

Semester:	<b>Spring 2025</b>
Course Number and Sections:	<b>37:575:338:90/91</b>
Course Title:	<b>Occupational Safety and Health</b>
Location:	<b>Online - non-synchronous</b>
Course Instructor:	<b>Ashley Conway, Assistant Teaching Professor</b>
Contact Information:	<b>Primary - use Canvas; secondary - aconway@smlr.rutgers.edu</b>
Office Hours and Location:	<b>Online by appointment</b>
Text:	<b>No required text</b>

### Course Description

Work has an impact on physical and psychological health. In this course, students will explore the health and safety issues of various types of work and 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 role 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. Students will also examine how aspects of work interact with race and ethnicity, social and economic class, immigration status, and gender to create workers' health and safety outcomes.

### Learning Objectives

#### *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 assignments	Discussion, survey, academic integrity quiz, and news outlet choice	10	100
Journal entries	5 @50 points each	25	250
Online discussions	3 @ 150 points each	45	450
Exams	2 @ 100 points each	20	200
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>

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.**

**Journal entries – 5 @ 50 points each,**

Five entries related to the course content, work safety and health news events, and personal or work-related experiences will be submitted to an online journal. Journal entries will only be read by me.

**Online discussions – 3 @150 points each**

In Part I of the online discussions, you will have one or two weeks to prepare and submit an initial post to the discussion. The initial post requires preparing a brief topic presentation such as writing a paper, creating a presentation, or other task to share with group members. In Part II, you will read group members’ initial posts and construct replies that communicate questions, insights, analysis, and feedback in a threaded asynchronous (not “real time”) discussion. 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 discussion submissions are evaluated. 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’. Make-up exams submitted within one week of the due date, will be assessed a 25%-point penalty. Make-up exams of more than one week will not be permitted.

**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 schedule flexibility, but students are ultimately responsible for managing their time and participating in class every week.

**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 or contempt based on race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender and gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability will not be overlooked, 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 my emails that request a response. **Please inform me of emergencies or problems 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 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 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](https://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

**Subject to change** – always refer to Canvas for the most up to date information

Week	Topic	Assignments
<b>1</b> 1/22-1/28	Orientation to the Course and Introductions	Week 1 tasks due – 1/28
<b>2</b> 1/29-2/4	A Look Back: Work Safety and Health History	<i>Case: Triangle factory fire</i>  Discussion #1 – initial post due 2/11
<b>3</b> 2/5-2/11	Occupational Safety and Health Concepts	<i>Case – On the trail of an epidemic: cholera in 1831 London</i>  Continue Discussion #1 – initial post due 2/11  Journal #1
<b>4</b> 2/12-2/18	The Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	<i>Case- Change at McWane foundries</i>  Continue Discussion #1-make replies-discussion ends 2/18
<b>5</b> 2/19-2/25	Work Health and Safety: Policy, Politics, and Power	Discussion #2 – initial post due 3/4  Journal #2
<b>6</b> 2/26-3/4	The Economics of Worker Safety and Health	<i>Case – The BP gulf disaster</i>  Continue Discussion #2 – initial post due 3/4
<b>7</b> 3/5-3/11	Right-to-Know and Workers Compensation	<i>Case-Toms River industrial contamination</i>  Continue Discussion #2 – make replies-discussion ends 3/11  Journal #3

<b>8</b> 3/12- 3/14 and 3/24- 3/25	Evaluation week  Spring recess: 3/15-3/23	Exam #1 – opens 3/12 and closes 3/25
<b>9</b> 3/26-4/1	Safety and Health in the Entertainment Industry	<i>Case: Collegiate football players – students or employees?</i>  Discussion #3 – initial post due 4/8
<b>10</b> 4/2-4/8	Ethics in Work Safety and Health	<i>Case- Ethical decision making in the pandemic – workers, vaccines, and the ‘duty to serve’</i>  Continue Discussion #3 – initial post due 4/8
<b>11</b> 4/9-4/15	Protecting Workers’ Psychological Health  Work Health and Safety in a Changing Climate	<i>Case: Post-traumatic stress disorder in front-line, essential workers</i>  Continue discussion #3 – make replies- discussion ends 4/15
<b>12</b> 4/16-4/22	Safety and Health in a Changing Climate	<i>Case: Work on a hot planet</i>  Journal #4
<b>13</b> 4/23-4/29	Global Work Safety and Health	<i>Case: The global supply chain and worker health and safety</i>  Journal #5
<b>14</b> 4/30-5/5	Evaluation Week	Complete 2 course evaluations  Exam #2 opens on 4/30 and closes on 5/5  All journal entries must be submitted by 5/5

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## Readings

**Note: This reading list will change. A reading list 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)*.

Alcaez, X. (March 2022) What to expect under the Biden Administration. *Environmental Health Safety Today*.

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*.

Cha, M. et al. (2021) Workers and communities in transition: Report of the Just Listening Project. *Labor Network for Sustainability*.

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*.

Gerstein, T. (6 September 2020) Other people's rotten jobs are bad for them. And for you. *New York Times*.

Haedickie, M. (6 May 2020) To understand the danger of COVID-19 transmission in meatpacking plants look to the industries history. *The Conversation*.

International Labor Organization. (2012) The COSH Movement and Right to Know. *Encyclopedia of Occupational Safety and Health, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* (59).

Johnson, J. (March 2021) Former OSHA head, David Michaels, calls for transformation of U.S. worker safety. *Chemical and Engineering News*, Vol. 99, Issue 24.

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.

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.

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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*.

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*.