

Occupational Safety and Health

Semester: **Fall 2026**
Course and section number: **37:575:338:90**
Course title: **Occupational Safety and Health**
Location, modality: **Online, non-synchronous**
Instructor: **Matthew Fischer-Daly, Lecturer**
Contact information: **Primary, Canvas; Secondary,**
matthew.fischer-daly@rutgers.edu
Office hours information: **Online, via Zoom by appointment**
Materials: **All readings & media provided via Canvas**

Course Description

Work impacts our health, physically and psychologically. In this course, students will explore health and safety issues in a variety of types of work and contexts, including the roles of workers, trade unions, employers, and governments. Students will analyze the economic, political, and social forces that have contributed to the occupational safety and health problems, interventions, and outcomes to date. Students' analysis will encompass the interactions of social hierarchies—including those based on class, gender, race, and nationality—with occupational safety and health practices and outcomes.

Learning Objectives

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department

1. Apply employment relations concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal II) Assessment: quizzes

School of Management and Labor Relations

2. Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (Goal V) Assessment: discussions
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI) Assessment: discussions

Course Assignments & Grading

All assignments are submitted via Canvas.

Rutgers grade scale: A=90-100; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

Assignments	Points	Percent of course total	Points that can be accrued
Week 1 assignments: academic integrity quiz, Meet Your Classmates Discussion, survey	50, 40, & 10 points	10	100
Journal entries	5 @ 30 points each	15	150
Online discussions	3 @ 150 points each	45	450
Exams	2 @ 150 points each	30	300
Total		100%	1,000 points

Points are indicative and are translated into grades for the course using judgement, including comparisons between students this semester and with those who completed the course previously. Additionally, grades can increase or decrease (e.g., between B and B+) based on exceptional (positive or negative) class participation and performance. Grading rubrics for each assignment are available on Canvas. **Extra credit is not offered in this course.**

Due dates of assignments are your responsibility as a student. Late submissions of any assignment in this course will be assessed a point penalty of 10-50%, depending on late-submission history. Late submissions of more than one week will not be accepted. *Contact me as soon as possible with any emergencies that affect your ability to submit assignments on time.*

Journal entries – 5 @ 50 points each

Five (5) journal entries are required and account for 15% of your point total. For each journal entry, instructions are on Canvas and provide a prompt to which you are expected to respond. Your responses should relate to the course content and may address work safety and health news events and/or work-related experiences. Journal entries will only be read by the instructor. Journal instructions are posted periodically throughout the semester; however, you may submit your journal entries any time before the end of Thursday, December 10, 2026.

Online discussions – 3 @150 points each

Each of the three (3) assigned online discussions consists of one (1) initial post and a minimum of three (3) responses to your classmates' initial posts. Initial posts are short essay responses to prompts provided with the instructions for each discussion. Responses to your classmates are to communicate questions, insights, and feedback to contribute to collective learning about the topic. The Online Discussion Guidelines document provides an in-depth explanation of the online discussion assignments. Read and follow the Online Discussion Guidelines and instructions for each discussion carefully. Each discussion has two due dates: one for initial posts and the second for responses to your classmates. **Late submissions of up to one week will be assessed a point penalty of 10-50%, depending on late submission history. Late submissions of more than one week will not be accepted.**

Exams: 2 @ 100 points each

Timed exams of 90 minutes include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. Exams are noncumulative and must be taken online in the Canvas course site during the open period. Collaboration is not allowed, but the exams are 'open book'.

Class participation

This is an interactive class; students need to stay on track to successfully complete the course. Students are responsible for managing their time and participating in class every week throughout the semester. Contact the instructor via Canvas Inbox or email (matthew.fischer-daly@rutgers.edu) as soon as emergencies or personal situations that interfere with class participation arise.

Contributing to the learning environment

Students are expected to contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters mutual respect, courtesy, and civility by adherence to class norms for discussion, debate, and all interpersonal interactions. Expressions of hatred, contempt, or disrespect based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

Course communications

Students are responsible for accessing course materials on Canvas and participating as instructed. Rutgers email and Canvas should be checked frequently throughout the semester for announcements and/or updates about this course. Students are responsible for promptly replying to my emails that request a response. **Please inform me of emergencies or issues that are likely to affect your participation or performance in the course. The sooner I know, the easier it will be to develop a plan to ensure that you succeed in the course.**

Class cancellations

This is a non-synchronous, online course; therefore, most Rutgers class cancellations will not affect class participation and activities.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to your learning, to the mission of Rutgers, and to membership in the Rutgers community. It means honesty and is a fundamental value that supports trust among students and between students and teachers. Academic integrity is also a shared value; students, teachers, and administrators all play vital roles in promoting and ensuring it. In contrast, academic dishonesty violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and degrades scholarship. Please read the full Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and integrity

Clear, transparent identification of uses of artificial intelligence (AI) is part of academic integrity and essential to your development of critical thinking skills. Use of AI in this class must comply with the “Using AI in this class” guidelines posted on the first week’s module on Canvas. Failure to identify use of AI in your assignments amounts to plagiarism and will be treated accordingly.

From the Office of Disability Services

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 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 as possible in your courses. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Rutgers’ Resources for 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 <https://success.rutgers.edu/>. Nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

Technical Assistance

Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology

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

Call: 833-OIT-HELP

Course schedule

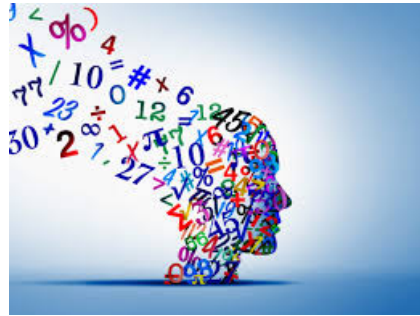
Week	Topic	Assignments
1 9/1- 9/6	Orientation to the Course and Introductions: Tasks— 1. Review the syllabus & the academic integrity & AI policies 2. Take the “Academic Integrity, AI, & Syllabus Quiz” 3. Complete the “Survey for your Professor 4. Participate in the “Meet your Classmates” discussion 5. Review the “Know Your Sources” page 6. Check out the “Meet your professor” page	Week 1 assignments due 9/13
2 9/7 – 9/13	Work safety and health historical survey: Industrial Revolution and the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Readings: 1. The Woman Behind the New Deal 2. Walsh-Healey and FLSA document Videos: 1. Can’t Take No More 2. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire 3. Cotton Mill Girl 4. Frances Perkins	<i>Case: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire</i> Discussion #1 – initial post due 9/20
3 9/14 – 9/20	Occupational Safety and Health Concepts Readings: 1. Occupational health and safety and the precautionary principle collective bargaining language 2. Cancer in auto factories: An interview with Mike Bennett 3. Occupational Safety and Health Equity Impacts of Artificial Intelligence: A Scoping Review. Videos: 1. What is industrial/occupational hygiene? 2. The Scientific Method Made Easy 3. The Ghost Map 4. Is it a hazard or risk? 5. Hazard, Risk & Safety: Understanding Risk Assessment, Management and Perception 6. Understanding Permissible Exposure Limits	<i>Case: On the trail of outbreaks: cholera in London, 1830s – 1960s</i> Continue Discussion #1 – initial post due 9/20; replies due 9/27 Journal #1

4 9/21 – 9/27	The Occupational Safety and Health Act and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Readings: 1. “Randomized Government Safety Inspections Reduce Worker Injuries with No Detectable Job Loss” (Levine, Toffel, & Johnson, 2012) Videos: 1. <i>A Dangerous Business Revisited</i> 2. <i>Lock-Out/Tag-Out</i>	<i>Case: Potential of Enforcement: Change at McWane Foundry</i> Continue Discussion #1 – make replies, due 9/27
5 9/28 – 10/4	Political Economy of Worker Safety and Health Readings: 1. Show Me the Money: Cost-Benefit Analysis in the Work Environment 2. The Dark Lord of Coal Country 3. Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs Across the U.S. Videos: 1. The Run Coal Memos	<i>Cases: Upper Big Branch Mine & Child labor in contemporary USA</i> Discussion #2 – initial post due 10/11 Journal #2
6 10/5 – 10/11	Right-to-Know and Workers Compensation in the United States Readings: 1. The demolition of workers’ comp 2. A Town Plagued by Water Videos: 1. Workers’ Compensation History 2. 20,000 Cuts a Day 3. A Town Fights Back: The Toms River Story	<i>Cases: Poultry processing and Water contamination</i> Continue Discussion #2 – initial post due 10/11, replies due 10/18 Journal #3
7 10/12 – 10/18	International Occupational Health and Safety Standards: The International Labour Organization Readings: 1. Supervisory and Review Procedures: International Labour Organization (ILO) 2. Harnessing Public Institutions for Labour Law Enforcement: Embedding a Transnational Labour Inspectorate within the ILO Videos: 1. ILO's work on safety and health at work	Continue Discussion #2 – replies due 10/18
8 10/19 – 10/25	Evaluation week	Exam #1 – opens 10/19 and closes 10/25

9 10/26 – 11/1	Corporate Accountability for Occupational Safety and Health in the International Economy Readings: 1. When does a worker's death become a murder? 2. Bhopal: 40 Years of Injustice (Amnesty International) 3. Banana Workers Made Sterile from Pesticide Sue Dow in France (Beyond Pesticides) Videos: 4. Dying for Gold (https://www.dyingforgold.com/) (Note: access requires logging into Rutgers' library)	<i>Cases: Union Carbide's Bhopal disaster, banana industry, gold, and apparel</i> Discussion #3 – initial post due 11/15 Journal #4
10 11/2 – 11/8	Corporate Accountability for OSH & Gender Based Violence and Harassment in Global Supply Chains Readings: 1. Dindigul Agreement to Eliminate Gender-based Violence and Harassment: Year 2 Progress Report (Cornell Global Labor Institute) 2. Nothing But Strength: Domestic Workers Organize Against Gender-Based Violence (International Domestic Workers Federation) Videos: 1. Talks met Kalpona Akter: power & OSH in Bangladesh (https://youtu.be/HiJY2Lly-7M?si=E2leoxviWDIGKE-e)	<i>Case: Dindigul agreement to End Gender-Based Violence and Harassment</i> Continue Discussion #3 – initial post due 11/15
11 11/9 – 11/15	Occupational safety & health in waste management Reading: Revolution in the Garbage Dump: The Political and Economic Foundations of the Colombian Recycler Movement Video: <i>Plastic China</i> Podcast: <i>I AM STORY Podcast</i>	Case: waste work in three contexts Continue Discussion #3 – initial post due 11/15, replies due 11/22 Journal #5
12 11/16 – 11/22	Climate Change and Occupational Safety & Health Readings: 1. Hot weather and heat extremes: health risks (Ebi et al.) 2. Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate (ILO)	<i>Case: heat & OSH</i> Continue discussion #3 –replies due 11/22

	3. How work and workers can influence heat action plans: Experts from Harvard Law School share lessons from international and interdisciplinary perspectives on heat adaptation and the climate crisis Videos: 1. <i>Climate 101 with Bill Nye</i> 2. <i>Key findings on climate change and occupational safety and health</i> by the ILO 3. <i>Did we just witness the LIMIT of hurricane power?</i> by Maiya May 4. <i>Mystery kidney disease kills Nicaraguans</i> by Al Jazeera 5. <i>Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability</i> by the IPCC 6. <i>Green Locomotive Report Release Press Conference April 25, 2023</i>, by UE	
13 11/23- 11/25, 11/30- 12/2	Protecting Workers' Psychological Health & Safety Readings: 1. The health hazards of an uncertain job schedule, by Taylor McNeil 2. The Mayday call: How one death at sea transformed a fishing fleet, by C.J. Chives Podcasts: 1. Mental health issues ripple through the federal workforce with firings, Katia Riddle 2. Solidarity, with Astra Taylor & Leah Hunt-Hendrix	Case: Stress at work
14 12/3 – 12/9	Evaluation week	Exam #2 opens 12/3 and closes 12/9 Complete course evaluation (10 bonus points) Journal – all (5) journal entries must be submitted by 12/9

Using AI in this class



Can I use an AI tool on assignments for this class?

Only if you use it in compliance with the requirements for using AI in this course.

Requirements for using AI on assignments for this course

If you use an AI generative tool (ChatGPT, Anthropic Claude, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, etc.) for an assignment in this course, you are **required** to include the following at the end of your submission:

- **Where in your submission did you use the AI generated content?** In the text of your submission, include a parenthetical citation that includes the name of the AI tool and date that you used it, e.g. (Claude 10/1/2026).
- **What AI tool did you use and what did you use it for?** At the end of the text of your submission, include a complete citation starting with the name of the AI tool and date that you used it, followed by the prompt that you used, e.g. Claude. 10/1/2026. Prompt: "provide short descriptions of New Jersey labor policies that impact college students".
- **What prompt did you use and when?** Yes, in your complete citation, include the prompt that you input to the AI tool after the name of the AI tool and date that you used it, e.g.: Claude. 10/1/2026. Prompt: "provide short descriptions of New Jersey labor policies that impact college students".
- **How do you know the AI generated material is accurate? Provide a citation to a [credible source](https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/420242/pages/know-your-)** (<https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/420242/pages/know-your->



sources that supports the validity of the AI generated content that you use - don't rely on any AI tool to get this right! Two steps

- In the text of your submission, include a parenthetical citation with the author and date of publication of the source that supports the AI-generated content, e.g. (Claude 10/1/26; New Jersey Office of the Attorney General 2023).
- At the end of the text of your submission, in your list of complete citations, include the complete citation for the supporting source, e.g.: "New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, Division of Civil Rights. 2026. "New Jersey Law Against Discrimination." Retrieved on 7/11/2026 from:

<https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/division-on-civil-rights-home/know-the-law/njlad/> ⇨ [\(https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/division-on-civil-rights-home/know-the-law/njlad/\)](https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/division-on-civil-rights-home/know-the-law/njlad/)."

Do not submit a post that uses AI in unethical ways. Plagiarism, misrepresenting abilities, outsourcing this assignment to an AI tool, and improper reference checking will result point deductions, an assignment being returned for revision, failing the assignment, or any of the sanctions established in the [Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy](https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf) ⇨ <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf>
 https://docreader.readspeaker.com/docreader/?cid=8909&lang=en_us&url=https%3A%2F%2Facademicintegrity.rutgers.edu%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpdfs%2Fcurrent.pdf .

You must have properly cited sources for all content that is not exclusively your own. You are responsible for the accuracy of citations. Here is a quick guide for the ethical use of AI:



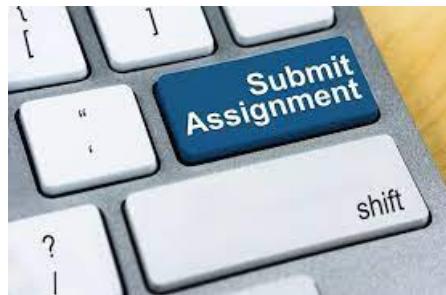
What is generative AI?

Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence technology that broadly describes machine learning systems capable of generating text, images, code or other types of content, often in response to a prompt entered by a user.

Generative AI models are increasingly being incorporated into online tools that allow users to type questions or instructions into an input field, upon which the AI model will generate a response. ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini are examples of generative AI tools.

Generative AI models have a "black box" problem. A black box is a metaphor for something with observable inputs and outputs and unobservable inner workings. The process by which inputs are transformed into outputs is unknown to observers. The following short interview with Professor Rawashdeh explains the black box problem of AI:

Blouin, Lou. (6 March 2023). "[AI's mysterious 'black box' problem, explained.](https://umdearborn.edu/news/ais-mysterious-black-box-problem-explained)" *University of Michigan-Dearborn News*. Last accessed 7/11/2026 from <https://umdearborn.edu/news/ais-mysterious-black-box-problem-explained>.



Why should I reference AI-produced content?

References tell your reader where your information came from and how you used it in your work. If you use content created by a tool like Claude, including a reference to it - as you would with any other source - is the responsible and *required* thing to do. If you use ChatGPT or a similar tool to help write or structure your submission, even if you do not otherwise quote or paraphrase its content, you should acknowledge your use of it. This provides transparency to your reader. It is the ethical thing to do and will keep you in compliance with requirements for this class.

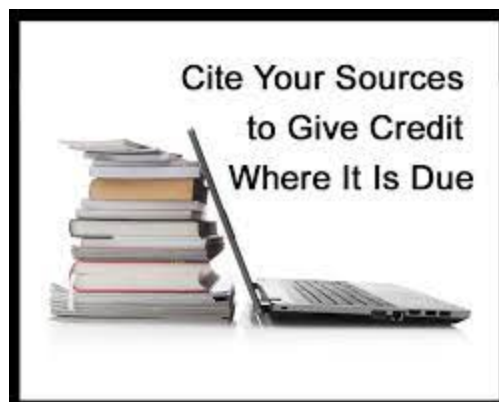


Can I ask AI models to cite their sources?

You cannot make statements and expect others to believe you without evidence and data to back up your words. However, AI tools are not reliably citing sources. They will respond to you and give you an answer, but you don't know where they got their answers from. AI tools will always give you a response; the problem is that the response may be inaccurate or false. AI systems have been found to produce fabricated information, a phenomenon known as '[AI hallucination](https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/addressing-ai-hallucinations-and-bias/)' .

[\(https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/addressing-ai-hallucinations-and-bias/\)](https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/addressing-ai-hallucinations-and-bias/).

I have high expectations that university students will properly cite their work. Because AI tools are not reliably citing sources, the onus is on you, as a student, to do so. All content in an assignment that is not personally known to you or that is not a product of your own research should be cited. If you make an assertion that isn't cited and I doubt that is your own, I will require that you provide a citation. Missing or incorrect citations that are not rectified will result in a grade of '0' on the assignment.



Cite your sources for your work in this course

We all know that scientific studies are littered with footnotes and references at the end of the paper. Otherwise we wouldn't know if it was true or not.

Use the Rutgers Library guide to citation styles to ensure proper citation:

<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/research-support/tutorials-information-literacy-and-critical-thinking/citation-styles> → (<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/research-support/tutorials-information-literacy-and-critical-thinking/citation-styles>)

The same could be said for rigorous media outlets; they quote their sources or input them as hyperlinks.

In this class, presenting generative AI software content as your own is a violation of academic integrity. If you use generative AI in your work, you must indicate that you have done so. Not all plagiarism is intentional - carefully and correctly reference your use of AI.



When in doubt, ask your instructor.

