking for work that has clearly been written in your own voice AND that thoughtfully engages with the material specific to this course. Failure to follow these guidelines – including recycling work from another course – will result in a significant grade reduction.

ASSESSMENT OF ONLINE FORUMS AND WEEKLY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

This course will be offered in an online format using CANVAS as the student learning and course management system. The online course format utilizes four specific teaching methods: lectures, readings, discussions, and critical analysis.

Introduction: Please post a 1 minute introduction video to the class and respond to at least one other classmate to receive full credit.

Discussion Forums – Students Forums - A forum is an interactive threaded discussion used to discuss course topics. Threaded discussions are also a means for the instructor to identify whether or not a student comprehends required reading and/or video assignments. Forums include instructor-generated questions and suggested topic areas for discussion, and student-to-student interaction.

Reflection Assignments: There will be 3 Reflection assignments that are due the same week as the Discussion Forums. Specific instructions are within the assignment

Questions/Comments Assignment: There are 3 “questions, comments” assignment. Specific instructions are located in the assignment.

Assignments - All assignments are to be turned in on the due date indicated by Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Late Assignments - All assignments are to be turned in on the due date indicated by midnight EST via Canvas. Unless prior approval has been received by the instructor, points will be deducted for assignments submitted late. You will automatically receive ½ credit. Any assignment submitted more than three (3) days after the due date will not be accepted and will result in a grade of zero (0).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Class Sessions and Assignment Due Date Information:

The course begins Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025

Mondays are the beginning of each course week. All assignments are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm.. ***A



weekly message will be sent at the beginning of the week which will provide instructions for new assignments as well as grading feedback regarding prior assignments, and general course announcements. Students are responsible for the contents of weekly messages.

Writing assignments submitted **after the 24-hour late period will be accepted based on the discretion of the instructor.** Resources for Student Success:

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Rutgers Information Technology

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

Email: help@oit.rutgers.edu

Call 24/7: 833-OIT-HELP or 833-648-4357

INSTRUCTOR'S MESSAGE CHECKING POLICY:

Unless you receive advance notification, your instructor will check for messages daily on most workdays. (This excludes Saturday/Sunday, holidays, and official University breaks.) If a student sends a comment or question, your instructor will try to answer the message within 24 hours.

STUDENTS MESSAGE CHECKING POLICY:

It is the responsibility of the student to check for incoming course related messages within the Inbox tool at least 3 times a week. This is in addition to engaging in forums in the course. Students receive at least 1 message a week. Messages are ALWAYS sent via Canvas. Forgetting or being unable to check your messages is not an excuse.

ASSIGNMENTS BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Points
Introduction	10 points
Discussion #1	10 points
Reflection #1	20 points
Questions/Comments Submission #1	10 points
Essay #1	50 points
Online Activity #1	5 points
Discussion #2	10 points
Reflection #2	20 points
Questions/Comments Submission #2	10 points
Essay #2	50 points
Online Activity #2	5 points
Discussion #3	10 points
Reflection #3	20 points
Questions/Comments Submission #3	10 points

Online Activity #3	5 points
Final Exam Essay	100 points
Final Project Submission	100 points
TOTAL	445 points

GRADING

Each assignment is worth a certain number of points as identified in the assignments section of the syllabus. Highest number of points a student can earn is 480. Points accumulate to determine final percentage grade. Information concerning use of one's gradebook and assignment rubrics for each assignment is available in the course shell.

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	
90 – 100% = A	87 – 89% = B+	80–86% = B	
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Poor	Poor
77 – 79 % = C+	70 – 76% = C	60 – 69% = C	0 – 59% = F

DISCUSSION FORUM GRADING RUBRIC

To receive full credit for the discussion you must do the following:

10 points: You have posted at **least** 3x on the forum. Your initial post provides topics, or issues from the readings; provides thoughtful and detailed analysis. The initial post ties in both the student's views and supports those views the sources and data from the course content. The assignment is structured and organized well, there is a strong fluid writing style, and there is an originality in style and presentation. There is a clear connection and relationship among the examples. Your other posts should reply to at least 2 different students. Each reply post is a minimum of 100 words. You stay on topic. You comment on other student's views. You offer evidence in the form of an article, a quote, in which you put in bold in your references.

5 points: You created an initial post that provides topics, or issues from the readings; provides thoughtful and detailed analysis. The initial post ties in both the student's views and supports those views the sources and data from the course content. However, you only replied to 1 other student or no students.

0 points: You did not follow the instructions of the assignment, did not complete the assignment, or the posts lack appropriate content from the course material.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation,

and to regulations promulgated by the University. All members of the RutgersUniversity community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academicfreedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all studentsto pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please see thefollowing link below for details regarding the Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected torefrain from cheating, fabricating information, plagiarizing, inappropriately denying others accessto material, and facilitating others in academic dishonesty. <https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

****Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to "Turnitin.com" to ensure that your answers are yours alone – not answers fromanother student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to "copy" phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words!**

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properlyaccording to the accepted format for the discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words anotherperson's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources withoutproper attribution.

TURNITIN FOR PLAGIARISM DETECTION:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. For this course Fall 2021, your assignments will be reviewed upon submission by Turnitin and students will get a copy of the report.

MEDIA POLICY:

The recording and transmission of classroom activities and discussions by students or faculty is prohibited without written permission from the class instructor and all students in the class. Classparticipants must have been informed that audio/video recording or reposting of forum contributions may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for thepurposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership ofcontent. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments without written permission. You may not share any part of any recording without express written permission by all parties potentially affected by the recording.

Recordings, course materials, forum content, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than studyby students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of

federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

EXCEPTION:

It is not a violation of this policy for a student determined by the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center ("LNEC") to be entitled to educational accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study. Such recordings of lectures or class presentations are solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The restrictions on third party web and commercial distribution apply in such cases.

DESTRUCTION OF APPROVED RECORDINGS:

Students must destroy recordings at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class unless they receive the instructor's written permission to retain them or are entitled to retain them as an LNEC-authorized accommodation.

Begin	Title	Type of Assignment	Points
WEEK 1: September 2-7 th	Introductions. Familiarizing yourself with Canvas See: Week 1 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Go over Canvas and the syllabus. Email or post any questions. Introductory Post!	10 points
WEEK 2: September 8 th - September 14 th	Kelley (2023) Introduction: Solicitor See: Week 2 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Discussion #1 Sunday night @1159pm Reflection #1 due Sunday night @1159pm	10 points 20 points
WEEK 3: September 15 th - September 21 st	Kelley (2023) Chapter 1: Henry Blacksmith See: Week 3 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Questions/Comments Submission #1 Sunday night @1159pm Online Activity #1	10 points 5 points
WEEK 4: September 22 nd - September 28 th	Kelley (2023) Chapter 2: Sarah at Home See: Week 4 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Essay #1 Sunday night @1159pm	50 points
WEEK 5:	Kelley (2023) Chapter 3:	No assignment	No assignment

Begin	Title	Type of Assignment	Points
September 29 th - October 5 th	Resistant Washerwoman	*Use this time to catch up on any readings or submit any late work from the first 5 weeks*	*Use this time to catch up on any readings or submit any late work from the first 5 weeks*
WEEK 6: October 6 th - October 12 th	Kelley (2023): Chapter 4: The Jeremiad of the Porter See: Week 6 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Discussion #2 Sunday night @1159pm Reflection #2 due Sunday night @1159pm	10 points 20 points
WEEK 7: October 13 th - October 19 th	Kelley (2023): Chapter 5: Minnie and Bruce See: Week 7 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Questions/Comments Submission #2 Sunday night @1159pm Online Activity #2	10 points 5 points
WEEK 8: October 20 th - October 26 th	Kelley (2023): Chapter 6: The Maids of the Revolution See: Week 8 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Essay #2 Sunday night @1159pm	50 points
WEEK 9: October 27 th - November 2 nd	Kelley (2023): Chapter 7 Everything Sufficient for a Good Life	Final Project assigned	Final Project assigned
WEEK 10 November 3 rd - November 9 th	Kelley (2023): Conclusion: Brunell See: Week 11 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Discussion #3 Reflection #3 due Sunday night @1159pm	10 points 20 points

Begin	Title	Type of Assignment	Points
WEEK 11 November 10 th - November 16 th	See: Week 12 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Questions/Comments Submission #3 Sunday night @1159pm Online Activity #3	10 points 5 points
WEEK 12: November 17 th - November 23 rd	See: Week 13 Readings, Videos, and Assignments on Canvas Shell	Continue working on your Final Project Due: 12/7/25	Continue working on your Final Project Due: 12/7/25
WEEK 13: November 24 th - November 30 th			
WEEK 14 December 1 st - December 7 th .	Final Project due on Sunday, 05/04/25@1159pm Final Essay due on Sunday, 12/7/25	Final Project due on Sunday, 12/7/25@1159pm Final Essay due on Sunday, 12/7/25	100 points 50 points
Week 15 December 8 th - December 14 th	Final Project due on Sunday, 05/04/25@1159pm Final Essay due on Sunday, 12/7/25	Final Project due on Sunday, 12/7/25@1159pm Final Essay due on Sunday, 12/7/25	100 points 50 points