SYLLABUS

Economics of the Employment Relationship
37:575:325:90
Fall 2017

Professor: Dr. Ruth Ruttenberg
Email: ruth.ruttenberg@rutgers.edu

Technical Support:
It is the student’s responsibility to be competent in maneuvering around the course and using course tools.
When a student has a technical question or experiences difficulties, it is the student’s responsibility to seek assistance.
Your instructor cannot solve technical problems. Request assistance from helpdesk personnel.

   Recommended: Local Rutgers Helpdesk
   Call: 848-932-4702
   7 Days a week: 9 am – 6 pm
   - Or -
   Send an Email: help@ecollege.rutgers.edu

   Pearson Learning Studio (eCollege) Platform Helpdesk:
   Call toll free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
   877- 7RUTGER (877-778-8437)

Learning Objectives. The student is able to:

School of Management and Labor Relations:

   • Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
   • Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

   • Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).
   • Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
Course Learning Objectives from the Instructor

Learning objectives for this class are:

(1) for students to understand the theoretical underpinnings of labor economics.

(2) for students to be knowledgeable about key policy issues affecting the economics of employment relationships.

(3) for students to be able to access, organize, and analyze public data for relevant decision-making in the workplace and for policy.

Class Sessions

Class begins Tuesday, September 5, 2017. The last day students will be required to log into the course shell is December 13. With the exception of the first week of the semester, course weeks will begin on Mondays and end 11:59 pm Sundays.

Students should log in as soon as possible to familiarize themselves with the tools used throughout the semester to access and submit assignments. It is important to keep up with the assignments, which means students should check the course shell and email frequently. Use the syllabus, course calendar, and instructor announcements as a guide for due dates.

Course Materials

Textbook

All other course materials are linked to or uploaded into the course shell.

Assignments

Forums
Asynchronous, eight (8) forums; 50 points each; 1st comment deadline 11:59 pm Thursday; final comments by 11:59 pm Sunday

The purpose of these assignments is to hold meaningful discussions on course topics with fellow students.

The instructor provides directions on the forum assignment, requiring all students provide a 500 word 1st comment.

In order to receive maximum credit for the forum, students must offer a high quality 1st comment and interact substantively with each other about the contents of other students’ 1st comments and course content.

Instructions for developing a 500 word 1st comment for each forum are available as a link on the week page associated with the week that the forum will be held. Participate in forums by clicking on a link that’s located under the week page (example week 4) associated with the week that the forum is being held.
Journal Entries
7 Journal entries; submission deadline Sundays, 11:59 pm; worth 50 points each entry

The purpose for the Journal assignment is to show your understanding of course material for the week.

Instructions for completing each Journal entry are available through a link on the Journal home page.

Submit journal entries in the appropriate folder in dropbox. (Example: Journal 1)

Final Exam
Take home, open book, worth 250 points; submission deadline last day of classes; Wednesday, December 13.

The final exam involves working with tables, developing essays on specific topics, and identifying the importance of what the student has learned throughout the semester.

Extra Credit
Quizzes
There are 3 extra credit quizzes that occur weeks 6, 10 and 12 of the semester. Each quiz has a value of 25 points, and is computer graded and recorded.

Extra Credit Projects
Other extra credit opportunities embedded in the course involve writing assignments. These opportunities occur weeks 6 and 10. Each extra credit writing assignment is worth up to 30 points.

Grading
Final grades are based on 1,000 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Interpretation I</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>OUTSTANDING</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>860-899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>800-859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>760-799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>SATISFACTORY</td>
<td>700-759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments: Points and percentage associated with final grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Point Worth</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forums</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to earn full points, you must: show (1) mastery of the subject, (2) critical thinking about the topic, (3) appropriate independent research, and (4) quality writing.

## Course Policies

### Deadlines and Late Penalty

Journal assignments should be submitted and students’ final forum comments completed by 11:59 pm on the date the assignment is due, unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor. If you have a specific problem with making a deadline, please contact the professor in advance.

There is a penalty of 10 percent per day for late Journal entry submissions.

Forums cannot be made up (unless there is prior instructor permission), since they require interaction with peers. If a student misses a 1st comment deadline (without prior instructor approval), 11:59 pm Thursdays, he/she will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

The final exam is expected on the date due, unless previous arrangements have been made with the professor.

Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source for academic work in this course.

### Communication

Students are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis and emailing the instructor with questions. The instructor will respond to emails promptly.

On Mondays, which serves as the first day of each course week, the instructor will send the class a weekly message. Students should always check their inbox on Mondays and report if they have not received the weekly message. Students may also receive individual messages from the instructor regarding a variety of topics throughout the semester.

When communicating with classmates, proper etiquette is required at all times. All interaction should be courteous. A response that bullies, uses name calling, or directly attacks or threatens another student is grounds for failing the assignment.

### Academic Integrity: Plagiarism

In this course, plagiarism is grounds for failing the assignment. Use quotation marks and citations appropriately.

A guide to avoiding plagiarism is provided under Course Home in the course shell. It is a student’s responsibility to review the document and follow guidelines.

### Writing Requirement and Citations
All submissions, to receive a passing grade, must be grammatically correct.

Feel free to get assistance from the Writing Center on campus. (Help is also available from the Writing Center on-line.)

Students with Disabilities
To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, students with a disability must send their letter of accommodation to the instructor and discuss the needed accommodation(s) as early in the semester as possible. For more information regarding the process of applying for a letter of accommodation:
https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines.
https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>What is Due</th>
<th>Reading and Written Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit I: The Theoretical Underpinnings of Labor Economics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/5-9/10/2017)</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td><em>Dollars and Sense</em>, Chapters 1 and 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Economics?</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td><strong>Student Introduction</strong> 1 page – to include an introduction of yourself, as well as your specific areas of interest in the economics of employment relationships. <strong>Due Sunday, September 10, 11:59pm Upload into document sharing.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Labor Economics?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong> (9/11-9/17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the Labor Theory of Value?</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td><em>Dollars and Sense</em>, Chapters 3, 4, and 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Neoclassical Approach</td>
<td>Forum 1</td>
<td>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; Secondary posts due Sunday, 11:59 p.m. (50 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of employment discrimination</td>
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</table>
### Week 3 (9/18-9/24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is a Labor Market?</th>
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<tr>
<td>What is Elasticity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laws of Supply and Demand</td>
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**Reading and Viewing**

- Labour Market (from France)
  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSDd6re92TY

- Labour Market Equilibrium – Excess Supply and Demand for Labour
  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBOPPzvUu2E

- The Demand Curve
  

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**Journal 1**

In at least 50 words each, respond to the following 5 questions:

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?

**Due Sunday, 11:59 pm (50 points)**

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### Unit II: Key Policy Issues Affecting the Economics of Employment Relationships

**Week 4 (9/25-10/1)**

**Reading:**

- Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, “Labor, the Economy and Monetary Policy,”
  


**Forum 2 – Public Policy Influencing the Supply and Demand for Labor**

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
| Week 5  
(10/2-10/8) | **Microeconomic vs. Macroeconomic Analysis**  
**Reading and Viewing:**  
*Dollars and Sense*, pp. 103-187.  
Reich, “The Truth About the Economy,”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynlS5rM7bgU.  
Reich, “Raise the Minimum Wage to $15 per Hour,”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqtl53V3JI.  
Boudreaux, Don, Learn Liberty, “The ‘Real Truth About the Economy’: Have Wages Stagnated?”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6FmhXQ32Wo.  
**Forum 3 – Public Policy and Minimum Wage**  
In 500 words, with at least three new sources, in addition to assigned readings, 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 $15.00. 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. (50 points) |
| Week 6  
(10/9-10/15) | **Role of Unions**  
**Reading and Viewing:**  
AFL-CIO, “About the AFL-CIO,” http://www.aflcio.org/About  
“US Inequality Debate Turns to Decline of Unions,”  
http://news.yahoo.com/us-inequality-debate-turns-decline-unions-033745327.html;_ylt=A0LEVvebSgJV13UATG4lnIlQ  
**Forum 4 – Role of Unions in Building the Middle Class**  
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 two new sources. Respond to at least 2 student posts.  
Primary post due Thursday, 11:59 pm; Secondary posts due Sunday, 11:59 p.m. (50 points) |
| **Extra Credit Quiz 1** |
There are five true/false questions, each worth 5 points. Open between Sunday October 15 and Tuesday October 17.

**Extra Credit – Project Labor Agreements**

**Reading and Viewing**


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


Write in 500 words, the pros and cons of Project Labor Agreements, as a tool of developing middle class jobs and careers. (up to 30 points)

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<tr>
<th>Week 7 (10/16-10/22)</th>
<th>Viewing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Capital/Return on Investment for Education</strong></td>
<td>“Human Capital Theory” (definition), <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BueM_7YkO30">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BueM_7YkO30</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The New Science of Human Capital” (HR within companies) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3rZSlqZ0pM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3rZSlqZ0pM</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The Human Capital Report” (global) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-K8kGvJX94">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-K8kGvJX94</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Davos 2014 – Higher Education – Investment or Waste?” <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4y5QDxts28">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4y5QDxts28</a></td>
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**Forum 5 – Return on Investment for Education**

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 Thursday, 11:59 pm; Secondary posts due Sunday, 11:59 p.m. (50 points)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8 (10/23-10/29)</th>
<th>Reading and Viewing:</th>
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</table>
### Union-Busting

Collective Bargaining and Organizing


### Forum 6 – Right to Work Legislation

Recently, states such as Wisconsin and Michigan have passed 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 Thursday. Secondary posts, to at least two classmates, is due on Sunday. (50 points)

### Week 9 (10/30-11/5)

#### Retirement

Fair Labor Standards

Reading and Viewing:


“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=qM1LbsNwQel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qM1LbsNwQel).


“Rep. Mike Tobash explains defined contribution pension plan,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPPmV9khlDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPPmV9khlDI).

### Forum 7 – Defined Benefit vs. Defined Contribution Pension Plans

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 two new sources. Your response
should be 500 words and use at least one new source. Respond to at least 2 classmates.

Primary response is due on Thursday, with secondary responses due by Sunday. (50 points)

Reading and Viewing:
Explore the following web page, [http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/](http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/).
Now go to [http://www.dol.gov/whd/reg-library.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/reg-library.htm), to review 11 pieces of federal legislation that govern wages and hours.

Forum 8 - Legislation Affecting the Employment Relationship
For each of the 11 pieces of legislation discussed on the above web site, provide a sentence about what specifically is most meaningful about that legislation for a worker and a sentence about what specifically is most meaningful/important to an employer. Respond to at least 2 classmates.

Primary response is due on Thursday, with secondary responses by Sunday. (50 points)

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Week 10
(11/6-11/12)

Relevant Governmental Bodies, Programs, and Legislation

Reading and Viewing:
Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Mine Safety and Health Administration
National Labor Relations Board
[http://www.nlrb.gov/](http://www.nlrb.gov/)

Journal 2 – Government and Employment Relations
Focusing on economic issues, write a paragraph explaining each (each with at least 2 sources): Family and Medical 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 summarize what you learned from reviewing the specific submission of that labor body. Include at least 3 specific findings.) Due Sunday. (50 points)

Reading
Go to U.S. Department of Labor, [http://www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov) and click on Agencies
Journal 3 – Agencies of the Department of Labor
Write at least two sentences in your own words about the functions of 15 of the 28 DOL agencies. Be specific about the work of each agency. Due Sunday (50 points)

Extra Credit Quiz 2
There are five true/false questions, each worth 5 points. The quiz opens Sunday, November 12, and closes Tuesday, November 14.

Extra Credit Project – Economics of Occupational Safety and Health
Go to https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/safetypays/estimator.html, where OSHA helps a business owner to 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. (Up to 30 points)

Unit III:
Ability to Access, Organize, and Analyze Public Data
For Relevant Decision-Making in the Workplace and for Policy

Week 11
(11/13-11/19)
Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics
Presenting Data in Tables and in Charts


Become familiar with NAICS classifications and the BLS inflation calculator. (Begin with https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/.) All tables need to have sufficient titles and headings to be able to stand alone. Always show the specific url source for your tables.

Journal 4 – Economic Terms Used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics
For each of the terms below, provide, in your own words, a definition and a specific example:
1. Average hourly earnings vs median hourly earnings
2. Cost of living and how it’s determined by BLS
3. Cost of living adjustment (COLA) in collective bargaining
4. Current dollars
5. Earnings (in contrast with wages), as used by BLS
6. NAICS
7. Prevailing wages
Journal 5 – Finding and Organizing Employment-Related Data
Exercises finding data and organizing it.

1. Compare, in a table, employment and both median and mean hourly wages in New Jersey for five types of job categories in “Food Preparation Serving Related Occupations,” 35-0000. Then, in 2-3 sentences, summarize and then analyze what you found.


3. Make a table for construction wages for occupational category 47-0000, for New Jersey and four nearby states. What do the numbers say about NJ construction wages? Be analytic.

4. Make a table of union density in 10 states, with one being New Jersey. What do the data say about union density in NJ?

5. Using the Census for Fatal Occupational Injuries, make a table showing fatalities, 2011-2014, for slips, trips, and falls; struck by an object or equipment; exposure to environmental heat; exposure to electricity. Then, in 2-3 sentences, summarize and analyze what you found.

(Inflation calculator: http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

Due: Sunday, 11:59 pm. (50 points)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Final – The final has 3 parts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(12/10-12/13)</td>
<td>1. Using your table, from Journal 7, build the case (in written form and in tables) for a particular wage for 2018 and 2019 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. (150 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>2. Write 500-1000 words, tell 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. (75 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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. (25 point)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due:</td>
<td>December 15, 11:59 pm. (250 points)</td>
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