PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

37:575:395:02

Spring 2015

Professor Saul Rubinstein

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Office Hours: Wednesday afternoons by appointment - LEC Room 148

Class: Wednesdays 3:55-6:55 – LEC 130/131

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Course Expectations and Requirements

This course is designed to give you a chance to become engaged with the intellectual tradition in labor studies. You will read classic authors and current professional theory. You will have the opportunity to examine some of the big issues in the field and to decide what you think about them. You will also gain proficiency in important skills: reading for analytical insight, debating ideas, and communicating with others. Students should all be labor studies majors or minors with
15 credits or more in labor studies; if you are not in this category, then you need permission of the instructor to enroll.

**Course Hybrid Format**

The hybrid format of this course offers both practical and learning advantages. The part online format offers you flexibility by taking away commute time and by providing a seven-day time span to fulfill your online assignments. The integration of face-to-face and online activities should produce a deeper and more interactive learning experience, appealing to a wider array of learning styles than 100% classroom or online courses.

**Readings**

There is no single text for this course. Readings for each week will be available on the Sakai class web-site: Sakai.rutgers.edu

Use your Rutgers login name and password

Click on tab for class – 37:575:395:02 Spring 2015

Go to Resources to get syllabus and readings

**Relationship to Rutgers Learning Goals**

A. This class relates to the overall objectives of a liberal arts education in the **social science** area. “A Rutgers University SAS graduate will be able to:”

- “Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.” (Goal i). *Throughout this course, you will be practicing skills in identifying critical assumptions, methods, and types of evidence in relationship to theoretical arguments made by various seminal figures in the field of labor and employment relations.*

- “Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.” (Goal m). *The theories that you are expected to understand include views from sociology, institutional economics, political science, personnel psychology, human relations, and industrial relations – they form a variety of perspectives relevant to the study of labor. You will demonstrate this understanding through written work and through online discussion of concepts.*

- “Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.” (Goal n). *You will see how various theories have been applied to particular applied issues*
such as, to what degree should worker pay be contingent? You will have the opportunity to argue for your ideas on the application of theory to such questions in labor and employment relations.

Course Expectations

Students read book chapters, journal articles and other electronic material available within the Sakai course shell. To prepare for class or forum participation, students are asked to write answers to the written questions for that week. These writing assignments are to be completed before class and posted to the class website under assignments before 4pm every Wednesday. Be prepared to discuss the key points of the readings in class and on the forums. It is important to participate in discussions and group activities. Explain your views. Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Also listen – don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore other views.

This is an interactive class – you need to keep current in the reading and forums so that you can interact with others in the class. For full credit, you need to participate in class, in the forums, and hand in the written questions on the readings on the day that they are due. All students are expected to attend class and discuss the readings.

Keep current and avoid being late. Please turn off cell phones during class time. You may use personal computers but only for class work – not for checking email or social media.

If you have a health problem or another emergency that requires you to miss a class, please inform me of the situation before the class if possible, or as soon after the class as you can. A hybrid class is somewhat flexible with regard to your schedule but you must be responsible for managing your time and for getting online each week no matter what else is going on in your life. A trip associated with your job is not an excuse for not participating in the forums, nor is a problem with your personal computer. There are many ways to get online in hotels and in campus computing facilities. In general, you should sign into the class AT LEAST 3 times during the weeks when the class is online.

Course Evaluation - grades will be based on all of the following:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>In-class Attendance, Participation &amp; Forums</th>
<th>Written Reading Questions</th>
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<tr>
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Percentage
Mid-term Exam 25%
Final Exam 25%
Total 100%

Assessment of weekly written reading questions

Every week you will be asked to answer a series of questions about the reading. These assignments are designed to insure that you paid attention to the most important aspects of the reading, and enable in-class or forum discussion. The answers should not be any longer than they need to be; in most cases, 2-3 pages in total should suffice.

Evaluation of these weekly assignments reflect whether or not you have achieved an accurate understanding of the various readings and whether or not you reflect those ideas well in written English. Scores will range from 1-3 (minimally adequate to truly exceptional.)

Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to “Turnitin.com” to insure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from another student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words!

Assessment of online discussion forums

The forum offers a complementary approach to the in-class teaching. You will be required to do your readings as well but instead of participating in class discussion, you will respond to questions, and start your own questions on the weekly topic.

Of great importance in an online learning environment is the opportunity for students to discuss course topics with each other. Students are required to communicate their insights and thoughts pertaining to reading and listening assignments, while learning from one another in the process. Forum discussions are also a means for the instructor to identify whether or not the student comprehends required reading assignments.

It is expected that students will engage in the weekly forums at least three times each week. Forums include instructor-generated questions and student-to-student interaction.

Students can respond to the Forum question at anytime during the day or night.
As described above, your grade is based upon participation in each weekly forum. The forum is like a class discussion. Each forum has a question(s) to get you started – you may choose to discuss one or all, or to comment on some other aspect of the week’s topic, or to ask or answer a question.

A forum is an interactive discussion and your contribution will be evaluated on a scale (1-3) from minimally adequate to truly exceptional.

The score reflects:

- **How early & how often you participated.** Signing on twice to interact with other students regarding one of the questions is minimally adequate, whereas more extensive participation earns you more points. Earlier participation in the week is rewarded as long as it is thoughtful. The first three students who participate in a substantive way in any forum receive additional credit for this alone.

- **Was your participation interactive?** Remember, this is a discussion – it is better to demonstrate understanding of the ideas of others before going on to your own opinion than to just “splash” your own ideas onto the page. On the other hand, passively “agreeing” with what others have written doesn’t contribute much to a discussion.

- **Were your comments thoughtful and based on the readings?** Did they reflect an accurate understanding of the material being discussed or were they riddled with errors regarding the course material.

- **Were your opinions backed by personal experience or other types of evidence?** Did you draw on readings from other courses, current news, or online sources of information in a manner that contributes to the discussion?

- **Were your comments expressed clearly and appropriately?** Do they show mastery of persuasive written English? *Please do not “flame” in these forums; be courteous of others who will be reading your comments.*

The weighting of these components is approximately equal.

**Assessment of in-class participation.**

You will be assessed on your in-class participation.

Your final grade is based in part on your participation in class discussions during the weeks the class meets together. Your contribution will be evaluated on a scale (1-3) from minimally
adequate to truly exceptional, based on the quality, thoughtfulness, and frequency of your contributions to class discussions.

**Exams**

There will also be a mid-term and a final exam, each worth 25% of the final grade.

**Topics (In Class and Online):**

**Jan. 28, 2014 Class: Introduction & Orientation**

**Feb. 4, 2014 Online: The Power of Theory**

Required reading and listening:


Listening to economists with different ideas:

Milton Friedman, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfdRpyfEmBE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfdRpyfEmBE) [30mins, watch first 10mins]

Paul Krugman "Income Inequality and the Middle Class" [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kwACwFK5A&feature=PlayList&p=006DFDEAD59BB66E&playnext=1&index=21](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kwACwFK5A&feature=PlayList&p=006DFDEAD59BB66E&playnext=1&index=21) [7:14]
Joseph Stiglitz "Market Fundamentalism is Dead"  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_2Tv2GPs0 [4:14]

Optional:


Feb. 11, 2014 Class: The Division of Labor & Scientific Management


Optional:

Edward S. Herman, "Karl Marx and the Reopening of His System," excerpt from *New Politics*.

**Feb. 18, 2014 Online: Capitalism**


**Feb. 25, 2014 Class: Motivating and Managing Employees**


March 4, 2014 Online: Mid-term Exam

March 11, 2014 Class: Markets, Institutions and Competing Theories of IR


March 18, 2014 Spring Break

March 25, 2014 Online: Problems with Managing


Optional:


**April 1, 2014 Class: Industrial Democracy**


Trist, *The Evolution of Socio-Technical Systems*

April 8, 2014 Online: Democracy and Inequality


Optional:


Arlie Hochschild, Second Shift Chapters 1-2, pp. 2-21. (gender and inequality)

April 15, 2014 Class: Changing Relations between Labor and Management in a Global Economy


Video: Crossfire Debate

**April 22, 2014 Online: Human Resource Management, Industrial Relations & Organizational Behavior**


**April 29, 2014  Final Exam**