Working Woman in American Society

Instructor: Amy Tracy Wells
Email: Please use Canvas email
Calls/Texts/Emails will be returned within 24 hours.

In this course we will examine a specific segment of Americans – working women. We will explore ideas/concepts such as:

1. what do we mean by paid and unpaid work;
2. what is meant by gender, equality and, conversely, inequality;
3. what are the historical and current trends (quantitative data) in work;
4. what is the contextual history of women’s work by industry and profession; how have women’s experiences varied by class and race; and
5. through worker experiences, what issues and reforms affect women’s work.

Assignments/grades will include participation in Discussion Forums, Brief Response Papers, an Autoethnographic paper, Exams and an Extra Credit Brief Response Paper.

Core Learning 21L and SCL Objectives addressed and to be assessed through short items on exams:

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world. (Goal a)
- Analyze contemporary issues of social justice. (Goal d)
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (Goal m)
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations using appropriate assumptions methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal n)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1)
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2)
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experience of work. (Goal 6)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

Instructor:

- Discuss differences between employment law and policy and workers lived experience.
Unit I. Introduction

Class 1: Introduction to Working Women in American Society
Become familiar with the web site that has the on-line course. This is called the “course shell.”

Assignment:
1. Learn about the instructor and introduce yourself to other students by writing an on-line introduction as well as read the introduction to this course.
4. Read, sign and upload a copy of “How to get an A Writing an Essay” to the Dropbox.

Unit II. Paid & unpaid work

Class 2: What is work?

Assignment:
Brief Response Paper: In the context of this course, how do people and organizations define work? What are the ramifications of this definition for women?

Unit III. Gender equality & inequality

Class 3: Gender

Assignment:
Discussion Forum: Answer either one of the two following questions:
1. Identify and discuss 3-4 ways in which the concept of gender influences everyday life such as education, training, work, health care, wealth etc.
2. How do gender stereotypes affect your own thinking?

Class 4: Equality & inequality

Assignment:
Exam #1 (Covers Classes 1 through 4)
Unit IV. Now & Then

Class 5: Pay
Assignment: [No assignment this week]

Unit V. The history of women’s work (Paid & unpaid, by historical period, by occupation, by education and by union)

Class 6: Background
Assignment:
Discussion Forum: Answer either one of the two following questions:
1. What is the myth of womanhood and what has been the reality or the trends?
2. Many believe that the issues we’ve covered to-date are now historical while others believe many of the issues are ongoing. What do you believe and why?
Extra Credit Brief Response Paper: Answer either one of the two following questions:
1. From your own perspective and in your own words, what is the importance of learning the history of working women in the U.S.?
2. Why or why not are the issues covered to-date, issues for males as well as females?

Class 7: 1900-1970
Assignment:
1. Autoethnographic paper – draft due

Class 8: 1970 to present

¹ Available via Amazon & on DVD via the Rutgers Libraries
2. Landsburg, S.E. (2005). *The Price of Motherhood Ready to have a baby? You'll earn 10 percent more if you wait a year*. Slate. (1 pp.)

Assignment:
**Exam # 2:** (Covers Classes 5 through 8)

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**Unit VI. Issues & reforms affecting women’s work**

**Class 9: Wages**

Assignment:
[No assignment this week]

**Class 10: Sex-segregation & Tokenism**

Assignment:
**Discussion Forum:** Answer either one of the following:
1. Define and discuss the significance of institutional constraints?
2. Is sex segregation diminishing, why or why not?

**Class 11: Sexual Harassment & Assault**

Assignment: Respond to either one of the two following questions

**Brief Response Paper:**
1. What are the implications if women do not feel completely safe using the internet? Identify and discuss 2-3 issues general issues (e.g., workplace, economic, career etc.) or those professional issues faced by female law makers, actors, journalists, athletes, etc.
2. What is the status of sexual harassment in the workplace-are the number of incidences rising, decreasing or can we even know?

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2 Available online via the Rutgers Libraries
3 Available online via the Rutgers Libraries
Class 12: Race, Nationality & Work

Assignment:
Discussion Forum: This forum has two parts:
Complete and submit Worksheet *Work, Life & Balance* and then share specifics and/or observations in the DF.

Class 13: Gendered roles
3. Peterson, A.H. (2020) "Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women." Culture Study. (10 pgs.)

Assignment:
[No assignment this week]

Class 14: Collective Action

Assignment:
Autoethnographic paper due

Class 15: Final Assignments
Assignment:
Exam #3 (Covers Classes 9 through 14)
GRADING CRITERIA AND COMPONENTS

Grading Criteria:

A  90-100%
B+ 85-90%
B  80-85%
C+ 75-80%
C  70-75%
D  60-69%
F  59% and below

Grades are based on the following components:

#1 – Discussion Forum: Classes 3, 6, 10 & 12
  20% of the grade
#2 – Brief Reading Response: Classes 2 & 11 (Two-page paper)
  20% of the grade
#3 – Autoethnographic Paper: Classes 7 & 14 (Four-page paper)
  30% of the grade
#4 - Exams: Classes 4, 8 & 15 (Exams are True/False, Multiple Choice, and Brief Answer Questions)
  30% of the grade
#5 – Extra Credit Brief Reading Response: Class 6
  Can be used to increase lowest test score by up to 15 points (=> 90 then 15 points,
     =>80 then 10 points & =>70 then 5 points)

Each Discussion Forum is worth 5% of one's grade, which is based on content and timing. That is, readings etc. as well as instructor and other student posts will provide the basis of content and all postings/responses should be provided during the week within which the topic/issues are examined.

Brief Response Papers are worth 10% of one's grade, which is based on content, persuasiveness and readability. Papers must be double-spaced throughout and 2 pages in length, each numbered with standard one-inch margins and 12-pitch font. In addition, papers must include a "References" section of sources cited.

The Autoethnographic Paper is worth 30% of one's grade. For more specifics, see "Autoethnographic Paper" below.

Each Exam is worth 10% of one's grade and is composed of true/false, multiple choice and brief answer questions. Content will cover the classes specified (i.e., tests are not cumulative). Exams must be completed in 1.5 hours. Though you may consult class materials to complete an exam, you may not consult with another student in any way.

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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.

Autoethnographic Paper
Autoethnography is a form of narrative writing that views the author's own experience as a
topic of investigation in its own right. (For more on Autoethnography, see
Autoethnography: An Overview.) Key to this experience and hence the paper is clarifying
how culture (e.g., the sexual division of labor, gendered use of communication styles & tools,
gendered attributes of leadership, equation between productivity and hours worked, etc.)
shapes norms & events according to the themes we've explored in this course. This paper
will explore
1. your current and/or past working life – compensated and/or non-compensated –
   and/or
2. work/family balance, an issue that affects men and women,
using data you collect (e.g., quotes, pay rates, social security income, numbers of employees,
length of employment, etc.) and will include a thesis, select references and a bibliography.
That is, while the paper will focus on you, it is important to frame or contrast your
experience using class materials including readings, videos, audio and/or lectures. You will
produce and provide a draft for review along the way. Papers must be double-spaced
throughout and 4 pages in length, each numbered with standard one-inch margins and 12-
pitch font. Late papers may be downgraded. Note: data does NOT include academic references,
but is from your experience.

Examples of autoethnographic writing:

- Papers from previous students are available in Files -> Autoethnography Examples in Canvas