INTRODUCTION TO LABOR STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY 37:575:100:03 Tentative - Subject to Change
Fall 2016

Classroom: Room 003, Janice H. Levin Building (JLB), Livingston Campus, 94 Rockafeller Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854
Course schedule: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:40 pm – 3:00 pm, September 6 – December 13, 2015
Final Exam: TBD

Instructor:
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Course Overview: The course is designed to give you an overview of various aspects of labor and employment relations, including the perspective of working people and their labor organizations. We will also study the changing nature of work, workers and workers’ institutions and organizations; the impact of technological change, the economic cycle, social class, immigration, race, ethnicity and gender; the role of government in labor policy; the history of unions, the role of unions in politics and challenges the labor movement faces today; and collective bargaining and workers’ rights issues.

Class will include lectures, small group discussions, simulations, in-class assignments, and media presentations. Students are encouraged to freely express their views. Respect for the appreciation of different viewpoints will be a guiding principle in this course. Note: this syllabus may be changed or modified as the course proceeds.

Note: The third edition contains updated chapters and information not in the second edition.
All readings, except for the textbook, are available on Rutgers Sakai, which you may access at http://sakai.rutgers.edu. To log on, enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right hand corner. Click on the tab: 37:575:100:03 and then click on modules on the menu on the left hand side of the page.

The syllabus, schedule, and assignments are subject to change as the course evolves.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Read the entire syllabus** and make sure you understand it. This is your contract with the instructor.

2. **Be prepared for class.** Always read the material assigned for a class before the class. For instance, complete the reading for September 12 before our class meets on September 12, complete the reading for September 15 before our class meets on September 15, etc. **Bring the reading material to class with you** in case you need to refer to it (for instance, for an activity, quiz, or discussion). Check your Rutgers email regularly for class announcements.

3. **Be present and be on time.** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to us. Please note: Our attendance policy is that students begin with an “A” for attendance. However, the grade for attendance will decline each time a student is absent, late, or leaves early. If you are late or leave early, you will be charged with ½ class absence. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence, lateness or need to leave early, it must be provided to us in writing in advance or immediately after the occurrence. Even excused absences must be reported via the University absence reporting website indicated above.

4. **Participate in discussions and group activities.** Students will be divided into groups for breakout sessions and projects. The teaching assistants and us will supervise the groups. Your participation in these group situations goes to your participation grade. Explain your views. Ask questions. Listen – don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore other views. Do your share of the work in simulations and in-class group activities. Texting, talking on your phone, FB, Twitter, etc. are prohibited in class (unless part of the group activity).

5. **Take careful lecture notes.** You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you miss a class. These are not provided by the instructors or by the teaching assistants.

6. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity requires that all academic work be the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the university community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. For more information on the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, see https://slwordpress.rutgers.edu/academicintegrity/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI_Policy_2013.pdf

The instructor for this course holds the copyright to the course teaching materials, including lecture slides, discussion questions, exams, and assignments. Students may not copy or distribute this material without the permission of the instructor. Unauthorized distributions of course materials are serious offenses. For
Evaluation
For purposes of grading, there are five components of the course:

- Family Interview Exercise (5%)
- Class preparation, homework, attendance, and participation (20%)
  - Attendance will be taken in class. Completion of homework and participation in group activities and discussions will be tracked.
- Written assignments (20%)
  - There are two written assignments for this class. The first is a short response paper based on your family interview exercise and the second is a final reflection paper on course themes. Each paper is worth 10% of your course grade.
- Collective bargaining exercise (10%)
  - The entire class will participate in a collective bargaining exercise spanning a couple of weeks. Students will be assigned to a union team or to a management team and will be required to negotiate a contract by a set date and time. You will be graded individually and as a team on this exercise.
- Exams (45%)
  - There will be two in-class exams (a midterm and a final) that are predominantly “objective” – a combination of short-answer and short essay items. Both are closed book. The final exam will cover material after the midterm. The midterm exam is worth 20% of your course grade and the final exam is worth 25% of your course grade.

Learning Objectives
Students in this course should achieve the following SAS, SMLR, and LSER learning objectives:

**SAS Core Curriculum - Social Analysis (SCL):**
- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place (Goal h).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political system and other forms of social organization (Goal m).
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations (Goal n).

**School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR):**
- 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 (LSER):**
- 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).

**Unit I: The Situations Facing Working People**

Most people have to work. Work shapes our lives and our conceptions of self, and at the same time it provides us with income. When work is insecure, low-paid, or we are not accorded dignity on the job, we suffer. On the other hand, when work is rewarding, it enlarges our capacities, allows us to connect to others, and enables us to contribute to the community at large.
In this unit, you will have a chance to ponder your family's history of work, consider how work has changed in the last 150 years, and explore the relationship of work and social class. A major topic is the prevalence of economic inequality in the United States today.

**September 6: Introduction and Course Requirements**
- Review syllabus and discuss course expectations, assignments, and goals.

**First class assignments:**
- Read the syllabus thoroughly. Learn how to use Sakai and locate readings.
- **Family Member Interview:** See Family Interview assignment sheet (also posted on Sakai). Assignment due in class on September 13.

**September 8: Career Opportunities**
- What is a good job?
- What is a bad job?
- What jobs have you held? What are your hopes for the future?
- What is Labor Studies and how does it help us understand issues around work?

**September 13: Work and Our Lives**
- Lecture and class discussion on the contours of work in the U.S.
- Assign discussion groups.

**READING:**

**September 15: Family Histories**
- Group discussions on your family interview assignments and how they relate to course themes.
- Family interview assignment due in class.

**READINGS:**

**September 20: Work in the “New Economy” part 1**
- Film: *The Big One* (directed by Michael Moore, 1997).
- Hand out and discuss written assignment #1 (due in class October 6).

**READING:**

**September 22: Work in the “New Economy” part 2**
- Discussion of *The Big One*.

**READING:**
September 27: Social Class and Culture
- Lecture and class discussion on the theories, ideologies, structures, and experiences of class in New Jersey and the U.S.

READINGS:

September 29: Economic Inequality
- Group activity: what would ideal wealth distribution look like and why?
- Review of the causes and consequences of inequality.

READINGS:
- Sweet and Meiksins, Changing Contours of Work, chapter 3.

October 4: The Industrial Revolution and the Origins of the Labor Movement
- Film: The Grand Army of Starvation (directed by Stephen Brier, 1987).
- Group discussions: What has changed and what has remained similar about the politics of poverty and work between 1877 and today?

READING:

October 6: The New Deal and the Rise of the Labor Movement
- Lecture on the New Deal and the growth the labor movement in the 1930s and 1940s.
- Video excerpt from Mean Things Happen, part of The Great Depression PBS documentary series.
- Written assignment #1 due in class.

READINGS:

Unit II: Diversity, Work, and Employee Rights

Employment law is the fundamental law of the workplace. It is essential for you to know something about your rights at work, or lack thereof. And obviously, future managers need to recognize their own rights and how they can, and cannot, treat employees.

Employment law is mutable—it has changed in the past and may change in the future. One of the biggest changes in American employment law occurred in the 1960s in the face of demands for greater equality by race, color, national origin, religion and gender. Employment
opportunities for people of different races and national origins have become more equal under the law since then, but racial and ethnic divisions and discrimination still persist throughout the workforce.

Gender also matters for employment outcomes, although again, the workplace is much more equal today than it was in 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was passed. As more women have entered the workplace on a full-time basis, families are increasingly juggling the demands of two (or more) jobs along with the need to care for their families.

October 11: Employment Rights and Job Security in the United States part 1
- “Know Your Rights” – in class quiz and discussion.

READINGS:
- Sweet and Meiksins, Changing Contours of Work, chapter 4.

October 13: Employment Rights and Job Security in the United States part 2
- Lecture and discussion of major workplace labor laws and regulations, including the at-will doctrine and its exceptions, antidiscrimination, and wage and hour laws.

READINGS:

October 18: Worker Safety and Health
- Film: Can’t Take No More (produced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 1980).
- Discussion of occupational safety and health.
- Midterm exam overview.

READINGS:
- Workers’ Memorial Day Interview with the Hoyt Family, New Jersey Work Environment Council, April 24, 2016: http://www.njwec.org/PDF/Press/2016/InterviewHoytfamilytranscriptWEC.pdf

October 20: MIDTERM EXAM (IN-CLASS)

October 25: Work, Race, Ethnicity, and Equality part 1
- Film: At the River I Stand (directed by David Appleby, Allison Graham, and Steven Ross, 1993).
READINGS:

October 27: Work, Race, Ethnicity, and Equality part 2
- Discussion of historical and contemporary issues surrounding race and employment.

READINGS AND AUDIO STORY:

November 1: Gender and Work
- Presentation on the relationships between gender, working conditions, and employment opportunities.
- In-class discussion on “occupational ghettos,” “the glass ceiling,” and possible remedies.

READINGS:

November 3: Work and Family
- Guest presentation on the movement for paid family leave by Yarrow Willman-Cole, Program Coordinator with the Working Families Program at the Center for Women and Work, Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, [http://cww.rutgers.edu/](http://cww.rutgers.edu/)

READINGS:

November 8: Immigration and Labor part 1
- Discussion of immigration and labor issues in the U.S.
- Film excerpts from *Bread and Roses* (directed by Ken Loach, 2000).

READINGS:

November 10: Rutgers 250th Anniversary Event – Bhairavi Desai

READINGS:


Union membership grew rapidly in the 1930s-1950s. Collective bargaining between unions and employers in major industries helped raise the standard of living not only for union members, but also for the entire workforce. For the past 35 years, however, the labor movement has been in steep decline in the U.S.

In this final unit for the course we will try our hand at collective bargaining during an in-class simulation. We will also explore the reasons why the labor movement has been in decline, as well as some of the newest and most innovative efforts on the part of unions, worker centers, and community organizations to organize workers in the ever-changing economy. The course will end with a discussion of public policies that could reshape the future of work.

November 15: Unions 101
- “Union knowledge” in class quiz and discussion.
- Presentation on the structure of the labor movement in the U.S. and New Jersey.
- Hand out Collective Bargaining simulation assignment guideline and assign bargaining teams.

READINGS:
- Excerpts from the National Labor Relations Act (Sakai).

November 17: Unions and Collective Bargaining
- The basics of collective bargaining under private and public sector labor laws.
- In-class preparation with your team: assign roles, revise, and finish contract proposals.
- Write first drafts of contract language proposals individually outside of class.

READINGS:

November 22: Collective Bargaining Simulation
- Bring contract proposals to class and begin bargaining!
- Hand out and discuss written assignment #2 (due in class December 5).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24: THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 29: Collective Bargaining Simulation continued
- Continue bargaining and reach a final settlement with the other side… if possible!
- Hand-in contract language bargained in class and notes from bargaining.
- Complete online peer and self-assessment for collective bargaining exercise (due by December 1).

**December 1: Organized Labor Today**
- Guest presentation on union organizing and strikes by Joel Brooks, organizer with Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE/AFT, AFL-CIO), [http://www.hpae.org/](http://www.hpae.org/)
- Begin studying for final exam!

**READINGS:**

**December 6: Organized Labor Tomorrow**
- Written assignment #2 due in class.
- Discussion of “union avoidance” strategies by employers and counter-measures by unions.
- Online peer and self review for collective bargaining exercise due.

**READING:**

**December 8: Public Policy and the Future of Work**
- Discuss how new public policies could address work and employment-related problems.
- Discussion of ways young students and workers (like yourselves!) can get involved.
- Continue studying for final exam!

**READINGS:**
- Sweet and Meiksins, chapter 8

**December 13: Final Exam Review**
- Overview of major course themes and review of final exam topics.
- Continue studying for final exam!

**FINAL EXAM – DATE AND TIME TBD**