

---

**37:575:363**

**Labor and the Global Economy**

**Rutgers University: Spring 2025 Semester  
Labor Studies & Employment Relations Department  
School of Management and Labor Relations**

---

This course critically examines global political economy and its vestiges of power, inequality and resistance. Beginning with the destruction of the Bretton Woods system, we will trace the origins and expansion of neo-liberalism, a system built on the paradox of socializing corporate gains while imposing harsh capitalist competition on ordinary people and workers. The course interrogates how neo-liberal policies dismantle social welfare, redirect public resources to corporate interests, foster extreme inequality and poverty and results in the rise of right-wing nationalism amid popular discontent.

We will explore the resurgence of labor organizing, strikes, growing anti-capitalist sentiments and its appeal to younger generations and the challenges posed by neo-liberalism to democratic institutions. Finally, the course will close by highlighting the links between imperialism, the Pentagon system (the world's largest polluter) and climate change, exposing how environmental degradation is rooted in the global economic order.

---

**Contact / Scheduling Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Andrew Kennis

**Phone:** (917) 829-1971 (cell; texts, if desired, preferred via Whatsapp; SMS texts arrive slower)

**Email:** [Dr.Andrew.Kennis@rutgers.edu](mailto:Dr.Andrew.Kennis@rutgers.edu)

**Class Hours:** Tuesdays via Zoom, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm (EST)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays via Zoom from 5:00pm to 6:00pm (EST) or by appointment.

---

**Course Objectives**

**Rutgers Core CCD-2: Analyze Contemporary Social Justice  
Issues and Unbalanced Power Systems**

Through critical analysis of both historical developments and contemporary case studies, students will gain a thorough and critical understanding of the contradictions of the modern global economy while exploring the pathways that have been carved out by popular resistance and struggle. The course emphasizes participation via substantive contributions to class discussion and presentations to develop public speaking skills and familiarity with such, which will serve students well into their professional futures.

---

## Course Materials

There are no textbooks or books required for purchase for this course. All assigned readings and viewings will be posted via Canvas and organized by modules.

---

## Course Requirements:

- **Attendance:** The *most* important requirement for this course is *attendance* (with active class participation and listening, of equal importance as well). It is the foundation upon which *all* other graded components of the course are based upon and also accounts for **30%** of your final grade (however, see “freebie” policy). Students who miss more four classes or more, will *not* be permitted to give a class presentation unless an alternative arrangement is worked out and approved by me and initially taken on at the student's initiative as well. Attendance for *every* class counts, including even our first class. Attendance is graded separately than participation even though the two are certainly related.
- **“Freebie” Policy:** As a result of the importance of participation in this course, attendance is made that much more important. There are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences in this class. Instead, if a student manages to limit their absences to two classes or less by the end of the semester, they will *still* earn *full* credit for attendance. Those who have perfect attendance or only miss one class, will earn extra credit toward their final grade. Students who miss more than two classes, however, can hinder their final grade and substantially so if absences eclipse more four classes or more, which would put into peril being able to pass the class.
- **Participation:** Individual participation during class discussions will account for **30%** of the final grade. All students are required to participate, actively listen and substantively contribute to discussion based on the weekly readings and viewings assigned for each and every class throughout the entirety of the semester.
- **Quizzes and Exams:** There will be *no* quizzes, exams or homework assignments for this course other than weekly readings and viewing assignments, which will serve as the basis for subsequent class discussion and participation.
- **Weekly Required Readings and Viewings:** Each student is expected to complete *all* of the reading assigned for each class *before* each class begins and should have all readings for the designated class printed out and/or stored digitally, for in-class use and consultation. The extent students participate each class directly relates to what will be their eventual participation grade.

- **Presentations**: Each student will give a unique oral presentation based on research stemming from both external and class-based sources. Students will be free to either choose or propose a topic that will be approved by me. Bibliographies, upon which presentations will be based, will be required to be sent *and* approved by me *before* presentations are given. Usage of Power Point and any other multi-media component is optional, but plenty encouraged. The presentation will account for **40%** of your final grade. Presentations will be given during the last two or three class meetings of the semester.
- 

## **Course Requirements (continued):**

- **Guest Lecturers, Zoom Appearances and Video Clips**: for any given course I teach, I strive to keep my own voice as a limited one. Instead, class discussion, as noted above, is considered a bedrock of the course. In this same spirit, an array of guest speakers appearing live via Zoom and/or through taped clips, are also a staple of this course. Anywhere between three and a half dozen (or even more) guest speakers will be welcomed to our course.
  - **Extra Credit**: if a student misses more than three classes in a semester and wishes to make up for their absences, they can arrange to do so by approaching me and potentially gaining my *approval*. Within reasonable limits, no student will be denied the opportunity to do extra work. Extra credit can also be garnered by doing at least a 1000 word analysis of a particular issue relating to the course & agreed upon beforehand with the instructor.
  - **Final Grade Distribution**: **Attendance: 30% | Participation: 30% | Presentation: 40%**.
- 

**Thematic Modules**: *current planned chronological order of leading themes of weekly assignments but subject to change as a result of our class wide poll.*

There are *many* issues and topics which fall under the greater rubric of the following leading thematic modules which we will tackle this semester and one semester alone will *not* be sufficient to cover these additional and sub-topics in their entirety. *However*, between collective class-wide decision-making (i.e. via a class wide and forthcoming poll) as well as your professor's know-how, we will cover a great many of the related and potential topics subsumed under these modules:

### **I. Birth of Neo-Liberalism and the Fall of Bretton Woods**

### **II. Crisis of Democracy: Social Disintegration, the Attack on Social Democracy and Dictatorial Links to Neo-Liberalism**

### **III. Neo-Liberalism and its Leading Mechanisms: Public Wealth, Private Profits & Ever-growing Inequality**

#### **IV. Nationalism: Its Revitalization and its Manifestations**

#### **V. Social Resistance and Struggle from Below: Labor, Strikes, Unionism & Social Movements**

#### **VI. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Economy: Climate Change, Imperialism and Artificial Intelligence**

---

### **Trajectory of Class Sessions and Course Readings**

As for how we will organize the class sessions and the trajectory of the course, it will be done in the following manner and basically in three phases: a reading and viewing assignment phase, where the leading pillars and modules of the course are addressed; a research and presentation preparation phase, where the lessons learned from the first phase of the class are incorporated while popularly suggested and voted upon topics are assigned as well; and a guest speaker phase, whereby leading experts from all over the world will be welcomed to our class while students are simultaneously undertaking, completing and even delivering their final presentations. Particularly during this last phase, and to a certain degree during the second phase too, the extent of reading and viewing assignments will have decreased markedly, and purposefully, thus affording the time necessary for students to focus on their research and presentation preparation responsibilities. At the same time, the reading and viewing assignment load during the first phase and earlier part of the semester, will be more substantial than subsequent parts of the semester.

As a result of this plan, the first class session will be dedicated to introducing each of us to each other and to the course as a whole. It will be the prime opportunity for students to shape and mold the syllabus to quite a meaningful degree. We will discuss topic options and also even eventually undertake a poll so as to directly incorporate student input and related needs into the course itself.

Most of the course will take on at least one sub-theme stemming from the leading modules and pillars of the course noted above and duly based on the priority order given by a class-wide poll. There has been a purposeful limitation to the amount of leading topics planned for the course so as to give us a cushion to interject several class lessons based on topics that will again, be voted upon and decided by the class as a whole.

Especially by the time presentations are decided upon and approved, course readings will have already shifted from more theoretical and scholarly-oriented reading assignments to more current event and topic-oriented readings (i.e. the readings will be plenty *easier* to digest). Finally, the last third part of the semester will feature both guest speakers and individual presentations.

---

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

While I encourage students to work together to understand theories and concepts, all presentation work must be your own unless arranged with prior approval by me to be a co-presenter and/or group effort. If you cite an author or use his/her ideas, please cite properly.

A plagiarized presentation or evidence of cheating will result in a failing grade for both the assignment and the course itself. Moreover, plagiarism may result in disciplinary action by the university.

---

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the [New Brunswick Office of Disability Services](#), participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation related to your disability.

To begin this process, please complete the [registration form on the ODS web site](#).

If your request for reasonable accommodations is (hopefully!) approved, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter and discuss any accommodations you may need with me as early (!) in the semester as possible.

---

## **RUTGERS TECH SUPPORT**

**Helpdesk:** [Rutgers Office of Information and Technology](#)

**Phone:** 833-648-4357 (833-OIT-HELP)

**Email:** [help@oit.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@oit.rutgers.edu)