



Working Women in American Society
37:575:309:95

Section 95 - Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Laura Sosa

To Interact:

Send a message via Canvas Inbox messaging tool

Virtual Office Hours (Via Zoom):

Monday 8-9AM

Tuesday 7-8 PM

Or By Appointment

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/las71?pwd=WVBnTm1DY0xEbINFYVVQS1pHNEFFQT09>Links to an external site.

Course Description

Focus on the contemporary experiences of working women, including an exploration of current legal strategies and social policies created to address their concerns.

This course is designed to provide an overview of the dynamics of gender at work. Under the umbrella of work, this course includes organizational theory, embodied labor and issues around work and family, occupational stratification, the gender pay gap, gender diversity at work, women in low-wage work, and theories of gender and work

Get Help

Need Assistance with a technical question?

It is the student's responsibility to be able to perform technically in the course. Contact helpdesk staff if you need assistance using the **Canvas**. Your instructor cannot assist you with technical issues – but the helpdesk staff can!

Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology

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

Call: 833-OIT-HELP

Student resources

If you are in need of help in the areas of (a) mental health, (b) academic coaching, and (c) financial assistance:
<https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2022-information-smlr-students>

SMLR Scholarships

<https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

Learning Objectives

Rutgers CORE:

Diversity and Social Inequalities (CCD)

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.

CCD-2 Analyze contemporary social justice issues and unbalanced social power systems.

Social Analysis (SCL)

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.

School of Management and Labor Relations:

IV - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation

V - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

1 - Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories, and concepts in our field.

2 - Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments.

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

Course Learning Objectives

This course will:

- (1) give students an overview of women's labor force participation, the wage gap, and theories of gender at work,
- (2) make students aware of the influence of gender and (to some degree) race and class in structuring opportunities to work and the rewards of work,

(3) help students to become critical consumers of popular and academic sources about work and to apply these abilities in written assignments, and
 (4) develop students' abilities to carry out and present research on issues relevant to work

Course Requirements

Assignments and Assessments

Course Conversations i.e. Discussion Forums	25 points	1 @ 1 point (Intro) 8 @ 3 points (Conversations 1-8)
Connecting to the Topic	40 points	4@ 6 points each (Individual) 1@ 2 point (Small Team Prep) 2@ 7 points (Small Team)
Field Project Interview/Written Narrative	20 points	1 @ 20 points (Individual)
Roundtable Discussion (small team recording)	10 points	1 @ 10 points (Small Team)
TOTAL	100 points	

Course Conversations (Found in Discussion Forums)

- Worth 25 points (Intro = 1 point; Forum #s 1-8 = 3 points each)
- Begin on Tuesday and end on following Monday
- Initial postings are due by 11:59PM on the Friday of the Module's Week. The due date in Canvas reflects that date. For every day that the initial posting is late, **one point will be deducted.** Students are encouraged to be as interactive as possible all week – responding and asking questions. A reply to at least one peer is then due by the following Monday.
- See the Grading Rubric and Guidelines posted in Canvas.
- Grammar counts – you are not conversing in a text message.

- *Key things to remember are:*
 - Use our **course material** as the primary source for your posting. Use an in-text citation (e.g. Sandberg, 2012) within your posting to acknowledge the source of your ideas. You do not need to include a full reference unless you bring in external material as a compliment to the course material. Keep in mind that external material should NOT be the single source that you use in your posting. In addition, be careful with the validity of the source. Use only academic sources.
****An initial posting that does not integrate any of the course material for the week, but relies solely on outside sources, will have two points deducted.**
- **Timeliness is important** - a good discussion entails keeping the dialogue going (throughout the given week) with your classmates. In order to facilitate the dialogue, it is critical you adhere to the conversation post due dates so that you have sufficient time to respond to each other's posts. Please **do not wait until the last day** to post your responses. Due dates are as follows:
 - **By Friday of the week (due date indicated on Canvas)**, post your initial response to the question(s).
 - **By Monday of the week (at the latest)**, read, and respond to one (or more) of your classmates' posts.
 - It is highly encouraged to return to the Course Conversation after your initial post and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

****Because it is unfair to your peers if you do not post your initial response by Friday, one point will be deducted from the total grade for every day that the initial post is late (assuming the post meets all requirements). e.g. If you post your initial post on Monday and then also reply on Monday, you will not be able to receive any points.**
- Note that Prof. Sosa will monitor the conversations and often comment or bring up other considerations. Be sure to read those comments and respond if appropriate. The purpose of my monitoring is to clarify and reinforce key points.

Connecting to the Topic

- Worth 40 points
- Students will critically analyze the material and demonstrate their understanding via either individual (4) or small group (2) assignments.
- Students will be grouped into small teams early in the course. These teams will work on all team related assignments together, including the Roundtable discussion, for the remainder of the course.
- Small group assignments are recordings of student discussions/panel simulations with **cameras on** to simulate a professional organizational environment.
- Examples of individual assignments are narrated PowerPoint presentations, written

analysis, LinkedIn Learning exercises, connection to news/data, podcasts, personal reflections, case studies, etc.

Field Project/Narrative Paper

- Worth 20 points
- Students will individually conduct an interview with a woman who has at least 20 years of experience in the US workforce in a supervisory or technical role. You will need to use your network to identify an interviewee. Prof. Sosa can help you begin to build this network.
- Findings will be summarized in written narrative style (approximately five pages) and shared with small team peers for the Roundtable Discussion. A sample of narrative style is available on Canvas.

Roundtable Discussion

- Worth 10 points (team grade) – This is where the team pulls everything together.
- Virtually via Zoom, students will compare the individual interview narratives in an interactive small group discussion format (i.e. “roundtable”) to 1.) identify common themes and 2.) apply the theories and concepts within the course material to the perspectives of the interviewees.
- The roundtable will be recorded with cameras on; one submission per group. The purpose of having cameras on is to emulate a professional setting, an important practice for the workplace.

Course Policies

Communication

Unless students receive advance notification, I will check my Canvas Inbox by 6 pm EST on regular workdays. This excludes Weekends and college break (e.g. Spring Break, Thanksgiving). If a student sends a comment or question, I commit to addressing the contents of the message within 24 hours. I will try but messages sent after Friday at 5PM or on the weekends may not be returned until Monday morning.

Late Submission Policy –I understand that unplanned events may happen in life which may disrupt your ability to participate in the class. Please get in contact with me as soon as possible to manage such situations. Without communicating with me, no late assignments will be accepted.

Grading Policy

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 100. Points accumulate to determine final grade. ***Decimal points will not be rounded.*** For example, your final grade is B+ if you earn 89.99. It is your responsibility to monitor your grade and take steps to improve it.

A = 100 – 90
B+ = 89.99 – 85

B	= 84.99 – 80
C+	= 79.99 – 75
C	= 74.99 – 70
D	= 66.99 – 60
F	= 59.99 – 0

Students with Disabilities

To receive consideration for an accommodation, students with a disability must send their letter of accommodation to their instructors and discuss the needed accommodation(s) as early in the semester as possible. For more information regarding the process of applying for a letter of accommodation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

Academic Integrity

Conduct yourself in accordance with the Rutgers University Academic Integrity policy. <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in submissions

Unless specified in the assignment, representing AI generated work as your own is considered plagiarism and a violation of Rutgers' academic integrity policy. Upon suspicion, the assignment will not be graded, and the possible violation will be reported through the university's Academic Integrity process.

Grammar and Citing Work

Grammar counts in written work. Submitting poorly written assignments will result in a lowered grade. All work must include accurate citations and a reference page or will receive a zero. If AI is allowed in an assignment, you must also include a citation in APA or MLA format (e.g. for Chat GPT). If you are unfamiliar as to how to cite references and produce a reference page, be sure to contact a Rutgers librarian.

Course Schedule by Week

Note that additional material may be added to folders throughout the semester. Be sure to check the module's folders at the beginning of each week.

Week 1: Getting to Know Peers and the Course

Assignment: Introduce Yourself With A Short Video

Setting the Stage - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iZkK5j2jHM>

UNIT 1: Working Women in US Society

Week 2: Brief History of Women at Work

Readings

- **Click - Women's Work - Women's Roles in the Workplace, Women's Roles in Modern Economy, History of Women and Work in Twentieth Century, History of Women's Work.pdf**
- <https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>
- <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/labor-force-participation-rate-for-women-highest-in-the-district-of-columbia-in-2022.htm#:~:text=For%20the%20nation%20as%20a,was%2056.8%20percent%20in%202022.>
- <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>
- <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2022/>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data>
- Goldin and Mitchell (2017) The New Life Cycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, and Expanding Tops

Video

- **Women Have Always Worked: Why I Study Women's History (The U.S. Experience 1700 - 1920)**

Assignment: Course Conversation #1 and Connecting to the Topic #1 (Individual)

Week 3: Men's Work versus Women's Work

Readings

- **Britton (1997) Perceptions of the work environment among correctional officers: Do race and sex matter?**
- **Wingfield (2009) Racializing the glass escalator: Reconsidering men's experiences with women's work**

Assignment: Course Conversation 2

Week 4: Gender Bias

Readings

- **Ben Barres (2006). "Does Gender Matter?" *Nature* 442, no. 7099: 133-136.**

- Tinsley, Catherine H., Sandra I. Cheldelin, Andrea Kupfer Schneider, and Emily T. Amanatullah (2009). "Women at the bargaining table: Pitfalls and prospects." *Negotiation Journal* 25, no. 2: 233-248.
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/gender-identity/us-women-are-largely-dissatisfied-with-how-theyre-treated-most-men-dont-see-a-problem/>
- Women in Tech Statistics
- Forbes. Why Women Are Lagging in Tech Leadership

Video

- How to avoid gender stereotypes: Eleanor Tabi Haller-Jordan at TEDxZurich

Assignment: Connecting to the Topic #2 (Individual Narrated Power Point)

Week 5: Landmark Legislation

Readings

- Equal Pay Act and Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
- Alphabet Settles Shareholder Suites Over Sexual Harassment Claim
- McDonald, Paula, and Sandra Backstrom (2008) "Fighting Back: Workplace Sexual Harassment and the Case of North Country," *Australian Bulletin of Labour* 34 (1): 47-63.
- The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United Forward Together. 2014.

Video

- How To Recognize, Address, and Prevent Workplace Harassment

Assignment: Course Conversation 3; Small Team Contract

Week 6: Balancing Work and Family

Readings

- Huang, Krivkovich, Rambachan, & Yee (2021) "For mothers in the workplace, a year (and counting) like no other", McKinsey & Company Article. Also available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/for-mothers-in-the-workplace-a-year-and-counting-like-no-other>
- Slaughter (2012) "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," *The Atlantic* 2012 (7): 6 pages. Also available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/6/>.

Video

- 3 Rules for better work-life balance: TED Talk
- By the numbers: Work-life balance: ABC News

Assignment: Connecting to the Topic #3 (Small Team)

Week 7: Gender Pay Gap

Readings

- Miller (2019) Women Did Everything Right and then Work Got Greedy. NYTimes
- Blau & Kahn (2007) The gender pay gap: Have women gone so far as they can?
- Cohen & Huffman (2007) Working for the women? Female managers and the gender wage gap
- How the gender pay gap and glass ceiling help some women

Podcasts

- The True Story of the Gender Pay Gap
- Interview with Nobel Laureate Claudia Goldin

Videos

- Jennifer Lawrence Opens Up on Hollywood's Gender Pay Gap
- OECD: Why is the gender pay gap such a stubborn problem? What can we do?

Assignment: Course Conversation 4 and Connecting to the Topic 4 (Individual)

Week 8

- Work on Field project - Conduct interview

UNIT II – Working Women in Organizations

Week 9: Intersection of Gender and Race in Workplace

Readings

- Alonso-Villar, O., & Del Río, C. (2017). “The occupational segregation of African American women: Its evolution from 1940 to 2010.” *Feminist Economics*, 23(1), 108-134.
- Wingfield, A. H. (2010). Are Some Emotions Marked “Whites Only”? Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces. *Social Problems*, 57(2), 251–268.
- The Occupational Segregation of African American Women Its Evolution from 1940 to 2010.pdf
- She Said Equinox Fired Her For Being a Black Woman. The Jury Agreed NY Times
- Pao Effect: Discrimination of Asian Women

Videos

- CBS Mornings: Google faces lawsuit alleging racial discrimination against Black women (Links to an external site.)
- Why you should not bring your authentic self to work | Jodi-Ann Burey | TEDxSeattle (Links to an external site.)

Assignment: Course Conversation 5

Week 10: Tokenism

Readings

- **Kanter (1977a) Men and Women of the corporation**
- **Kanter (1977b) Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women**

Assignment: Connecting to the Topic #5 (Individual)

Week 11: Why Don't We Have More Women Managers?

Readings

- **Ali et al. (2015) Retaining a diverse workforce: the impact of gender-focused human resource management**
- **Chatman, J (2010) Norms in mixed sex and mixed race work groups**
- **Theories relevant to Workplace Gender Diversity**
- **McKinsey 2024 Report on Women**

Videos

- **Ted Talk: Why we have too few women leaders | Sheryl Sandberg**
- **So We Leaned In, Now What?|Sheryl Sandberg**
- **Linked In Interview with Sheryl Sandberg**

Assignment: Course Conversation 6

Week 12: Glass Ceiling

Readings

- **The glass ceiling: Its definition, History and Effects**
- **Foley, Kidder, & Powell (2002) The perceived glass ceiling and justice perceptions: an investigation of Hispanic law associates**
- **Matsa & Miller (2011) Chipping Away at the Glass Ceiling: Gender Spillovers in Corporate Leadership. *American Economic Review*, 101 (3): 635–39.**

Videos

- **A glass ceiling - or a broken ladder?- BBC News**

Assignment: Course Conversation 7

****Interview Narratives Due**

Thanksgiving Break

Week 13: Women and Mentorships

Readings

- Kurtulus & Tomaskovic-Devey (2012) Do female Top managers help women to advance? A panel study using EEO-1 records
- McDonald & Westphal (2013) Access denied: Low mentoring of women and minority first-time directors and its negative effects on appointments to additional boards
- Women in Tech on Leadership

Videos

- Accenture CEO's Advice To Women: Stand OutLinks to an external site.
- She's The CEO Of A Fortune 500 Company, And She's Rethinking Leadership.

Assignment: Connecting to the Topic 6 (small team)

Week 14: Contemporary Perspectives (students research articles)

Assignments: Course Conversation 8 and work on Roundtable Discussion

Roundtable Discussions

In Zoom, conduct recorded “Roundtable Discussion” in small group with cameras on; Submit one recording for team grade.

****Note that material may be added during the semester.**