

WORKING WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
BRIEF SYLLABUS; FULL SYLLABUS DISTRIBUTED AT FIRST

(Labor Studies 575:309/Women's Studies 988:309)

Draft – 35 students; 25 labor studies and 10 women's studies

Spring 2015 – Tuesdays, 12:35-3:35 pm

Labor Education Center, Room 133

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble

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Office Hours: after class and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course analyzes the changing status of working women in American society and investigates the effectiveness of various approaches to improving their lives as well as the health and well being of their families and communities. We begin with the historical transformations in women's status, the rise of modern U.S. women's movements, and an overview of employer practices and public policies affecting women. We then focus on contemporary barriers to women's equality and well-being and the most effective approaches to overcoming those barriers. Topics include, among others, pay discrimination and equal opportunity, the devaluation of caregiving and emotion work, income security and the feminization of poverty, glass ceilings and women's leadership, the body and sexuality in the workplace, redesigning jobs and careers to accommodate changing family and societal needs. The interconnectedness of cultural and structural forces and the necessity for social as well as individual change are central themes of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- *Understand the interconnectedness of women's market and family work
- *Assess the societal effects of women's entrance into market work
- *Specify changing patterns of division of labor and the societal value of various jobs
- *Familiarity with economic, cultural, and psychological theories of gender inequality
- *Understand how gender and sex interact with other identities and social structures
- *Apply insights from scholarly research to improve workplace practices and social policy
- *Locate and evaluate best practice initiatives to address workplace inequities
- *Enhance written and public presentation skills
- *Develop group process and leadership skills

COURSE GRADING:

- 1. Class Participation (20%)**
- 2. Quizzes (20%)**
- 3. Response Papers (40%)**
- 4. Final Project (20%)**