

38:578:500: Introductory Seminar in Labor and Employment Relations  
Fall 2019

Instructor: Francis Ryan  
Office: 111 Labor Education Center  
Email: [fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu](mailto:fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu)  
Phone: 848-932-0303

Instructor: Ryan Greenbaum  
Office: 215B Janice Levin Building  
Email: [ryan.greenbaum@rutgers.edu](mailto:ryan.greenbaum@rutgers.edu)  
Phone: 848-445-4528

Classroom: Labor Education Center 130, Tuesday 4:30-7:10

**DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to introduce Master's students to research and findings in the fields of labor studies, employment relations and human resources, and to raise significant philosophical questions that lie at the core of the discipline. It is also designed to help students strengthen their analytical and writing skills; and it will provide students with an opportunity to engage a number of SMLR faculty in discussions about their areas of interest.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Students who successfully complete this course will meet the following official learning objectives of SMLR and MLER:

- Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional. (Goal I)
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background of a particular work situation (Goal IV)

In addition, successful students will also meet the following course specific goals:

1. Deepen their understanding of key historical and current workplace and social issues through exposure to a variety of research topics and methods; <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

2. Explore the ethical implications of alternative employment systems and relationships; <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>
3. Develop and improve analytical and writing skills; <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>
4. Be introduced to a number of faculty and through them to the scope of the MLER program so that they can make more informed choices about future course work and research sponsors; <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>
5. Create a culture of open discussion, constructive criticism and active collaboration between and among faculty and students. <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>

**THEMES:**

In addition to the topics to be covered by the presentations from other Rutgers faculty described below, the course will also address questions and concerns that illuminate key professional issues in the area of labor studies and employment relations. These continuing conversations will help to tie the different parts of the course together and accustom students to asking the most searching questions possible about the material under discussion.

Weekly Course Schedule:

September 3: Introduction to the Class

September 10: Paula Voos, Industrial Relations Frameworks

September 17: James Cooney, Esq. Employment Law

September 24: Bill Dwyer, Corporate Negotiation

October 1: Toby Schultz-Cleven, International and Comparative Industrial and Employment Relations

October 8: Mike Merrill, Labor and Employment History

October 15: Todd Vachon, Labor and Environmentalism

October 22: Carla Katz, Esq. Workers and Unions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

October 29: Naomi Williams, Working-class Activism

November 5: Joseph Blasi, Employee Ownership

November 12: Saul Rubinstein, Viewing Public School Reform through and Employment Relations and Industrial Democracy Lens

November 19: Francis Ryan, School Crossing Guards and Labor Feminism

November 26: Thanksgiving Break

December 3: Lisa Schur, Disability and Employment Discrimination

December 10: Final Class Meeting and ~~Overview~~Exam

**Course Expectations, Grading and Assignments**

**Forum Discussion 1: 30 Points**  
**Forum Discussion 2: 30 Points**  
**Forum Discussion 3: 30 Points**  
**Forum Discussion 4: 30 Points**  
**Forum Discussion 5: 30 Points**  
**Short Paper 1: 75 Points**  
**Short paper 2: 125 Points**  
**Final Exam: ~~250-200~~ Points**

**Total Points Available: ~~600-550~~ Points**

**Grade Scale (subject to change at professor discretion)**

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<u>90-100%</u>	<u>495-550</u>	<u>A</u>
<u>80-85.9</u>	<u>440-494</u>	<u>B</u>
<u>70-75.9</u>	<u>385-439</u>	<u>C</u>
<u>60-69.9</u>	<u>330-384</u>	<u>D</u>
<u>&lt;59.9</u>	<u>&lt; 329</u>	<u>F</u>

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### 1) Forum Discussion Posts

Follow the instructions for each Forum Discussion Post as they will vary. You may write a brief reflection on the assigned readings, complete a hypothetical or answer the questions posed. You must also write a couple paragraphs that raise questions and respond to the comments previously raised by others in the seminar.

30 points available for each Forum Discussion. 15 for your original post, due by Sunday at midnight, and 15 points for your responsive posts to other students due by Monday at midnight.

### 2) Written Assignments

#### Short papers:

**Short paper #1: Reflective Essay.** You will prepare a short 2-3 page paper exploring how one of the problems identified in one of the weeks would be viewed differently from an IR or HR perspective. Make sure to first identify the problem clearly and discuss why it is a problem. Please use proper citations.

**Short Paper #2: Persuasive Policy Essay.** A 3-4 page short written speech (as if to the membership of an organization), the purpose of which is to secure support for a specific policy proposal. You should choose another issue that you feel strongly about but relevant to our field. You need to go beyond your own experience to support your proposal with credible scientific research or similar authority. The essay or testimony needs to: (a) define the problem that the proposed policy or program is supposed to address; (b) describe the proposed solution, and (c) provide factual evidence to support the claims that your proposal warrants the group's attention and support.

### 3) Final Exam

The final exam will be a timed essay exam drawn from all of the topics for the course. Students will answer ~~five-four~~ out of six essay questions. The exam will be held on the final day of class and ~~Y~~ you will have ~~ninety (90)~~ the full class time ~~minutes to to~~ complete the exam.

**PLAGIARISM:** The extensive use of another person's ideas without proper citation is plagiarism and unacceptable. It can result in a failing grade and

disciplinary action through University channels. The same is true for any other form of cheating. For information about proper citation of written and web-based material, please read, “Documenting Sources” and “Correct Forms for Citation,” which is available on the Canvas web page for this course. For this course we will use the Chicago Style.