

Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations
Spring 2025 – Virtual Asynchronous Online Class
Professor Adria Scharf, PhD

Working Women in American Society

This course examines working women in American society. It highlights historical and contemporary issues faced by women workers. Students will explore structural inequalities, policy responses, and movements for change. Through readings, discussions, and media, we will critically analyze the systems that shape women's work experiences and evaluate strategies for creating a more equitable workforce, focusing on intersections of gender, race, and class. This course provides students with the analytical tools and empirical knowledge to critically examine the challenges and opportunities for creating gender equity in the workplace.

Learning Objectives

- Understand key theories of gender and work.
- Analyze historical and structural forces that perpetuate gender inequity in the workplace.
- Explore historical and contemporary experiences of working women through lenses of race, class, and gender.
- Name and define several drivers of the gender pay gap.
- Understand the role of care work and unpaid labor in the economy.

The course will include analyses of societal patterns of inequity, discussion of the gender pay gap, discussion of the history of Black women and work in the United States, discussion of women in low-wage work and in tech, and theories of gender.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Adria Scharf, PhD

E-mail: adria.scharf@rutgers.edu or Canvas inbox

Contact the professor through Canvas or email anytime throughout the semester with questions small or large, observations, or need for clarification about anything related to the course.

Office hours: By request (the professor encourages office hour requests).

CORE and SMLR/LSER Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

Learning Objectives – Rutgers CORE

- CCD-2. Analyze contemporary social justice issues and unbalanced social power systems.
- 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.

Learning Objectives – SMLR

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions.

Learning Objectives – LSER Department

- Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories, and concepts in our field.
- Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments.
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work.

For Canvas assistance, Passwords, or any other computer-related technical support contact the Rutgers Canvas Help Desk, help@canvas.rutgers.edu.

Course Delivery Format

This course is delivered entirely online through Canvas. The course is delivered in asynchronous mode. This means you do not have to log in at any specific scheduled time; you log in at your convenience. Note: Even though you don't need to log in at any specific time, you are required to log in to Canvas frequently and adhere to all coursework due dates. There will be no in-person classroom sessions. To build a strong learning environment, discussions, and reflection journals will be the centerpieces of the course experience.

Course Materials

All course materials: lecture videos, multimedia, and readings are provided in each week's module. You do not need to purchase any textbook.

Course Structure & Schedules

This course is structured in a weekly module format. A Module is a chunk of the course content broken out by topic. Each Module equates to a week. Each week starts on a Sunday and ends on a Saturday. Exceptions are the 1st and the last week of the semester.

The weekly/module activities are noted in the Modules section under the corresponding Week.

Modules include:

- Topic introduction of the week (Professor's video lecture and/or written topic introduction)
- Reflection questions to reflect on as you are reading and watching assigned videos.
- Learning Materials and Assessments (Readings, Audio, and/or Video)
 - Activities & Assignments
 - Discussions
 - Reflection Journals
 - Mid-term, Final exam, final paper, and other activities and assignments

Course Structure

The course is divided into 15 Weeks as follows:

Week 1 (January 21 - 25): Welcome to Working Women in U.S. Society

Week 2 (January 26 - February 1): Gender and Work

Week 3 (February 2 - 8): Care Work

Week 4 (February 9 - 15): Key Concepts -- Gender and Unpaid Labor

Week 5 (February 16 - 22): Jobs & Gender Pay Gap

Week 6 (February 23 - March 1): Women and Wage Discrimination

Week 7 (March 2 - 8): Midterm (due 3/8)

Week 8 (March 9 – 15): Women in Retail and Service Industries

Week 9 (March 16 – 22): Women in Tech

Week 10 (March 23 – 29): Women in Manufacturing

Week 11 (March 30 - April 5): Collective Action

Week 12 (April 6 - 12): Black Women and Work in U.S. History

Week 13 (April 13 - 19): Sexual Harassment

Week 14 (April 20 - 26): Queer Identities and Work

Week 15 (April 27 – May 3): Course Review

Grading period: Final Exam and Final Paper due

Assignments, Activities, and Assessments

Discussions

Actively engage in discussion forums, having completed and reflected upon assigned course materials. Student participation in the discussion forum represents 20% of total course grade.

Participation in discussions is critical to this class.

Reflection Journal

Your reflections on weekly course materials, organized by week, containing: brief summaries of readings, your answers to reflection questions, and your personal analysis. Your weekly reflections should reflect a close careful reading of the material and watching of the assigned videos and demonstrate critical thinking by analyzing the content and questioning assumptions. You are also encouraged to relate course material to your own experiences and observations. Do not ever submit text generated by AI.

Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam

For the mid-term and final exams, you will complete an exam that will include multiple choice questions, fill in the blank questions, and short-essay questions. Practice questions will be provided in advance.

Final Project

The final paper or project will be an in depth examination of a question of your choosing related to the course topic, which includes a clear articulation of the question, a literature review, and your thoughtful analysis. It must reference concepts or readings from the class and include citations.

Grades

Discussion Forums – 20%

Reflections – 20%

Mid-Term Exam - 20%

Final Exam - 20%

Final Paper – 20%

Grading Scale

Points Range

Grade		Performance
90 - 100	A	Outstanding
88 - 89.99	B+	Good
80 - 87.99	B	Good
78 - 79.99	C+	Satisfactory
70 - 77.99	C	Satisfactory
69.99 below	F	Poor

Academic Integrity

The rights of students will be protected to insure that test scores are related to competence in the subject matter. If cheating is detected, it will be prosecuted to the limit allowed by University policies.

Academic Integrity Contract:

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation, and to regulations promulgated by the University. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academic freedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all students to pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please see <http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section10/10.2.11-current.pdf> for details regarding the Student Code of Conduct. Please see

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf for details regarding the Academic Integrity Policy. Similarly, all students and faculty members of the academic community at the School of Management and Labor Relations should uphold high standards for personal conduct, ethical behavior, and professional integrity. In the area of academic integrity, students are expected to refrain from cheating, fabricating information, plagiarizing, inappropriately denying others access to material, and facilitating others in academic dishonesty. Please see <http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section10/10.2.11-current.pdf> (pp. 24-28) for detailed descriptions of each type of action. Any of the following acts, when committed by a student, is an act of academic dishonesty and decreases the genuine achievements of other students and scholars.