

Occupational Safety and Health Course Syllabus

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

School of Management and Labor Relations

Amy Bahruth: abahruth@rutgers.edu; 908-812-0974

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the important issues in Occupational Safety and Health. We will not only focus on the Occupational Safety and Health Act and its standards (or lack thereof), but on the larger political agenda of the global economy and how it impacts on the safety and health of workers around the world. The class style will be participatory, including small group discussions and activities. Related videos will supplement our class discussion.

The challenge of providing safe and healthy workplaces in a context of a market economy and global competition that produces pressure for low-cost production. Students will consider major types of workplace health and safety problems; review existing public policy in the area, and learn how to conduct a workplace audit. They also consider how employers, unions, and public policy might improve health and safety outcomes. Issues are addressed using multiple disciplines (sociology; history; industrial hygiene; and employment relations).

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course you should be able to:

- ***Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:*** Apply employment relations' concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
- ***School of Management and Labor Relations:*** Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI).
- ***Additional Course Objective(s) from the Instructor:*** Students will be assessed on the objective by how well they apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work on exams and written assignments. A standard rubric will be used for this purpose. (Institutional knowledge encompasses labor, law, and work practices, in the U.S. and other nations now operating in a global framework.)

Method of Instruction

This course is delivered in-person, in a Face-to-Face classroom setting. We will use this platform, Canvas, for facilitating the course activities. Reading materials, assignment instructions and submissions, quizzes, and other course-related activities will be facilitated through Canvas.

Course Structure

Weekly modules structure the course. Each week is comprised of:

- Introduction of the topic for that week
- Readings (PDFs, links to website articles, other)
- Multimedia (lectures, interviews, podcasts, or other)
- Discussion - in class group work
- Forums - extra credit only
- Assignments - weekly articles and written assignments
- Quizzes - weekly quizzes on reading material

Course Materials

All course materials; reading materials, videos, audio are provided here, within the learning management system (Canvas). You do not need to purchase any course materials.

Student Responsibilities

Be prepared for class. Always read the assigned material before the class so that you can fully participate in class discussions and more easily follow the lecture.

Take careful lecture notes. Copies of Power point slides will be posted on Canvas in the appropriate week's module. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are forced to miss a class. Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, small group discussions, group exercises and student presentations. Students are required to participate actively in all aspects of the course, especially small and large group discussions and group exercises. When participating in discussions respect others' views and listen. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you must give them your full attention and consideration.

Student Code of Conduct

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional, responsible, courteous, and respectful manner at all times during this course. Texting, talking on your phone, and being on Facebook or other social media are all prohibited during class. The TA's will be sitting in the back of the room and will be able to see what's on open screens. Students who repeatedly do these

things during class time will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent for the day.

Communication

You are expected to check your official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. I will communicate all official course correspondence to students via Announcements on Canvas. Any announcement through Canvas automatically generates a notification to your Rutgers email account. Verbal discussions before or after class will not be considered official unless followed up with written email confirmation.

Groups

Groups will discuss course reading, prepare presentations and participate in-group activities together – sit with students you know or make new friends. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance on group assignments will be evaluated both by the instructor and the other members of your group.

Attendance

You should plan to attend every class session – especially if you want the OSHA 30 card (see more below). Students must sign in personally at the beginning of class and at the end of class; failure to do so will result in a loss of attendance points and ineligibility to get the [OSHA 30 card](#). I recognize that illness, death in the family or other emergencies happen, and will excuse absences as long as the affected student can provide me with proof. **Signing in for another student is considered academic dishonesty and can result in failing the course.**

Be punctual. Students who are late to class two times lose the same number of attendance points as students who miss an entire class. Stay for the whole class. Students who leave early without the instructor's permission will be marked absent and be ineligible for the [OSHA 30 card](#).

The teaching assistants will be taking attendance and will be noting lateness. **It is your responsibility to make sure you sign the attendance sheet each class, so make sure you find it.** Attendance will be 5% of your overall grade. Signing attendance sheets is a requirement for obtaining an [OSHA 30 card](#).

Written Assignments

Grading Criteria

1. **Content:** Papers should reflect careful, thorough consideration of the assignment. All papers should have a clear, creative thesis and a strong conclusion. Papers should also demonstrate careful reading of the course material, and should cite all sources that were consulted when preparing the assignment. **Quality of weekly written article summaries and reaction papers will be evaluated based upon writing mechanics, content/detail, thoroughness, understanding of material and quality of analysis.**
2. **Mechanics:** Student writing should **demonstrate college-level competence** in grammar and style. Students with unsatisfactory writing skills will be encouraged to seek additional assistance from Rutgers writing tutorial resources.
3. Papers the instructor(s) deem unacceptable in terms of either content and/or mechanics will be returned to the student for revision prior to grading and marked down for each day the paper is late. Failure to use spell check and grammar check to fix basic mistakes will result in automatic return of the paper without grading.

Assignments

1. Reaction Papers:

All papers will be due in Canvas by the start of class on the due date. All papers turned in after this time will be marked late. **Late papers will be marked down one point for each class that they are late.** I will not accept assigned papers in class or via email.

You will be responsible for writing one (1) [reaction paper to “Libby, Montana”](#), which is a movie about asbestos exposures to workers and community residents of the town of Libby.

You also will be responsible for three (3) reaction papers on the following reading assignments:

[OSHA’s Recommended Guidelines for Safety and Health Programs Workers' Compensation - "How NJ Fails Injured Workers”](#) and one other assignment of your choosing from below:

[Combustible Dust](#)

[Apple, Inc.](#)

[Gasland](#)

The reaction papers are to be a minimum of a **full four to five-pages**, double-spaced and based on questions I will give you to respond to. You will be graded on how developed your reaction is and how well you grasped the content of the material.

2. Weekly Articles:

You will be responsible for turning in eight (8) weekly articles from the news regarding health and safety. **You will need to write a full one-page minimum summary of the article AND a reaction to it.** Over the course of the semester, I expect your analysis to reflect the knowledge you've gained from material covered in class. For example, initially you may not know what standard has been violated in a given case, but by the second half of the semester, that should be more evident and/or you should know where to find that information.

Each week your group will discuss the articles found so make sure you are prepared. **Discussing these articles will count towards your overall participation grade.** A few good resources for finding articles include: www.OSHA.gov and/or www.jordanbarab.com and/or any newspaper source you find.

You **will NOT** get full credit for these articles or any written work if you hand them all in at the end of the semester. They are to be completed each week and submitted through the week's Assignment link under Modules, here in Canvas. Your grade will drop by a point for each week it is late – no exceptions.

3. Quizzes:

You will be responsible for ten (10) very short quizzes that are based upon the reading for that week. Quizzes will count towards your overall participation grade.

4. Small Group Discussions:

Additionally, you will be participating in small group discussions that will count towards your overall participation grade. You'll also be asked to work on assignments in class in your groups or as take-home assignments. These assignments will have to be handed in for credit towards your overall participation grade and for credit towards your OSHA 30 card.

Turnitin

All written assignments submitted will be checked through Turn-It-In for plagiarism, including work from students, both past and present. If I get high percentages for plagiarism, I will take action.

TurnItIn Statement

Students (You) agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (via Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the

purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If you do not agree please contact me immediately.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly 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 the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. Students are expected to be familiar with all [Rutgers University policies regarding academic integrity.](#)

Mid-Term and Final Exams

The mid-term exam for this course will cover material (course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, exercises, etc.) from the first half of the course. It will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, identifications, short answers and short essay questions. The final exam will cover material from the mid-semester break to the end of the course. Both exams will be take-home exams that MUST be hand-written – no exceptions.

Class Project

You will work in your assigned group of approximately six (6) of your classmates. You will be looking at particular buildings and grounds and associated jobs (if possible) within and around these buildings. You will get checklists of things to look for throughout the semester and some ideas for questions to ask the workers in the buildings.

Your analysis should contain the following elements:

- If appropriate, a brief description of the jobs and work responsibilities of the workers in the buildings or on the grounds and the associated safety and health hazards of these jobs, prioritized by severity.
- A description of the buildings and/or grounds, including the safety and health hazards (think circle chart) of these areas, prioritized by severity.
- A description of what, if any, OSHA standards apply.
- Recommendations for preventative or corrective measures for controlling hazards associated with the jobs identified and the buildings/grounds assigned (hierarchy of controls).

Your group should be prepared to present your findings based upon the above elements. Be as creative as you wish in developing your presentations. You can use pictures/video and power point. A **one-page outline/summary of the presentation or a copy of your slides is required at the time of your presentation.** Additionally, one member of your group will be required to submit a copy of your presentation up on Canvas.

There will only be 10 possible spots and your presentation should be approximately 10 minutes ... 15 minutes maximum. I will hold you to your time slot unless there is an emergency situation to keep things fair for all class members. If you are unable to present your project on the date you selected, you will forfeit your opportunity and will be required to write a ten (10)-page report instead.

I will be grading presentations on how well you cover the points outlined on the syllabus; how thorough your research and comments are; the quality of your suggested changes or controls and your overall analysis of the assignment you present on. **The group of your peers who have worked with you will also evaluate your participation in this project.** This peer evaluation will be included in the calculation of your individual grade. You will likewise be expected to participate in evaluating your peers. Specifically, peer evaluations will be based upon preparation, presentation and teamwork.

Rubric for Presentations

Thoroughness: (Out of 50 Points)

- Provided a brief description/history of the building (and possibly jobs).
- Analyzed the associated safety and health hazards, prioritized by severity.
- Provided a description of what, if any, OSHA standards apply.
- Provided recommendations for preventative or corrective measures for controlling hazards.

Organization of the Material: (Out of 30 Points)

- Does the presentation demonstrate good knowledge of the assignment?
- Is the presentation well structured and thought out?
- Can you tell the assignment was taken seriously?

Quality of Analysis (Out of 20 Points)

- Are points illustrated with good examples?
- Are OSHA references properly used?
- Are hazards identified by category?
- Is the hierarchy of controls the basis for recommendations?
- Did all students participate in the presentation?

Extra Credit Opportunities

Throughout the semester, I will be offering extra credit opportunities. These will include a short paper on your family's work history; forum discussions

within the course modules; midterm and final assignments and any other opportunity that may arise during the course of the semester. It is entirely up to you to take advantage of these opportunities. I value any extra credit work done in your overall grade. So, for example, if you are in between two grades, extra credit assignments will bump you to the higher of the two grades. **Please note, an A in this course is a 93.**

Evaluation Criteria

Grades will be based on:

- 15% project
- 5% attendance
- 10% participation (including reading quizzes)
- 15% weekly articles
- 15% reaction papers
- 20% on each exam

Participation grades will be on a sliding scale from 60 to 100 based on your participation levels. I expect to hear from you – especially if you want to challenge something I’m saying. Don’t be afraid to speak your mind – that type of behavior gets rewarded in my class!

Overall Grade:

A = 93 -100
B+ = 88 - 92
B = 83 - 87
C+ = 78 - 82
C = 73 - 77

Attendance Grade:

0 Classes Missed =100
1 class missed = 93
2 classes missed = 86; etc.
Grade drops by seven points for each class missed.

OSHA Card

If you’ve attended every class and have done the materials handling worksheet and are interested in obtaining the OSHA 30 card, please bring \$8 and a self-addressed envelope that I can mail the card to you in. I’ll need you to sign in and provide me your home address. I must keep records for 5 years. If you missed a class or two and still want a card, please see me. Depending on the class missed, I might be able to work with you.

NOTE: Program Purpose

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Outreach Training Program for General Industry teaches general industry workers about their rights, employer responsibilities, and how to file a complaint as well as how to identify, abate, avoid and prevent job-related hazards. **If you attend all classes and complete all assignments, you will be eligible for**

an OSHA 30-Hour General Industry card. OSHA student completion cards in the General Industry Outreach Training Program do not expire. **THE CARD COSTS \$8 and, if you meet the requirements, I will need the money at the end of the semester via Paypal or Venmo.**

30-Hour General Industry Outreach Training Program – Designated Training Topics. The 30-hour General Industry Outreach Training Program is intended to provide a variety of training to workers with some safety responsibility. Training should emphasize hazard identification, avoidance, control and prevention, not OSHA standards. Instructional time must be a minimum of 30 hours.

The topic requirements are as follows:

- **Mandatory - 13 hours**
- Introduction to OSHA – 2 Hours
- Managing Safety and Health – 2 hours. May include Injury and Illness Prevention Programs, job site inspections, accident prevention programs, management commitment and employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, accident 4 investigations, how to conduct safety meetings, and supervisory communication.
- Walking and Working Surfaces, including fall protection – 1 hour.
- Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and Fire Protection – 2 hours.
- Electrical – 2 hours.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – 1 hour.
- Materials Handling and Ergonomics – 2 hours.
- Hazard Communication – 1 hour.
- **Elective - 10 hours. Must present at least 10 hours of training on the following topics. At least 5 of the following topics must be presented. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.**
- Hazardous Materials (Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Spray Finishing, Compressed Gases, Dipping and Coating Operations)
- Permit-Required Confined Spaces
- Lockout / Tagout
- Introduction to Industrial Hygiene
- Blood borne Pathogens
- Ergonomics
- Safety and Health Programs
- Powered Industrial Vehicles
- **Optional - 7 hours. Teach other general industry hazards or policies and/or expand on the mandatory or elective topics. The minimum length of any topic is one-half hour.** What I'll be covering: Asbestos – 3 hours; IAQ – 1.5 hours; Combustible Dust – 1.5 hours; Workplace Violence – 1.5 hours; Silica – 1 hour

Course Schedule

The course is divided into 14 weeks (14 class meetings):

- [Week 1 - Introduction & Course Overview \(September 9 - 15\)](#)
- [Week 2 - History of OSH in US and All About OSHA Part 1 \(September 16 - 22\)](#)
- [Week 3 - All About OSHA Part 2 \(September 23 - 29\)](#)
- [Week 4 - Principles of IH and Personal Protective Equipment \(September 30 - October 6\)](#)
- [Class 5 - How to Conduct a Hazard Analysis \(October 7 - 13\)](#)
- [Class 6 - Workers' Compensation and Confined Spaces \(October 14 - 20\)](#)
- [Class 7 - Hazard Communication and Exit Routes \(October 21 - 27\)](#)
- [Class 8 - Workplace Violence and Walking/Working Surfaces \(October 28 - November 3\)](#)
- [Class 9 - Indoor Environmental Quality and Ergonomics \(November 4 - 10\)](#)
- [Class 10 - Asbestos \(November 11 - 17\)](#)
- [Class 11 - Subpart S - Electrical Standard and Lockout Tagout \(November 18 - 24\)](#)
- [Class 12 - Bloodborne Pathogens and Special Topics \(November 25 - December 1\)](#)
- [Class 13 and 14- Presentations and OSHA Paperwork \(December 2 - 9\)](#)