

Syllabus
LATINO WORKERS IN THE U.S.
Labor Studies and Employment Relations
School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University
Fall 2025

Course Number: 37:575:307:01
Days and Times: Wednesdays
12:10pm – 3:10pm
Location: Janice H. Levin Building Rm 219
Professor: Carmen Martino
carmenm@smlr.rutgers.edu
Cell: 609-513-3504
Office Hours: By appointment

Office Hours: By appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine Latino Workers in the U.S. with a focus on globalization, immigration, and the proliferation of low-wage work.

The topics we will explore include:

- Immigration theories and why people come.
- The history of migration and migration policy in the U.S.
- Current immigration laws in the U.S.
- The impact of globalization.
- How undocumented Latino immigrants manage and survive in the U.S.
- The employment and labor rights of immigrant workers.
- Racialized labor markets, subcontracting and low wage industries.
- Efforts to organize through unions and worker centers to improve wages and working conditions.
- Fixing a broken system.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Core Curriculum Learning Goal

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.

Labor Studies & Employment Relations Learning Goal

Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work (6).

School of Management & Labor Relations Learning Goal

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

Instructor's Goals

- Know and understand fundamental social science, historical, and legal perspectives, theories, and concepts relating to immigration.
- Know the fundamental laws/institutions governing immigration.
- Understand how the global economy and the movement of capital impacts the lives of workers and all but guarantees their movement across borders, legally and illegally.
- Understand how our diverse backgrounds and cultures shape our experiences and perspectives on immigration.
- Improve our critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

III. EXPECTATIONS

Preparation

We will be covering a lot of ground over the course of the semester so please do complete the reading assignments and summaries and take good notes!

Participation

Class sessions will include short lectures, small group discussions and group exercises. The expectation is that everyone will actively participate in the class.

When participating in discussions use your experience and the information you get from the readings. When you take a position try to back it up with facts, data and examples. And above all, be respectful and listen when others are speaking. You do not have to agree but you must give full attention and consideration to other points of view.

Communications

I will communicate with you via email on a weekly basis. Most of the time I will be providing you with a "Weekly Message" that will include updates, reminders, adjustments and/or reworking of the syllabus (we will be doing some of that from week to week) so please check your Rutgers email account regularly. Feel free to contact me via email or text with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

When emailing always include "Latino Workers in the U.S." in the subject line of your email.

IV. EVALUATION

Final grades will be based on the following:

Attendance/Participation	280pts	20pts per class
Weekly Summaries	120pts	10pts per summary
Mid-Term	300pts	
Final Exam	300pts	
Total Points	1,000pts	

Attendance/Participation (280pts)

For each class you will have an opportunity to earn a total of **20 points for Attendance and Participation**. You get points for coming to class and signing the Attendance Sheet. So, it is vitally important that you come to every class. Failure to sign the Attendance Sheet will result in a loss of attendance and participation points. You can only be excused for an illness, death in the family or other real emergencies. It's important to note that being excused means that you will have an opportunity to make-up the class by completing the summary and answering all the "Questions to Consider" for the class you missed. For excused absences on days when readings and summaries are not assigned, you will need to see me, and we can figure out how best to provide you with an opportunity to earn missed attendance/participation points. And just to clarify, in order to qualify for an excused absence, you need to send me an email prior to the class, or in the case of an emergency, no more than 24 hours after the class.

Weekly Summaries (12 @ 10pts per summary = 120pts)

It is vitally important that you come to class ready to contribute to the discussion. With this in mind, everyone will be required to answer two (2) "Questions to Consider" for each weekly reading assignment—including weeks 2-14. **Each summary is worth 10 points of your final grade (for a total of 120pts)**. The "Questions to Consider" will be posted with each week's reading assignment. They will also serve as small group discussion questions for each week of class. Summaries must be uploaded to Canvas prior to the start of each class. Summaries must be a minimum of 300 words, and you are encouraged to write more. (**Note:** The total 300-word count will not include repeating the questions you chose to answer, and I will read summaries and keep in touch on an as needed basis. Also, please be aware that summaries will be reviewed by "Turnitin.")

You earn more points per class based on your contribution to the class discussion.

There will be two opportunities to participate—the first opportunity will be in your small group discussions and the second during full class discussions. **In order to get full credit for participation you will need to participate in both the small group and full class discussions.** I will ask for volunteers to keep track of student participation for each class. For purposes of clarity, if you come to class and only participate in small group discussions, you will earn 16 out of 20 points. If you come to class and participate in both the small group and full class discussion you will get more points and closer to a perfect score for the day (e.g., 18 or higher...if you raise your hand and are called on 3 or more times you will get all 20 points for the day).

Mid-Term and Final Exams (600pts)

The midterm and final will be worth 300pts each and they will be written take-home exams that will cover all course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, documentaries, group exercises, etc. You will have one week to complete the mid-term and one week to complete the final exam. It's important to note that for both exams, you will only be able to use the assigned readings. You will not be allowed to use any outside sources! I will make this point when we get to the mid-term and again for the final.

V. RU ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(<https://policies.rutgers.edu/B.aspx?BookId=11914&PageId=459231>)

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational, research, and clinical missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- make sure that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student's own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations (*see Use of AI Prohibited below*)
- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, images, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with the student's interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students ethically, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This principle requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the ethical standards and professional code of conduct in the field for which the student is preparing.

Use of AI is Prohibited

Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, GPT-4, DALL·E and other AI-based content creation platforms, are strictly prohibited in writing summaries and/or completing take-home exams. This prohibition does not extend to AI-powered tools commonly used for proofreading, grammar correction, accessibility checks, Microsoft Word's grammar correction tool, Grammarly, TurnItIn Draft Coach, and Google. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic dishonesty, in accordance with the Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy on plagiarism and cheating. Please consult with me before using any form of technology that could raise concerns about academic integrity.

VI. RU LEARNING CENTERS

"Rutgers is committed to your success and offers free academic services to all students. The Learning Centers provide tutoring, study groups, and review sessions for your courses. They also host workshops and provide individual academic coaching to help you further develop your study strategies and self-management skills. To learn more about how the LCs can help you succeed, visit rlc.rutgers.edu."

VII. DISABILITY STATEMENT

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should

refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

VIII. STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class will introduce an array of sometimes conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, immigration policy, etc. and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

IX. COURSE READINGS

There is one book to buy for this course (Front of the House, Back of the House by Eli Reville Yano Wilson) but you will not need it until later in the semester. All other readings for this course will be available on Canvas.

X. SYLLABUS

PART I: IMMIGRATION HISTORY, THEORY AND WHY THEY COME

(WEEK 1) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Read: The syllabus

In-Class: Intro's, our expectations for the class and review of syllabus
Why People Come and Why They Go

(WEEK 2) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH

TODAY'S LATINO IMMIGRANTS AND WHY THEY COME (THEORIES)

Read: **Canvas:**
Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. Chapter 2:
"Principles of Operation: Theories of International Migration"; Beyond
Smoke and Mirrors, Mexican Immigration in An Era of Economic
Integration, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2006.
Abraham Lustgarten, NYTimes Magazine/ProPublica: *The Great Climate
Migration*, 2020
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on theories of migration and why people migrate.

(WEEK 3) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

THE HISTORY OF MIGRATION IN THE U.S. AND WHO GETS IN TODAY

Read: **Canvas:**
Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. Chapter 3:
"System Assembly: A History of Mexico-U.S. Migration" Beyond Smoke

and Mirrors, Mexican Immigration in An Era of Economic Integration, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2006.

Mae M. Nagai, *How Grandma Got Legal*, Los Angeles Times, May 16, 2006.

Goodman Adam, The Deportation Machine, [Chapter 2: Coerced Removal from the Great Depression through Operation Wetback](#); and [Chapter 6: Deportation in an Era of Militarized Borders and Mass Incarceration](#)

[Pew Data on Self-Deportations](#)

Martínez, Óscar, *The Beast, Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*, Verso, 2014.

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on what we can learn from the history and U.S. policy on immigration.

Documentary—The 800-Mile Wall

PART II: GLOBAL CAPITALISM (NEO-LIBERALISM) AND MIGRATION

(WEEK 4) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND MIGRATION

Read: **Canvas:**
Jeffrey Kaye, Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration, Chapter 3, *Migrants in the Global Marketplace*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2010.

Ruth Gomber-Munoz, Labor and Legality, Chapter 2, *Why Is There Undocumented Migration?* Oxford University Press, 2011

David Bacon, Illegal People, Chapter 3, *Displacement and Migration*, Beacon Press, 2008.

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on the mobility of capital and workers

Documentary— The Other Side of Migration

(WEEK 5) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1ST

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS, AND RACIALIZED LABOR MARKETS (PART 1)

Read: **Canvas:**
Richard McIntyre, Are Worker Rights Human Rights? **Chapter 3: Not Only Nike Is Doing It**

NJ Star Ledger, [The Invisible Workforce](#)

[NJ Star Ledger, The Invisible Workforce](#)

Handout: Supply Chains, Temp Towns and Low Wage Work

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion of New Brunswick's Low Wage Labor Market and NJ Temp Towns

Vise News Investigation—Permanently Temporary: The Truth About Temp Labor

(WEEK 6) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS, AND RACIALIZED LABOR MARKETS (PART 2)

Read: **Canvas:**
Weil, David, The Fissured Workplace: Why Work Became So Bad for So Many and What Can Be Done to Improve It, **Chapter 1: *The Fissured Workplace and Its Consequences***, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2014

Immigration Raids in Edison NJ (NYTimes Aug 2025)

The Middlemen Linking Migrants to Your Shopping Cart (Nov. 2024)

Documentary: We Are Not Machines

Guest Speakers From New Labor

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion of corporations, globalization and low wage work

(WEEK 7) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH

LOW WAGE WORK-BEARDSTOWN, ILLINOIS, MEATPACKERS

Read: **Canvas:**
Faranak Miraftab, Global Heartland, Displaced Labor, Transnational Lives and Local Placemaking, Chapter 1: *Welcome to Porkopolis*, pp. 26-53

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion—The history of the meatpacking industry

Mid-Term Take Home Assignment

(WEEK 8) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22ND

LOW WAGE WORK-BEARDSTOWN, ILLINOIS, MEATPACKERS (CONTINUED)

Read: **Canvas:**

Faranak Miraftab, Global Heartland, Displaced Labor, Transnational Lives and Local Placemaking, Chapter 3: *Michoacán's Largest Export is People*, pp. 78-93; Chapter 5: *"The First Third World City of the U.S."*, pp. 113-129

MOVIE: A BETTER LIFE

Mid-Term Due

PART III: LOW WAGE WORK AND LIVING IN THE U.S.A.

(WEEK 9) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH

LOW WAGE WORK-BEARDSTOWN, ILLINOIS, MEATPACKERS (CONTINUED)

Read: **Canvas:**

Faranak Miraftab, Global Heartland, Displaced Labor, Transnational Lives and Local Placemaking, Chapter 7: *We Wanted Workers*, pp. 160-185; and Chapter 8: *We Got People*, pp.186-208.

Documentary: PBS Frontline: COVID-19s Hidden Toll

(WEEK 10) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH

LOW WAGE WORK, RESTAURANTS (PART 1: FRONT OF THE HOUSE, BACK OF THE HOUSE)

Read: **Canvas:**

Eli Revelle Yano Wilson, Front of the House, Back of the House, Race and Inequality in the Lives of Restaurant Workers, Introduction, pp. 1-22, Producing Difference, pp. 23-81, Worlds Apart, pp. 82-104

With an introduction from an episode of "The Bear"

(WEEK 11) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH

LOW WAGE WORK, RESTAURANTS (PART 2: FRONT OF THE HOUSE, BACK OF THE HOUSE)

Read: **Canvas:**

Eli Revelle Yano Wilson, Front of the House, Back of the House, Race and Inequality in the Lives of Restaurant Workers, Brown-Collar Careers in the Back of the House pp. 105-131, Mobility Pathways and Closed Doors, pp. 132-158, Conclusion, pp. 159-174

(WEEK 12) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH

LOW WAGE WORK, RESTAURANTS (PART 3: THE BUSBOYS AND "A BETTER LIFE")

Read: **Canvas:**

Ruth Gomber-Munoz, Labor and Legality, Chapter 3: *Jumping and Adjusting to Life Under the Radar*, and Chapter 4: *Friends, Networks and Households*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

In Class: Lecture/Discussion on the role of social networks among immigrant workers

MOVIE: A BETTER LIFE

Thanksgiving Break (No Class on Wednesday, November 26th)

(WEEK 13) WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3RD

LOW WAGE WORK, RESTAURANTS (PART 4: THE BUSBOYS)

Read: **Canvas:**
Ruth Gomber-Munoz, Labor and Legality, Chapter 5: *Working Hard*, and Chapter 6: *Identity, Dignity and Esteem*, Oxford University Press, 2011

In Class: Lecture/Discussion on the tradeoffs and compromises that undocumented workers make at work and in their communities

Documentary—The Hand That Feeds

(WEEK 14) WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Read: **Canvas:**
Gross and Compa, Human Rights in Labor and Employment Relations: International and Domestic Perspectives, Chapter 1: *Takin' it to the Man: Human Rights at the American Workplace*, Labor and Employment Association, 2009.

Immanuel Ness, Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Movement, Chapters 2 and 3: *Unions and Immigrant Worker Organizing: New Models for New Workers*, Temple University Press, 2005

In Class: Lecture/Discussion on unions and organizing immigrants in the U.S. and a discussion about organizing based on worker rights as human rights vs. solidarity and the implications for immigrants and undocumented workers.

Documentary: Food Chains

Review Final Exam