

Semester:	Spring 2021
Course Number and Sections:	37:575:338:90/91/93
Course Title:	Occupational Safety and Health
Course Day and Time:	Wednesday-Tuesday
Location:	Online - non-synchronous
Course Instructor:	Ashley Conway, Assistant Teaching Professor
Contact Information:	Primary - use Canvas; secondary - aconway@smlr.rutgers.edu
Office Hours and Location:	Online by appointment or during virtual office hours
Text:	No required text

What to expect – a note to students

The Spring 2020 semester at Rutgers will be different from others because of the coronavirus pandemic. My goal is that this course will not add to the burden of uncertainty that you may already be experiencing. As you will learn this course, in occupational safety and health, accommodating changing conditions is key to successfully weathering a crisis, therefore, clear expectations along with flexibility are built into this course. I am looking forward a productive and interesting semester with no surprises and a minimum of stress. – Prof. Conway

Course Description

Work has an impact on physical and psychological health. In this course, we will explore the health and safety issues of various types of work. You will gain an understanding of the current state of occupational safety and health in the United States and globally including the enforcement of laws regulating occupational safety and health and the roles of workers, unions, and employers. The historical, economic, and cultural forces contributing to and inhibiting solutions to occupational safety and health problems will be analyzed.

This is a fully online course; synchronous sessions are not required. *Optional interactive, synchronous sessions will be available periodically during the semester – topics and dates to be determined.*

Learning Objectives

The student is able to:

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department

- 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

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

Course Grading

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

Activity	Number	Percent of course total	Points that can be accrued
Week 1 intro tasks		5%	50 points
Online discussions	4 @ 150 points each	60%	600 points
Exams	2 @150 points	30%	300 points
Course debrief		5%	50 points
Total			1,000 points

Points have no absolute meaning, and in the end, I will use my judgment in translating points into grades for the course. Implicitly, that means that grades are “curved” in the sense that they are comparative. The comparison is both to other students taking the class this semester and with those who took the class in the past. In addition, I may increase or decrease a grade for exceptional (positive or negative) class participation and performance – ordinarily by one level (e.g., between B and B+). Grading rubrics for each assignment are available on Canvas. Extra credit is not offered in this course.

Online discussions – 4 @150 points each

In the first week of each online discussion students will prepare and submit an initial post. In the second week of the discussion, students will read group members’ posts and communicate their questions, insights, analysis, and conclusions in a threaded discussion. Each discussion will require preparing a brief topic or issue presentation; writing an essay or brief critique; or other task to share with group members. The *Online Group Discussion Guidelines and Grading Rubric* document provides an in-depth explanation of how to successfully participate in the online discussions and how the discussions are evaluated. Late submissions without an approved excuse will be assessed a point penalty.

Exams – 2 @ 150 points

Timed exams include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer questions and essay questions. Exams are noncumulative and must be taken online on the Canvas course site during the open period. Collaboration on the exams is not allowed, but they are open book. Make-up exams without an approved excuse and taken within one week of the due date will be assessed a 25% point penalty.

Class participation

This is an interactive class; students need to stay on track to effectively interact with others in the class. **I should be informed of personal situations or emergencies that interfere with class participation. As soon as a problem arises, email me.** An online class provides welcome schedule flexibility, but students are responsible for managing their time and participating in class every week.

Contributing to the learning environment

Students are expected to contribute to creating an environment that fosters mutual respect, courtesy, and civility by adherence to class norms for discussion, debate, and all interpersonal interaction. Expressions of hatred or contempt based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or psychological disability will not be over-looked nor will they be tolerated.

Course communications

Students are responsible for accessing course materials on Canvas and participating as instructed. Rutgers email and Canvas email should be checked frequently throughout the study week for class announcements or updates. Automatic email and announcement notifications are available on Canvas.

Students are responsible for promptly replying to emails that request a response. **Inform me of emergencies or problems that are likely to affect participation or performance in the course. The sooner I am informed, the easier it will be to develop a plan to keep up with the course work.**

Class cancellations

Because this is a fully online course, most Rutgers class cancellations will not affect virtual class attendance and participation.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is vital to the mission of Rutgers, to education at Rutgers and membership in the Rutgers community. It is a core value that supports trust among students, and between students and teachers. Academic integrity is also a shared value; administration, faculty, and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing, and nurturing it.

Academic dishonesty is not an individual act that affects only the students involved. It violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and is an offense against scholarship. For this reason, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with harshly.

Honesty matters. As a shared value, administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it. See the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

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's

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 in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

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

Class Outline by Week

The syllabus is subject to change – always refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date information

Week	Topic	Assignments
1 1/20-1/26	Orientation to the Course and Introductions	Week 1 assignments – due 2/2
2 1/27-2/2	Work Safety and Health History	<i>Case: Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire</i> Complete Week 1 tasks – due 2/2

3 2/3-2/9	Occupational Safety and Health Concepts	<i>Case: Change at McWane foundries</i> Discussion #1 – initial post due 2/9
4 2/10-2/16	Work Safety and Health Policy, Politics, and Power	<i>Case- “Popcorn workers’ lung” and the regulation of diacetyl</i> Continue Discussion #1 – closes 2/16
5 2/17-2/23	The Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	<i>Case – Worker morbidity and mortality in the meatpacking industry</i> Discussion #2 – initial post due 2/23
6 2/24-3/2	The Economics of Worker Safety and Health	<i>Case – economics and worker safety and health in the gig economy</i> Continue Discussion #2 – closes 3/2
7 3/3-3/9	Health and safety right-to-know and workers’ compensation	<i>Case – Workers’ right-to-know in public health emergencies</i> Exam #1 – opens Sunday, 7/7, 12:00 AM and closes Monday, 7/8, 11:59 PM
8 3/10-3/12 and 3/22, 3/23	COVID prevention at work, school, and home	<i>When “inside the factory becomes outside the factory”</i> No assignment
Spring Recess 3/12-3/21		
9 3/24-3/30	Safety and Health in the Entertainment Industry	<i>Case: The NFL and traumatic brain injuries</i> Discussion #3 – initial post due 3/30
10 3/31-4/6	Protecting Workers’ Psychological Health	<i>Case: Post-traumatic stress disorder in health care workers</i> Continue Discussion #3 – closes 4/6
11 4/7-4/13	Work, the Environment, and Climate Change	<i>Case- Fighting the California wildfires</i> Discussion #4 – initial post due 4/13

12 4/14-4/20	Global Work Health and Safety	<i>Case – The cost of an iPhone</i> Discussion #4 closes 4/20
13 4/21-4/27	Ethics in Work Health and Safety	<i>Case: Ethical decision making in the pandemic – workers, vaccines, and duty to serve</i> Exam #2 – opens Wednesday, 4/25, 12:00 AM and closes Thursday, 4/27 at 11:59 PM
14 4/28-5/3	Evaluation Week	Course debrief – due 5/3 Complete the SIRS survey

Readings

Note: This reading list will change. It is included in the syllabus to give students an idea of the type of readings that will be assigned.

Adam-Poupart, A *et al.* (2013) The impact of climate change on occupational safety and health. *Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST)*.

Berkowitz, Deborah. (10 August 2020). Which states and cities have adopted comprehensive COVID-19 worker protections? *National Employment Law Project*.

Bingham, E. (1983). Right to Know movement. *American Journal of Public Health*, 73(11): 1302.

Carroll, Aaron E. (28 August 2020). When it comes to COVID-19, most of us have risk exactly backward. *New York Times*.

Davis, Thomas. C. *et al.* (27 May 2020). Can employees refuse to return to work because of COVID-19? *National Law Review*, Vol. X, Number 265.

Dorman, P. (2000). The economics of safety, health, and well-being at work: An overview. *InFocus Program on SafeWork, International Labour Organization*.

Editorial board. (23 May 2020). The plight of essential workers in the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet*, Vol. 395.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. (2001). *Corporate responsibility and safety and Health at work*.

Eyres, H. (7 April 2020) How coronavirus has led to the return of the precautionary principle. *News Statesman*.

- Grabell, M. & Berkes, H. (2015). The demolition of Workers Comp. *ProPublica and National Public Radio*.
- International Labor Organization. (2012) The COSH Movement and Right to Know. *Encyclopedia of Occupational Safety and Health, 4th Ed.* (59).
- Kindy, Kimberly. (9 September 2020). More than 200 meat plant workers in the U.S. have died of COVID-19. Federal regulators issue two modest fines. *Washington Post*.
- Labaton, S. (2007, April 25). OSHA leaves worker safety in the hands of industry. *The New York Times*.
- Leibenluft, J. and Olinsky, B. (2020). Protecting worker safety and economic security during the COVID-19 reopening. *Center for American Progress*.
- Levenstein, C. & Dunn, M. (2005). Show me the money: Cost-benefit analysis in the work environment. *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Safety and Health Policy*, 15 (3).
- Loewenson, R. (2001). Globalization and occupational health: A perspective from Southern Africa. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 79(9).
- McOwer, Joel. (March 16, 2020). COVID-19 and climate change: A healthy dose of reality. *Green Biz*.
- Michaels, D. & Monforton, C. (2005) Manufacturing uncertainty: Contested science and the protection of the public's health and environment. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 95, No. S1, pp. S39-S48.
- Michaels, David. (2 March 2020). What Trump could do right now to keep workers safe from the Coronavirus. *The Atlantic*.
- Mock, Jillian. (June 2020). Psychological trauma is the next crisis for coronavirus health workers. *Scientific American*.
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. (1997) Protect your family: Reduce contamination at home. Publication #97-125.
- New Jersey Work Environment Council (2008). Still at risk: Protecting New Jersey jobs, families, and hometowns from toxic chemical disaster.
- Occupational exposure limits – One tool in a risk assessment. University of Wisconsin - Madison, Office of Chemical Safety.
- O'Donnell, Jimmy. (3 September 2020). Essential workers during COVID-19: At risk and lacking union representation. *Brookings Institute*.
- Pasani, Joseph & Olsen, Alexandria. (20 July 2020). As companies keep workers in the dark on COVID-19 cases, some employees are turning into amateur sleuths to track virus cases. *Chicago Tribune*.
- Rosner, D. (2000). When does a worker's death become a murder? *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(4): 535-540.

Scheiber, N. (2020) Protecting workers from coronavirus: OSHA leaves it to employers. *New York Times*.

Silverstein, M. (2008) Getting home safe and sound: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration at 38. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98, 3, 416-423.

Stix, Gary. (10 September 2020) Emotional labor is a store clerk confronting a maskless customer. *Scientific American*.

Swanson, A. and Pappoport, A. (2020) Businesses want virus legal protection. Workers are worried. *New York Times*.

Trumbull, Mark. (March 9, 2020). Why COVID-19 is likely to change globalization, not to reverse it. *Christian Science Monitor*.

Westfall, M. 2009. Cancer in auto factories: An interview with Mike Bennett. *Cornell University ILR School*.