RUTGERS
School of Management
and Labor Relations

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Please note: this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the teaching professor.

Course Overview

The landscape of work is undergoing a profound transformation, and its implications will echo throughout our career paths for decades to come. This revolution is primarily driven by technological advancements, including artificial intelligence, robotics, and the rapid growth of digital platforms, all acting as catalysts for significant disruptions. These changes are further underscored by a gradual shift where knowledge is becoming the cornerstone of economic value, accompanied by a widening gap in power and wealth distribution.

The tangible effects of these shifts are already visible: a workforce divided into high-wage and low-wage sectors, the disruption of traditional job roles and industries, a trend towards shorter-term, project-based employment, and an increasing volatility in career pathways. However, amidst this disruption, there are also counter-narratives and opportunities emerging. We are witnessing a rise in skill levels, a shift towards more collaborative forms of work, the unlocking of human potential, and an increasing ability for individuals to shape their own professional journeys.

This course serves as an engagement, education, and interaction on these dynamics, with a focus on the diverse prospects for the future of work. We will analyze strategies that both current employees and new entrants to the workforce can utilize to adapt to and navigate these transformations successfully. Additionally, we will examine the roles of government policies, labor movements, and corporate strategies in shaping these changes to produce outcomes that benefit both the workforce and society as a whole. While acknowledging the challenges of predicting the future, our primary emphasis will be on actionable steps that individuals can take right away to thrive in this evolving landscape.

This course is listed as "Asynchronous content". See Rutgers University's explanation on asynchronous courses here: (https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/442). That is, this course will have a regular schedule of work and assignments due throughout each week, but it will not require you to be online at a particular time. Rather, I will provide materials—readings, videos, assignments, and exams—and you can access these materials and satisfy the course requirements within specified time frames.

One of the key advantages of remote, asynchronous courses is **inclusion** and **flexibility**. Students can learn and complete assignments anytime and anywhere they want, including in any

time zone. In addition, asynchronous courses can help increase cognitive engagement, because students will have more time to engage with and explore the course materials. For those who are interested in the benefits and challenges of taking asynchronous courses, here is a nice summary: https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/442.

Learning Goals

This course is designed to meet the following SMLR and MLER Learning Goals:

I) Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

II) Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

VI) Application –Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance

VII) Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations

Student Responsibilities

Completing synchronous courses requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While remote, asynchronous learning offers you flexibility and convenience to learn, you are still expected to:

- Have access to a reliable computer, and access to the Internet
- Log in to Canvas for your course **on a daily basis**
- Check for any announcements, syllabus updates, assignments, and/or discussions and respond accordingly
- Actively participate in the Discussion Forum
- Complete the assigned readings and multimedia, exercises and quizzes
- Adhere to all due dates

Make sure you have **an alternative plan of access to your Canvas course** in case your computer crashes (it happens). Additionally, be sure to backup your important documents and assignments on a flash drive or other external device.

Evaluation Methods

Weekly discussion forum	=	100
Weekly quiz/assignment	=	100
Mid-term and final open-book exams	=	200
Final reflection paper	=	100
Total points	=	*500 points*

Respect for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If you have already established accommodations with Student Accessibility Services, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

Rutgers Academic Integrity

Students in this class and in all courses at Rutgers University are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are among the behaviors that constitute violations of the Academic Integrity Policy. You are expected to be familiar with this policy. If you have questions about specific assignments, be sure to check with the instructor. The Academic Integrity Policy defines all forms of cheating and the procedures for dealing with violations. You should be familiar with this policy. The trust between the instructor and the class depends on your acceptance of this essential principle of behavior in the University. Do your own work and do not provide unauthorized assistance to others and you will find this course more rewarding.

Course Outline

The topics covered in this course may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Introduction: A Labor Studies Framework for the Future of Work
2. History and Context: History of Work and Technology
3. Technology:
   o   Robots
   o   Artificial Intelligence
   o   Blockchain and Big Data
4. Work Structures:
   o   Remote Work
   o   Gig Work and Platforms
5. Responses to Workplace Changes:
   o   Unions and NGOs
   o   Business
   o   Policy
6. Close: Preparing Yourself for the Future of Work

Schedule of Classes

This schedule may change during the semester. Always refer to the Canvas assignments for the latest information.

▾ **Unit 1 A Labor Studies framework for the future of work**

📄 [Required reading: Schulze-Cleven & Vachon. Building the future of work today - A Labor Studies perspective](#)

📄 [Required reading: What is the future of work? Redefining work, workforces, and workplaces](#)

📄 [required reading: The Thought of Work](#)

💬 [Discussion forum: Thought of work](#)
10 pts

🚀 [Weekly Quiz - Unit 1](#)

▾ **Unit 2 Technology and Work: Economic, Feminist, and Critical Race Theory Perspectives**

📄 [Required Video: Will automation take away all our jobs?](#)

📎 [Economic perspectives on technology: Autor et al. 2021](#)

📄 [Feminist perspectives on technology: Wajcman, J., 2010.](#)

📄 [Critical race theory perspective on technology: Ogbonnaya-Ogburu et al., 2020.](#)

💬 [Discussion Forum: Inside Walmart's Warehouse of the Future](#)
10 pts

🚀 [Weekly Quiz - Unit 2](#)

▼ Unit 3 How Technology Shapes Employment: Exploring Productivity, Reinstatement, and Displacement Effects

📄 **Acemoglu, D. & Restrepo, P., 2019. How technology displaces and reinstates labor.**

📄 **The future of warehouse work**

🔗 **The State of Industrial Robotics.pdf**

📄 **Helen's lecture video on the productivity, reinstatement, and displacement effects**

📄 **Video: Inside Amazon's robot revolution (5 mins)**

📄 **Discussion Forum: Why So Many Amazon Workers Are Getting Hurt**

🚀 **Weekly Quiz - Unit 3**