Course Title: Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations

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

Course Description
This course will introduce the Labor Studies and Employment Relations major. Our primary focus will be work, workers, and the organizations and institutions that shape and define the employment relationship. We will examine how class, race, ethnicity, and gender impact work; the role of corporations; the role of unions and worker centers; the global economy; and the future of work.

Students must complete either 100 or 110 for majors or minors offered by the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department. Students may count both toward their degree but may not count both toward either majors or minors. This course counts toward the Core Curriculum SCL requirement (see below).

Required Text

Course Learning Objectives
By the end of the course students will:
• Know and understand fundamental social science, historical, and legal perspectives, theories, and concepts relating to work, employment relations, and worker movements.
• Know the fundamental laws/institutions governing employment relations including government, labor unions, corporations, and other key institutions.
• Understand how the global economy impacts work and employment relations.
• Understand how diverse backgrounds and cultures shape experiences and perspectives on the world of work; and
• Develop critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

School Learning Objectives and Assessment
School of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum objectives met by this course: SCL (social analysis)
• Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (Goal m). Assessment: Quizzes
• Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal n). Assessment: discussions

School of Management and Labor Relations curriculum objectives met by this course:
• Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context
of a particular work situation. (Goal IV) Assessment: discussions

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI) Assessment: discussions

**Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department objectives met by this course:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1) Assessment: quizzes

- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2) 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent of course total</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction assignments</td>
<td>Discussion, survey, quiz</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online discussions</td>
<td>3 @ 150 points each</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper and 1 peer review</td>
<td>1 @ 150 points</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>10 @ 15 points each</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>4 @ 50 points each</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,000 points</strong></td>
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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 by one level (for example, between a B and B+). Grading rubrics for assignments and discussions are available on in Canvas. Extra credit is not offered in this course.

**Online discussions – 3 @ 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. Discussions may require preparing a brief presentation; writing an essay or 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 10-50% point penalty depending on lateness and previous late submissions.
Paper and peer review – 1 @ 150 points
Write a paper about a labor policy that has had an impact on you and your family. Read the paper of a peer and provide feedback.

Quizzes – 4 @ 50 points each
Timed quizzes of 60 minutes include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer questions, and essay questions. Quizzes are not cumulative. Quizzes must be taken online on the Canvas course site during the open period. Collaboration on quizzes is not allowed, but they are ‘open book.’ Each quiz will open at the beginning of the week of study (Wednesdays) and close one week later (Tuesdays). Make-up quizzes without an approved excuse and taken within one week of the due date will be assessed a 25% penalty.

Journal/Learning Log -10 entries @ 15 points each
Ten entries will be submitted to an online journal about the week’s course content, work-related events in the news, or personal course/work-related reflections. These entries are worth 15 points each. Your submissions are shared only with me. Making the entries should not take much time, but journaling will take some attention and some thought.

Class participation
This is an interactive class; students need to keep up with the course work to effectively interact with others in the class. I should be informed of personal situations or emergencies that interfere with your participation. As soon as a problem arises, email me using Canvas email. 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 a learning 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. Activating the automatic email and announcement notifications in Canvas is highly recommended. Students are responsible for promptly replying to emails that request a response. Inform me of emergencies or problems that will impact your participation or performance in the course. The sooner I am informed, the easier it will be to develop a plan for you 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.

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 success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

Technical Assistance
Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology
Email: https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support
Call: 833-OIT-HELP
Class Outline by Week

*10 journal entry assignments will be added to the schedule – weeks TBD*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation to the course and introductions</td>
<td>Week 1 tasks due on 1/31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work and our lives</td>
<td>Week 1 assignments: Discussion #1 – initial post due 1/31</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Week 1 tasks due - 1/31</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corporations and work in the new economy</td>
<td>Continue Discussion #1 – closes 2/7</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Work and inequality</td>
<td>Quiz #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agents of change in the new economy</td>
<td>Discussion #2 – initial post due 2/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Employment rights and job security in the U.S.</td>
<td>Continue Discussion #2 – closes 2/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unions and workers’ organizations</td>
<td>Quiz #2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Labor policy paper assigned – due 4/4 Peer review due – 4/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Work and public policy</td>
<td>Spring recess 3/11-3/19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Labor policy paper due – 4/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Work, race, and ethnicity</td>
<td>Quiz #3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Labor policy paper peer review due – 4/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work, gender, and family</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Work and the new immigration</td>
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</tbody>
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Readings – *This list is intended to give you an idea of the types of readings that will be assigned. This list will change. Always refer to Canvas for current assigned readings.*

**Week 1**

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 1

**Week 2**

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapters 2 and 3


Shenker-Osorio, A. (2013, August 1). Why Americans all believe they are middle-class. *The Atlantic.*


**Week 3**

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 4


Week 4

Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 5.

Week 5

Sweet & Meikins, Chapter 8.


Frost, N. (21 July 2020) The Pandemic has Exacerbated Differences Between Unionized and Non-unionized Retail Workers. Modern Retail.


Week 6


Week 7


Week 8


Lumen Learning. American Government - Module 16: Domestic policy

Week 9
Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 7.


Week 10
Sweet & Meiksins, Chapter 6.


Week 11


Week 12


Week 13

