



RUTGERS

UNIVERSITY | NEW BRUNSWICK

School of Management & Labor Relations

Youth at Work, Course 37:575:215:98, Fall 2026, Online Asynchronous

Instructor: Amy Bahruth

Course Format: Online, Asynchronous

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Virtual Office Hours (through Zoom): By Appointment

Course Delivery Format

This course runs from September 2 - December 10. It is delivered **entirely** online through the Learning Management System, Canvas. There will be no Face-to-Face, in-person classroom sessions, except for an optional virtual office hour. We may be on a group Zoom for one class so that you can present your projects, but we'll figure out when that is later in the semester.

The course is delivered in **asynchronous** mode. This means the learning activities and communication take place outside of real-time. You do not have to log in at any specific scheduled time; you log in at your convenience. However, there may be times when you're working in groups on an assignment, you would need to set up a live session via the **Canvas BigBlueButton, WebEx, or ZOOM.**

Note: Even though you don't need to log in at any specific time, **you are required to adhere to all coursework due dates.**

Accommodations

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may

require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the [Office of Disability Services \(Links to an external site.\)](#), the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. Below is the full contact information for the Office of Disability Services:

Communication

You should inform me of any personal emergencies that may arise, which will prevent you from getting online. I am available via email (abahruth@rutgers.edu). **Try to avoid the Canvas Inbox because that does NOT link to my email, and I don't check that inbox regularly.** I generally try to answer emails on the same day they are received.

Course Description

This course explores youth experiences in the labor market. The course starts by examining the work experiences of children and youth in the 19th and early 20th century. We begin by exploring the idea of child labor and how it is defined in social and economic contexts. We then investigate several industries including---coal mines, manufacturing, textiles, homework, street work and agriculture---to better understand the causes and effects of child labor in US history, why it matters both socially and economically, reform programs that emerged, and how the US history of child labor can contribute to understanding domestic and global child labor problems today.



— A Department of Labor investigator photographed a child who worked for Packers Sanitation Services Inc. (PSSI) cleaning a slaughterhouse in Grand Island, Nebraska. The subject has been blurred by the source. U.S. Department of Labor

The course further explores contemporary experiences of young people in the labor market. We will explore how young people prepare for work, view their education and workforce development pathways, and view their work and future careers. Here we will focus on the experiences of young workers across racial, class, and gender lines and pay particular attention to the growing working poor in the youth labor market, and how public policy can address some of these inequalities. Central to this half of the course will be an analysis of the experiences of young people in the current economy, and various policies and programs that can improve their experiences and economic security, especially in the midst of the current economic crisis.

This course explores several questions, including:

- Why do young people work?
- What jobs/industries are youth likely to work in, and how has this changed over time?
- Why and how are young workers concentrated in specific industries/occupations?
- How does young people's role in the labor market today differ from the role of previous generations of young workers?
- What are some of the challenges that young people face at work?
- How do the challenges that young workers face differ by cultural context and compared with adult workers?
- Have you ever been hurt at work or know of a young worker who was hurt at work?
- How can young workers and their advocates improve young people's experiences in the labor market?



Required Readings

There is one **required book** for this course. All books are available online, at the library and through the university bookstore.

1. Hindman, Hugh. 2002. *Child Labor: An American History*. M. E. Sharpe.
2. [ONLINE ONLY: Besen-Cassino, Yasemin. 2013. *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America*.](#) Note: You can access the Besen-Cassino e-text through the Rutgers University Libraries system. The link will direct you to the website, and you will be prompted to log in with your NetID and Password. You only need **Chapters 1, 2, & 3**

Additional learning materials

Any other additional articles, videos, and/or other media will be provided to you in the Modules section of this course, under the respective weekly To-Do pages.

Core Curriculum Learning Goals

The Core Curriculum Learning Goals assessed in this course include:

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.

Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations:

- Develop effective presentation skills appropriate for different settings and audiences
- Develop career management skills to navigate one's career
- Develop capabilities to work and lead in a multicultural and diverse environment
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- Develop cultural agility competencies
- Demonstrate lifelong personal and professional development skills

Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions:

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work
- Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective
- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)

- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context (HRM)

Course Module Structure

The course is structured into weekly Modules. Each Module contains the respective Week's "To-Do" page. The To-Do page lists:

- Brief topic introduction
- Learning Objectives for the week/topic
- Weekly Instructor Note (this is a more detailed description of the weekly topic.) The Weekly Instructor Note will help you better understand, absorb the readings for the week.
- Readings (textbook chapters, web articles, and/or other sources).
- Videos (Watching)
- Assignments (Forum Discussion, and/or other Assignments). Note, there may not be Assignments every week.

The course is divided into 14 weekly modules as follows:

- [Week 1 \(September 1 - 6\): Orientation](#)
- [Week 2 \(September 7 - 13\): Introduction](#)
- [Week 3 \(September 14 - 20\): Defining the Child Labor Problem](#)
- [Week 4 \(September 21 - 27\): Child Labor Home and the Streets](#)
- [Week 5 \(September 28 - October 4\): Child Labor in the Mines and Factories](#)
- [Week 6 \(October 5 - 11\): Should Adolescents Work?](#)
- [Week 7 \(October 12 - 18\): Paid and Unpaid Internships](#)
- [Week 8 \(October 19 - 25\): Teen Workers Today](#)
- [Week 9 \(October 26 - November 1\): Youth at Work: Talking Safety](#)
- [Week 10 \(November 2 - 8\): No Forum - Work on Finalizing your Projects - Due November 8](#)
- [Week 11 \(November 9 - 15\): Youth Unemployment](#)
- [Week 12 \(November 16 - 22\): Responding to Peer Group Projects](#)
- [Week 13: \(November 23 - 29\) Youth and the Future of Work](#)
- [Week 14 \(November 30 - December 6\): Youth and Unions](#)

Discussion Forums

In the absence of face-to-face interaction, the discussion forums become essential in sharing your thoughts, experiences, and expertise with each other. **Discussion is a significant portion of this course.** Participation is required as this is a graded activity.

Before posting your thoughts, replies to the discussion forum, make sure to have read the assigned readings, viewed/listened to the relevant media (videos, podcasts, etc). Take time

to reflect on what you have read and viewed and organize your references and citations. Write a draft, refine your response, save your document in Word (just in case), then copy and paste to the Discussion forum(s). Provide a substantial response supported by references and citations. Stay on topic. Follow the Discussion Post Guidelines and Rubric noted in each Discussion Forum Portal.

With the exception of Week 1 Discussion, your Discussion Forums are set up as a Group Discussion; 10 students per group. Over the course of the semester, your groups will be randomly reset so you get to know your classmates.

Note: *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 that you **adhere to the Discussion post due dates**, so you have sufficient time to respond to each other's posts. Please **do not wait until the last day** of the week to post your replies.

Each forum opens on a Monday of the week. The first post is due on **Wednesdays**, and replies to your classmates' posts are due on **Sundays**. Each forum closes on a Sunday of the week.

Group Course Project

Detailed project information will be available [here](#).

Grade Distribution

A final grade is based on a **1000-point** system. Each assignment is worth a specific number of points. The total points accumulated determine the final course grade.

Grading Components	# of Points
Discussion Forum Participation (50 points each)	600
Course Project	400
Total	1000

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points Range
A	900-1000

B+	870-899
B	800-869
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	599 and below

Policies and Procedures

Online Participation and Engagement

The success of this course depends on active engagement and dialogue by members of the class. You must be fully prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised in the assigned reading material. The course week begins on **Monday** for all weeks and ends on **Sunday**.

Your Responsibilities

Stay on Track

Online learning requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While online learning offers you flexibility and convenience to learn from anyplace, anytime, *you are still expected to **adhere to all due dates***.

You are expected to:

- Have access to a reliable computer and access to the Internet
- Log in to Canvas for your course ***on a regular basis***
- Check for any announcements, updates to the syllabus, assignments, and/or discussions, and respond accordingly
- Actively participate in the Discussion Forum
- Complete the assigned readings and/or media
- Complete the assigned exercises and projects
- Adhere to all due dates

Course Summary

Date	Details	Due
Sun Sep 6, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 1: Introductions	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 13, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 2: Child Labor in the Cacao Fields and Other Industries	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 20, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 3: Defining Child Labor	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 27, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 4: A Study of Significant Women in American History	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 4, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 5: Child Labor Then and Now	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 11, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 6: Should Teens Work?	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 18, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 7: Internships	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 25, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 8: Teen Workers - Marketing and Advertising	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 1, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 9: Safety and Health	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 8, 2026	Assignment Course Project: Artifact	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Course Project: Group Members Evaluation	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 15, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 10: Youth Unemployment	due by 11:59pm

Course Summary

Date	Details	Due
Sun Nov 22, 2026	Discussion Topic Course Project: Review Forum	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 29, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 11: The Future of Work and Youth	due by 11:59pm
Sun Dec 6, 2026	Discussion Topic Discussion Forum 12: Youth and Unions	due by 11:59pm

Artificial Intelligence Impact Statement

The Faculty Union’s Joint Media and Narrative Committee and Climate Justice Committee collaborated in writing [this recommended statement about artificial intelligence](#). The statement is based on the work of the national AAUP’s Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions.

AI is increasingly viewed as an important tool for writing, analysis, and creative output. However, it is important to recognize that AI use has significant social and environmental impacts. Reducing use by avoiding unnecessary AI queries can minimize environmental degradation and human exploitation. Further, unlike other forms of consumption, the resource use associated with AI cannot be recycled or undone, which makes it particularly important to understand the complex footprint and potential repercussions of utilizing generative AI technology.

Please consider the following before using AI:

1. Generative AI depends on intense energy use, which increases greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbates climate change. The International Energy Agency estimates that by 2026, global energy use from AI, data centers, and cryptocurrency will double from 2022 use to levels “roughly equivalent to the electricity consumption of Japan” (International Energy Agency, 2024).
2. Generative AI uses a substantial amount of water to cool hard drives to optimal temperatures for data processing. Global AI use is projected to involve the withdrawal of an alarming 4.2 to 6.6 billion cubic meters of water by 2027; for perspective, that equates to half of the annual water withdrawal of the entire United Kingdom (Li et al., 2025; Rogers, 2024; Danelski, 2023).
3. Generative AI requires substantial hardware resources to power AI software. Digital hardware often requires extracting rare earth minerals via exploitative mining labor practices (Fuchs, 2015).

4. As companies seek to further commercialize their platforms, continual upgrades of AI software to power increasingly large language models also generate immense amounts of e-waste, with estimates of 2.5 million tons of e-waste per year by 2030 (Wang et al., 2024).

These are just a few examples of the complex effects of AI on human life and natural ecosystems. With these impacts in mind, we encourage you to reconsider AI use whenever possible. Beyond minimizing your use of generative AI platforms like ChatGPT, you can mitigate AI-related harm by avoiding AI search assist in web browsers such as Google since many basic searches do not require the advanced processing that powers AI. To do this, simply type “-ai” after your search query. For example: “who owns facebook -ai”

References

- Danelski, D. (2023, April 28). “AI programs consume large volumes of scarce water.” University of California Riverside. <https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2023/04/28/ai-programs-consume-large-volumes-scarce-water>Links to an external site.
- International Energy Agency. (2024, January). “Energy 2024.” <https://www.iea.org/reports/electricity-2024>Links to an external site.
- Fuchs, C. (2015). “Social Media’s International Division of Digital Labour.” In *Culture and Economy in the Age of Social Media* (1st ed., pp. 207–245). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315733517-9>Links to an external site.
- Li, P., Yang, J., Islam, M.A., & Ren, S. (2025). “Making AI Less ‘Thirsty’: Uncovering and Addressing the Secret Water Footprint of AI Models.” <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2304.03271#:~:text=Even%20considering%20the%20lower%20estimate,half%20of%20the%20United%20Kingdom.>Links to an external site.
- Rogers, R. (2024, July 11). “AI’s energy demands are out of control. Welcome to the Internet’s hyper-consumption era.” *Wired*. <https://www.wired.com/story/ai-energy-demands-water-impact-internet-hyper-consumption-era/>Links to an external site.
- Wang, P., Zhang, L.-Y., Tzachor, A., & Chen, W.-Q. (2024). “E-waste challenges of generative artificial intelligence. *Nature Computational Science*, 4(11), 818–823. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43588-024-00712-6>Links to an external site.