

SYLLABUS

ECONOMICS OF THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

37:575:325:90

Fall 2015

Professor: Dr. Ruth Ruttenberg

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Online Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

helpdesk@rutgersonline.net or call 1-877-7 RUTGER (1-877-778-8437)

MAIN COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The goal of this class is for students to understand the theoretical underpinnings of labor economics; to be knowledgeable about key policy issues affecting the economics of employment relationships; and to be able to access, organize, and analyze public data for relevant decision-making in the workplace and for policy.

CLASS MEETINGS

Class begins Tuesday, September 1, 2015. Students should log in as soon as possible to familiarize themselves with the eCollege online venue. This document and any email updates will be your guide for due dates.

Bookmark and visit regularly this website as it holds all course materials: <http://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/ruonline-login>

It is important to keep up with the assignments, which means students should check their eCollege class and email at a minimum of four times a week. There are penalties for late submission of your work. If you have a specific problem with making a deadline, please contact the professor in advance.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

All students are enrolled in the course with their Rutgers address. **You are responsible to check your Rutgers email on a regular basis and email me with questions.** I will respond to emails quickly. If you are not receiving emails from me on a regular basis, contact me immediately so we can correct the issue.

Proper etiquette: When communicating with classmates, proper etiquette is required at all

times. All comments and all interactions should be courteous. This is an online course, which means there is a great deal of writing, responding, and working together online. As such, your responses to your peers must be well thought out and carefully crafted. A response that repeats the words of another student is plagiarism and unacceptable—it may also result in failure of this course as well as disciplinary action from the college. A response that bullies, uses name calling, or directly attacks or threatens another student may have the same outcome as mentioned for plagiarism. Just because this course is online does not mean that you should treat your peers in any manner that you would not treat them in person. This is to be a safe learning environment for everyone in the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND SCHEDULE

All assignments and due dates are listed week by week. All should be completed by midnight on the date the assignment is due, unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor. Evaluation is based on 20 three to five point journals and forums as well as a 15 point final exam paper.

Week	What is due – Reading and Written Assignments
Week 1 (9/1-9/6/2015) -- What is economics? What is labor economics? What is the labor theory of value? The Neoclassical Approach. Issues of employment discrimination.	<p>Student introduction – 1 page – to include an introduction of yourself, as well as your specific areas of interest in the economics of employment relationships. Due Wednesday on doc sharing, at 11:59pm</p> <p>Reading -- <i>Dollars and Sense</i>, pp. xii-101</p> <p>Forum 1 – In 500 words, with at least one new source, respond to: “According to neoclassical economic theory, how does discrimination exist or not exist in the employment market?” (First briefly define neoclassical economic theory.) Respond to at least two classmates. Primary post due Thursday, 11:59 pm and secondary posts due Sunday, 11:59 p.m. (4 points)</p>
Week 2. (9/7-9/13) What is a Labor Market? What is elasticity? Laws of Supply and Demand (Determining Wages and Level of Employment Consequences of Shifts in the Curves) and other Aspects of	<p>Reading and Viewing</p> <p>Labour Market (from France), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSDd6re92TY</p> <p>Labour Market Equilibrium – Excess Supply and Demand for Labour https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBOPPzvUu2E</p> <p>The Demand Curve http://mruniversity.com/courses/principles-economics-microeconomics/demand-curve-shifts-definition. Followed by additional short videos on The Supply Curve, The Equilibrium Price, A Deeper</p>

<p>Economic Theory</p>	<p>Look at the Demand Curve, The Demand Curve Shifts, A Deeper Look at the Supply Curve, The Supply Curve Shifts, Exploring Equilibrium, Does the Equilibrium Model Work, Supply and Demand Terminology, Elasticity and Its Applications.</p> <p>Journal 1 – In at least 50 words each, respond to the following 5 questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the laws of supply and demand for products the same and/or different from the laws of supply and demand for labor? 2. What is elasticity of demand? Give two examples of how the concept is important in thinking about the labor market. 3. Based on the “Labour Market” video, what options are there for moving toward full employment and how might national choices vary? 4. Explain the difference between a shift along the supply curve and a shift in the supply curve itself. 5. What do you see as three important lessons that supply and demand curves can provide for analysis of the labor market? <p>Due Sunday (5 points)</p>
<p>Week 3. (9/14-9/20) Employment and the Business Cycle. (frictional, seasonal, and structural unemployment) Relationship Between Employment and Inflation. Microeconomic vs. Macroeconomic Analysis</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, “Labor, the Economy and Monetary Policy,” http://www.dallasfed.org/educate/everyday/labor.cfm.</p> <p>Congressional Budget Office, “Estimated Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on Employment and Economic Output in 2014,” February 20, 2015, http://www.cbo.gov/publication/49958.</p> <p>Pettinger Tejvan, “Policies for Reducing Unemployment, September 17, 2013, http://www.economicshelp.org/blog3881/economics/policies-for-reducing-unemployment/.</p> <p>Journal 2 -- In 500 words, describe some of the differences between demand side policies to reduce unemployment and supply side policies to reduce unemployment. Give at least 2 examples of policies of each. Use at least 2 sources beyond the reading. Due Tuesday. (4 points)</p> <p>Forum 2 -- In 500 words, give three examples of how the Federal Reserve Board (Fed) and/or Congressional legislation can influence the quantity and price of labor. Then comment on what involvement of the Fed makes sense to you, and explain why. Use at least 2 sources beyond the assigned reading. Respond to the posts of at least 2 classmates. Primary post due Thursday. Secondary posts due Sunday. (4 points)</p>

<p>Week 4. (9/21-9/27) The Political Economy Approach to Employment Economics. Controversies over Shrinking Middle Class and Minimum Wage.</p>	<p>Reading and Viewing :</p> <p><i>Dollars and Sense</i>, pp. 103-187.</p> <p>Reich, “The Truth About the Economy,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynII5rM7bgU.</p> <p>Reich, “Raise the Minimum Wage to \$15 per Hour,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqtl53V3JI.</p> <p>Boudreaux, Don, Learn Liberty, “The ‘Real Truth About the Economy’: Have Wages Stagnated?” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6FmhXQ32Wo.</p> <p>Forum 3 -- In 500 words, respond to the overview for the political economy section of <i>Dollars and Sense</i> by agreeing or disagreeing with the following: “In the political economy world-view, people are not simply rational, calculating individuals. They are members of groups, and membership in particular groups predicts whether any particular individual will get a fair shot in the labor market... From the moment you are born, you enter an economy with an unlevel playing field.” Compare your response here to your posts for Forum 1. Respond to at least two classmates. Primary post due Tuesday. Secondary post due Wednesday. (4 points)</p> <p>Forum 4 – In 500 words, with at least one new source, respond to: “Using what you’ve learned about political economy and the labor market, discuss the pros and cons of raising the national minimum wage to \$10.10. Include a national economic perspective, the perspective of small business, and the perspective of low wage workers.” Respond to at least two classmates. Primary post due Thursday. Secondary posts due Sunday. (4 points)</p>
<p>Week 5. (9/28-10/4) Role of Unions</p>	<p>Reading and Viewing:</p> <p>http://www.aflcio.org/About</p> <p>http://www.aflcio.org/Learn-About-Unions</p> <p>“ US Inequality Debate Turns to Decline of Unions,” http://news.yahoo.com/us-inequality-debate-turns-decline-unions-033745327.html;_ylt=A0LEVvebSgJV13UATG4InIIQ</p> <p>Forum 5 – Imagine that you are a low wage worker, with no personal leave days, no sick leave and no vacation. Your job is dangerous and you</p>

	<p>have the barest of health insurance. Discuss, in 500 words, the pros and cons of whether or not to join in an organizing campaign for higher wages and benefits. Use at least one new source. Respond to at least 2 student posts. Primary post due on Tuesday and secondary posts due on Wednesday. (4 points)</p> <p>Forum 6 – In 500 words, discuss the role that unions played in building a middle class and the relationship of unions now to the decline of the middle class. Use at least one new source. Respond to at least 2 student posts. Primary post due on Thursday and secondary posts due on Sunday. (4 points)</p>
<p>Week 6. (10/5-10/11) Human Capital/Return on Investment for E</p>	<p>Reading and viewing:</p> <p>“Human Capital Theory” (definition), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BueM_7YkO30</p> <p>“The New Science of Human Capital” (HR within companies), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3rZSIqZ0pM</p> <p>“The Human Capital Report” (global), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-K8kGvJX94</p> <p>“Davos 2014 – Higher Education – Investment or Waste?” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4y5QDxts28</p> <p>Forum 7 – In 500 words, tell what Davos is and summarize the points of view of each of the speakers (in the Davos video) on whether or not education is a good economic/human capital investment or not. Then, using their arguments and at least 2 other sources, discuss the relative importance of traditional college education vs. development of a new paradigm. What is your perspective? Primary post due on Tuesday and secondary posts due on Wednesday. (4 points)</p>
<p>Week 7. (10/12-10/18) Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Reading and Viewing:</p> <p>Go to http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/ and review the web site, with particular interest in apprenticeships available in New Jersey</p> <p>“An Introduction into the Union Apprenticeship Program,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M26pUS3wyJk.</p> <p>“Craft Training and Apprenticeship,” (non-union) http://www.abc.org/en-us/educationtraining/crafttrainingapprenticeship.aspx.</p>

Forum 8 – Write in 500 words, the opportunities that apprenticeships bring to career development. From the web sites reviewed and at least two other sources, discuss the differences among going to work without an apprenticeship, going into a union apprenticeship, and going into a non-union apprenticeship. Respond to at least two classmates. Primary post is Due Thursday. Secondary posts are due Sunday. (4 points)

Extra Credit – Project Labor Agreements

Reading and Viewing --

“Project Labor Agreements,” <http://www.liuna.org/project-labor-agreements>.

“New Report Shows Project Labor Agreements Work,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49Y2CNST3RE>.

“Project Labor Agreements: Not What We Need, Not What We Deserve,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ITdRvoG_Kc.

“Why is ABC Opposed to Union-Only PLAs?” <http://www.abc.org/EducationTraining/AcademyPages/tabid/340/entryid/402/Why-is-ABC-Opposed-to-Union-Only-PLAs.aspx>.

(up to 5 points) – Write in 500 words, the pros and cons of Project Labor Agreements, as a tool of developing middle class jobs and careers.

Week 8. (10/19-10/25) Right-to-Work/ Union-Busting/ Collective Bargaining and Organizing

Reading and Viewing:

<http://www.nrtw.org/rtws.htm>
and <http://www.nrtw.org/en/about>

<http://www.aflcio.org/Learn-About-Unions/Collective-Bargaining>

<http://prospect.org/article/labor-crossroads-case-union-organizing>

Forum 9 -- In early 2015, Wisconsin became the 25th state to pass right-to-work legislation. Take a position for or against the legislation, focusing on the economics as viewed by workers and employers. Find at least 3 sources to support your point of view. Primary post of 500 words is due on Wednesday. Secondary posts, to at least two classmates, is due on Thursday. (5 points)

Forum 10 – Read (and watch video) about an organizing campaign (from a suggested list or one of your own choosing). Discuss, in 500

	<p>words, the issues that led the workers to organize, the struggles of the campaign, interactions between workers and management, any government involvement, and the outcome. Then comment on the process of getting a contract and what the new conditions are for the newly organized workforce. What lessons are there for another group of workers that want to organize? Respond to at least two classmates. Primary post of 500 words is due on Friday. Secondary posts, to at least two classmates, is due on Sunday. (4 points)</p>
<p>Week 9. (10/26-11/1) ERISA, Pensions, 401(k)s and Defined Benefits Retirement/ Portability of Benefits/ Fair Labor Standards – Overtime and Prevailing Wages</p>	<p>Reading and Viewing:</p> <p>http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/health-plans/erisa.htm</p> <p>http://money.cnn.com/retirement/guide/pensions_basics.moneymag/index3.htm</p> <p>“My Money@Work Simply Put: Defined Contribution & Defined Benefit Retirement Plans,” (from Canada, but relevant and only 2 minutes), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qM1LbsNwQeI.</p> <p>“Defined Benefit Retirement Plans” The Solution to America’s Retirement Crisis,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xtl7ZfiYrxc.</p> <p>“Rep. Mike Tobash explains defined contribution pension plan,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPPmV9khIDI.</p> <p>Forum 11 – After explaining the difference, in your own words, between a defined benefit pension plan and a defined contribution benefit plan, explain the pros and cons of each. Use at least one new source. Your response should be 500 words and use at least one new source. Respond to at least 2 classmates. Primary response is due on Wednesday, with secondary responses due by Thursday. (4 points)</p> <p>Reading and Viewing:</p> <p>Explore the following web page, http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/.</p> <p>Now go to http://www.dol.gov/whd/reg-library.htm, to review 11 pieces of federal legislation that govern wages and hours.</p> <p>Forum 12 -- For each of the 11 pieces of legislation discussed on the above web site, provide for each, a sentence for what is most meaningful about that legislation for a worker and a sentence about what is most meaningful/important to an employer. Respond to at least 2 classmates. Primary response is due on Friday, with secondary responses by Sunday. (5 points)</p>
<p>Week 10. (11/2-</p>	<p>Reading and Viewing:</p>

11/18) Relevant Governmental Bodies, Programs, and Legislation/Economics of Occupational Safety and Health

<https://www.osha.gov/> <https://www.msha.gov/>
<http://www.nlr.gov/>
<http://www.help.senate.gov/>
<http://edworkforce.house.gov/>

Journal 3 – Focusing on economic issues, write a paragraph each (each with at least 2 sources): Family Leave Act, LM-2 forms, NLRB and NLRA, Railway Labor Act, Taft-Hartley. (For LM-2 forms, instead of a paragraph, go to the DOL web site and choose one union and briefly summarize what you learned from reviewing the submission.) Due Wednesday (5 points)

Reading --
Go to <http://www.dol.gov> and click on Agencies

Journal 4 – Write at least two sentences in your own words about the functions of 15 of the 28 DOL agencies. Due Sunday (4 points)

Extra Credit: Go to <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/safetypays/estimator.html>, where OSHA helps a business calculate the cost of a range of accidents and illnesses. Choose 3 types of accidents or illnesses and explain the assumptions you make as you calculate their cost to an employer. Write a 2 paragraph response: the first paragraph explaining your findings and a second paragraph of analysis and reflections. (3 points)

Week 11. (11/9-11/15) Data: BLS and Census – Real and Current Wages, Hours, Benefits, Cost of Living, Union Density, Wages vs. Earnings/Learning How to Present Data – in Tables and in Charts.

Become familiar with NAICS classifications and the BLS inflation calculator. All tables need to have sufficient titles and headings to be able to stand alone.

Journal 5 -- For each of terms below, provide, in your own words, a definition and an example:

1. Average hourly earnings vs median hourly earnings
2. Cost of living
3. Cost of living adjustment (COLA)
4. Current wages
5. Earnings (in contrast with wages)
6. NAICS
7. Prevailing wages
8. Real wages
9. Seasonally adjusted employment
10. Union density

Due Wednesday. (5 points)

Journal 6 -- Exercises finding data and organizing it.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare, in a table, prevailing wages for laborers and carpenters for 2014 in Chicago, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit. 2. Make a table comparing current wages and real wages for manufacturing for every decade available, through 2010. How does choice of a base year affect interpretation of the numbers? 3. Make a table for police wages for Newark, and for 5 nearby cities. What do the numbers say about police wages in Newark? 4. Make a table of union density 1950 and 2010 for New Orleans, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Houston. Summarize your findings. 5. Choose 5 occupational categories. Make a table, with current and real wages, and then tell what has happened to wages compared with inflation, each decade, 1970-2010. (Inflation calculator: http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm) <p>Due Sunday. (5 points)</p>
<p>Week 12. (11/16-11/22) Data: Employment and Unemployment trend analysis</p>	<p>Journal 7 -- Make a table comparing the increase in employment, the decrease in unemployment, and the level of average hourly wage since the onset of the Great Recession in 2008. Using at least two new sources, discuss at least 3 different ways to interpret the data you have collected and organized. Due Sunday. (4 points)</p>
<p>Week 13. (11/23-11/29) Data: Employment projections and analysis: by geography, by occupation, by wages</p>	<p>Journal 8 -- In preparation for setting future wages, choose an NAICS with hourly employees and a metropolitan area. Build a table that shows hourly wages for the NAIC and metro area you have chosen. Due Wednesday. (3 points) Happy Thanksgiving!</p>
<p>Week 14. (11/30-12/6)</p>	<p>Final – The final has 3 parts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using your table, from Journal 8, build the case (in written form and in tables) for a particular wage for 2016 and 2017 based on real wages, parity with other similar NAICSs and jurisdictions and any other data you see as relevant. Have at least 2-3 tables. (10 points) 2. Write a page telling what theoretical aspects of labor economics and what other information you would ideally like to have in order to set wages. What interactions within a firm would you establish? Be as specific as possible. (4 points) 3. Tell in a paragraph each, the three most important things you learned this semester and how you might use that information as

you move forward with your major/career. (1 point)

TEXT

Required materials are available on line. One required text:

Albelda, Randy and Drago, Robert, *Unlevel Playing Fields: Understanding Wage Inequality and Discrimination*, Fourth Edition, Dollars and Sense, Economic Affairs Bureau, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts, 2013.

FORUMS

These “threaded discussions” are for discussing course topics with each other. There are 12 graded forums throughout the semester. In order to receive maximum credit for the forum, you must interact substantively each time you enter the Forum. Keep in mind that forums are asynchronous, which means that within the given time frame—one week—you can respond to questions at any time during the day or night. Take advantage of the forum and interact with your classmates. If you miss a Forum discussion, you cannot make it up, and you will lose valuable interaction with your classmates and grade points.

JOURNALS:

There are 8 graded journals that will take place throughout this semester. Each will be graded holistically in terms of the degree of your engagement with the assignment.

WRITING:

All submissions are expected to be grammatically correct. Feel free to get assistance from the Writing Center on campus (also available electronically). Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source for academic work in this course.

This class follows the MLA guide to papers.

ABOUT GRADES

RU Grading System:

GRADE	INTERPRETATION	POINTS
A	OUTSTANDING	90-100
B+	VERY GOOD	86-89
B	GOOD	80-85
C+	AVERAGE	76-79
C	SATISFACTORY	70-75

A = (90-100 points)

An “A” paper provides a clear original thesis that has evolved from the writer’s conversation with other experts in the field, along with his/her own experience/knowledge. The thesis is followed throughout the paper with original ideas and textual interaction. The paper is well organized, with each topic sentence flowing from the thesis to creating meaningful paragraphs. Terms are well defined and lead the reader through the paper. Quotations are introduced, are integrated into the body of a sentence, and are interpreted by the writer. Overall, the paper exhibits a clear, simple yet elegant style, demonstrating a point with direction and logic through the use of different types of sentence structures and rich vocabulary.

B+ (86-89 points)

The “B+” paper, like the “A” paper shows, originality in the thesis. There is a dialogue between the writer of the paper and the writers of the texts, which is throughout the paper. Each paragraph will have a pretty clear topic statement that reflects the thesis statement. The student's paper may even go beyond his original thesis by introducing other possible outcomes. The student shows control in ideas, sophisticated sentence structure and vocabulary, though not to the extent of an “A” paper.

B (80-85 points)

The thesis is well articulated from the start of the paper, but it weakens as the paper progresses due to generalities or some disorganization. Overall, the paper is not as sophisticated or as complex as the A paper. The paper almost reaches complexity, but fails in areas of clear topic sentences, sustained originality, and use of causal relations. The paper demonstrates organization, some creative ideas, good use of quotations, but more for support rather than for pushing ideas forward. There are few errors and the paper demonstrates an ability to write clearly though perhaps not elegantly.

C+ (76-79 points)

The “C+” paper may be well articulated at the thesis statement, but it noticeably breaks down in terms or organization and vague use of terms that confuse the issues at hand. Ideas are not carried through or developed through the paper; they are mostly simply touched upon. The topic sentences typically do not organize or deliver meaning for the ensuing paragraph. Some quoted material may be used too much for proof rather than taking the paper in different more complex directions. Sentences may be similar and need to be connected in order to show causal relations. While writing may not be filled with errors, it’s somewhat repetitive and not complex.

C Satisfactory (70 to 75 points)

A “C” paper’s thesis is typically too general, vague, and perhaps slightly confusing. The paragraphs that follow touch on the topic but are typically too vague or general because they emanate from a thesis that is too vague or general. The quoted material is used for proof or to

substitute for the student's own writing. Rather than lead the discussion in the paper, the student's voice is lost in the material, which is presented with little to no interpretation. Sentences are not sophisticated and do not display causal relations. Although error isn't overwhelming, there's enough to add to a reader's confusion.

[A "D" grade is below average. And is 60-69 points. An "F" grade is failing, and is 0-59 points.]

WRITING Point System:

ASSIGNMENT	AMOUNT	TOTAL %
Forum	12	60
Journal	8	40
TOTAL		100

Note: I'm here to help you be successful in this course. Please feel free to email me with any and all questions, concerns and comments. Ruth

