

**PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**

37:575:395:03

Spring 2015

Teresa Poor, Professor – tpoor@aleph-naught.net

Meeting by appointment.

COURSE SUMMARY

Labor is a broad topic that can be approached from a variety of perspectives. This course is designed to familiarize students with some of the key traditional perspectives, and to give students an opportunity to apply these perspectives to contemporary issues in Labor Studies. Students will be asked to read the assigned scholarship for the arguments, to take a position on those arguments, and to scrutinize the argument and its relationship to the evidence. Students will also be required to participate in discussions and give presentations. Some of the readings are difficult. Students who enroll in the course must be labor studies majors or minors, and must have earned 15 or more credits in labor studies. A student who does not meet these requirements must seek permission from the instructor in order to take this class.

COURSE READINGS

All course readings will be posted on Sakai.

CLASS 1, Jan. 22:

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Introductions
2. Hand out syllabus

CLASS 2, Jan. 29:

READINGS DUE:

1. “What does labor want?”, quote by Samuel Gompers, 1915.
2. “Lessons for Resisting Useless Vices”, in Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking Glass World, by Eduardo Galeano.
3. “World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015”, published by the International Labour Organization, January 19, 2015.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Submit weekly entry answers to questions related to readings. Questions posted on Sakai.
2. Watch and discuss movie Commanding Heights: New Rules of the Game.

3. Review syllabus and receive facilitation and group assignments.

CLASS 3, Feb. 5:

SUMMARY: In its capitalist form, the market of exchange has been linked to freedom, prosperity, and development. We will explore how three classic scholars, Adam Smith, F.A. Hayek, and Joseph Schumpeter establish these links.

READINGS DUE:

1. Chapters 1, 2, 3. An Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations, by Adam Smith.
2. Chapter 3. The Road to Serfdom, by F.A. Hayek
3. “Creative Destruction”, by Joseph Schumpeter.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions and present the groups’ answers in class.

CLASS 4, Feb. 12:

SUMMARY: In its capitalistic form, the market of exchange and production has also been linked to inequality, oppression, and unequal development. We will explore how Karl Marx and Immanuel Wallerstein establish these links.

READINGS DUE:

1. Chapters 4, 5, and 6. A Critique of Political Economy: Capital, Vol. 1, by Karl Marx
2. Selected reading from The Decline of American Power, by Immanuel Wallerstein

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 5, Feb. 19:

SUMMARY: We turn to contemporary scholarship on markets and labor. Will unregulated markets and global divisions of labor increase prosperity and freedom? Or, will the trajectory of capitalism lead to increasing inequality, instability, and oppression? Are the links and conclusions made by scholars today similar to the links and conclusions made by past scholars?

READINGS DUE:

1. “Freedom is Just Another Word”, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, by David Harvey.
2. “The Case for Free Trade”, by Milton and Rose Friedman

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

Class 6, Feb. 26:

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Movie: “Life and Debt” - Parts
2. Review
3. Hand Out Take-Home Test

CLASS 7, Mar. 5:

SUMMARY: Human beings labor and work. What are our labor and work experiences and expectations, and why would these experiences and expectations matter?

1. Take-Home Test Due
2. Move: Office Space

CLASS 8, Mar. 12:

SUMMARY: Do people need to be motivated to work? If so, why and what are the drivers that motivate people to work?

READINGS DUE:

1. “The Human Side of Enterprise,” by Douglas McGregor
2. “Work”, by C. Wright Mills
3. Chapters 3 and 4, Rivthead: Tales from the Assembly Line, by Ben Hamper.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

SPRING BREAK – March 14 to March 22

CLASS 9, Mar.26:

SUMMARY: We will explore concepts of alienation and emotional labor. We will review how scholars understand how we “feel” about our work lives.

READINGS DUE:

1. Selected pages from The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling, by Arlie Russel Hochschild .
2. “Turn the Radio to a Gospel Station”, by Jeanne Bryner.
3. “Estranged Labor”, by Karl Marx.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 10, April 2:

SUMMARY: Do managers and unions share similar organizational methods? Sometimes. We will explore bureaucratic approaches to organizing labor at work, and into unions. We will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of this approach.

READINGS DUE:

1. “Bureaucracy”, by Max Weber.
2. “Uses of Industrial Power”, by David Brody
3. Selected excerpts from Scientific Management, by Frederick Winslow Taylor.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.

CLASS 11, April 9:

SUMMARY: We will explore debates within industrial and employment relations.

READINGS DUE:

1. “Reflections on the ‘High Performance’ Paradigm’s Implications for Industrial Relations as a Field”, by John Godard and John T. Delaney. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2000).
2. Comment by Thomas Kochan, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Jul., 2000), pp. 704-711.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Assign students to debate teams.

CLASS 12, April 16:

SUMMARY: We will explore the right to associate and the right to work.

READINGS DUE:

1. “The Power of the Market” from Free to Choose: A Personal Statement, by Rose and Milton Friedman
2. “Freedom of Association: Lessons Learned”, 97th Session of the ILO, 2008.
3. Selected pages from the Gompers v. Allen Debate, 1920.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Assign students to debate teams.

CLASS 13, April 23

IN CLASS DEBATE. EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED.

CLASS 14, April 30:

SUMMARY: Sometimes workers join social movements which change the political and economic landscape. What is a “movement”? We will explore this question in this class by reviewing a primary theory that defines a “social movement” and by exploring instances of “daily forms of resistance”.

READINGS DUE:

1. “Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay, Change”, by Zald and Ash.
2. “Shiftless of the World Unite!”, Race Rebels, by Robin Kelley
3. “Structuring of Protest”, Poor People’s Movements: How They Succeed, Why They Fail, by Piven and Cloward

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

1. Prior to class, all students who are not facilitating must post your entries to the week’s readings on Sakai’s “Assignment” site.
2. Facilitators lead group discussions.
3. Hand out final, and review.

FINAL DUE ON MAY 7:

The final is due by 6 p.m., on May 7, 2015. Upload your final to Sakai’s “Assignment” site. It may not be longer than eight pages, and it must be typed and double spaced.

GRADING AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Weekly Entries (20%)(80 points)

a. Rutgers University has an attendance policy (26 points):

Students are expected to attend all scheduled course meetings, although no special provisions are normally made for reporting occasional absences from class. It is the policy of the university to excuse without penalty students who are absent because of religious observance and to allow the makeup of work missed because of such absences. A student absent from an examination because of required religious observance will be given an opportunity to make up the examination without penalty.

We will abide by this attendance policy except that each student may have one absence that will not be counted against him or her.

b. Weekly Entries(54 points)

All students who are not assigned to facilitate must submit a weekly entry, which should be posted on Sakai at the “Assignments” tab. Each entry will be a short response to the weekly entry questions posted on Sakai in the Assignments tab. The weekly entry must be posted prior to each class. The entry is a response to each reading assigned for the week. For example, if there are three readings assigned then there will be three responses. A response should be no more than a short paragraph (approximately five sentences).

Class Participation and Facilitation Assignment (30%)(120 points):

The Group

Students will be broken down into separate Groups on the second day of class. Students will remain in these Groups for the entire semester.

The Group Facilitator Assignment (95 points)

During the semester, one student in each group will act as the facilitator. This facilitator role will rotate throughout the semester. The student who acts as the facilitator must do the following:

- a. The facilitator is responsible for leading the other students in the group through that week’s reading assignment.
- b. By 11:55 p.m. on the Tuesday before each class, the facilitator will submit his or her typed answers to his or her assigned questions (posted on Sakai) and will upload the answer to the “Assignment” site. I will review and comment on that answer by Thursday morning. My review and comments will be given to the facilitator and will be geared toward helping the facilitator lead the group discussion scheduled for later that night.
- c. The facilitator will then lead the group discussion and stand before the larger class to present the group’s answers.

The Group’s Responsibility for Weekly Questions, Answers, and Discussion (25 points)

- a. Each member of the group must be prepared to discuss answers to the Group’s facilitation questions. These facilitation questions will be posted on Sakai.
- b. I will assess each student’s participation in the small group and in the larger class discussion, and that assessment will be incorporated into each student’s grade. To do well in this part of the class, each student must show that they have read and thought about the material, and are prepared to discuss the material.

Midterm: (25%)(100 points)

The midterm will be no more than 8 pages, typed and double spaced.

The Final (25%)(100 points)

The final will be no more than 8 pages, typed, and double spaced.

Grading

Total 400 Points

A = 400-360

B+ = 340-359

B = 320-339

C+ = 300-319

C = 280-299

D+ = 260-279

D = 240-259

F = 236 or below.

“Office Hours”

If you email me anytime between Monday and Tuesday, I will respond to your email by Wednesday evening. I will respond to all other email when I am able. Speak with me after class if you need to arrange a time to meet.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TIMELY SUBMITTED. POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS.