

Introduction to Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Labor Studies 37:575:100 Section 3

Spring 2020

Wednesdays 12-3pm

Beck Hall Room 213

Syllabus Subject to Change

Instructor: Justin Vinton, PhD Student, School of Management and Labor Relations

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- You can also use the Canvas mail tool to contact me

Office Hours: By appointment

In Class Expectations:

All students are expected to attend class and discuss the readings. Students should read all assigned material prior to class time. Be prepared to discuss the key points of the readings in class. It is important to participate in discussions and group activities. Explain your views. Don't be afraid to ask questions! Also listen – don't monopolize the discussion or ignore other views.

Learning Objectives for this course follow. The student is able to:

Core Curriculum: SCL

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal SCL-1).

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).

Additional course objective from the instructors:

- Students will be able to apply facts and concepts from the course to argue convincingly against common contemporary fallacies related to employment relations.

Text Book: Stephen Sweet and Peter Meiksins. *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. 3rd Edition. Sage, 2017. (Please note: the second and third editions are similar, although the latter is more up to date. The first is very different – do not use it).

Grades:

There are multiple components to the course

- In class participation (30%)
- Op Ed writing assignment (8%)
- New Deal legislation assignment (8%)
- Rights check and union knowledge check at 1% each (2%)
- Collective bargaining exercise (10%)
- 3 Quizzes at 10% each (30%)
- Short final exam (12%)

The instructor reserves the right to determine the division between B and B+ etc., although in many years B+ starts at an overall average of 88. That cutoff is subject to change each semester.

Disability

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> (Links to an external site.). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you

with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

Unit 1: The Situation Working People Face Today

Week 1 (January 22)

Introduction and Orientation

- Go over textbook and course plan/expectations
- Discuss [Family History Interview Assignment](#)

Week 2 (January 29)

Work and Our Lives

- You and your family's history of work
- Intergenerational economic mobility and immobility
- Intergenerational transmission of resources (types of economic and social capital)

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 1: Mapping the Contours of Work
- Patricia Cohen, "Paychecks Lag as Profits Soar and Prices Erode Wage Gains", *New York Times*, 7/13/18. [Cohen, NYTimes 2018](#)
- The Pew Charitable Trust on income changes and class identity over time. [Click here for the article](#)

Due (for class): [Family History Interview \(group discussions in class\)](#)

Week 3 (February 5)

Corporations & Work in the "New Economy"

- Corporations - structure, power, and rights
- Old and new forms of work organization
- The rise of contingent work
- Discuss [Op-Ed](#) assignment due Week 5

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 2: New Products, New Ways of Working, and the New Economy.
 - For those of you who have not yet received the text, a not very good scan of chapter 2 is available here: [Click Here](#)
- Two excerpts from Peter Cappelli et al. *Change at Work*. The first concerns "The Employment System that Died" and the second "How the World Began to Change":

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

Week 4 (February 12)

Social Class in the US

- Class and opportunity in the US
- Class and social mobility
- Relationship between wealth and power
- Has class faded in American culture?

Read for Class:

- Joseph E. Stiglitz, "How Policy Has Contributed to the Great Economic Divide", *The Washington Post*, June 22, 2012: [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- *NYTimes* website on Social Class: [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) Be sure to read on this site:

- - The Overview article, 'Shadowy Lines That Still Divide'
 - Tamar Lewin "Up from the Holler" Click on Day 3
 - David Leonhardt "The College Dropout Boom" Click on Day 5
 - **You should also be sure to do the interactive exercise on the *NYTimes* site using your family of social origin**

Reminder: [Op Ed assignment](#) due next week (Week 5) before class

Reminder: Quiz 1 on Unit 1 in class next week

Week 5 (February 19)

Economic Inequality Today

- Class, race, and gender inequality
- Does the US have a power pyramid?
- Health and other effects of income inequality

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 3: Economic Inequality, Social Mobility, and the New Economy
- G. W. Domhoff, "Wealth, Income and Power" (2017 version): [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- NY Times "6 Reasons that Pay has Lagged Behind US Job Growth", Feb. 1, 2018: [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- NY Times "Fresh Proof that Strong Unions Help Reduce Income Inequality", July 6, 2018: [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Due (before class): Op Ed Assignment

In Class: Quiz 1 on Unit 1 (open book)

Unit 2: Diversity, Work, and Employee Rights

Week 6 (February 26)

Employment Rights in the US

- Employment-at will
- Expectations to employment at-will
- The NLRA (Wagner Act) and state bargaining laws
- The Fair Labor Standards Act & Occupational Safety and Health Act

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 4: Whose Jobs are Secure?
- *Lewis Maltby, Can They Do That? (New York: Portfolio, 2009). Chapter 4, "Wrongful Discharge and Employment at Will," pp. 57-67 and a portion of Chapter 13, "The Rights You Have," pp. 196-203.: [Click here for both](#)*
- Steven Greenhouse, Low-Wage Workers are Often Cheated. Study Says, September 1, 2009, *New York Times*: [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- Review the Sloan Work and Family Research Network timeline of U.S. Labor Laws and Regulations.: [Click Here](#)

Reminder: [Rights check quiz](#). Quiz opens Week 6 and closes before class in Week 7. Take quiz on your own time as much as you need to until you get a perfect score.

Week 7 (March 4)

Work, Race, Ethnicity, and Equality

- Race, ethnicity, and inequality in the contemporary workplace
- Discrimination and fairness
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Memphis Garbage Workers Strike and Martin Luther King Jr.

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 7: Race, Ethnicity, and Work
- Charlie LeDuff, "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die: Who Kills, Who Cuts; Who Bosses Can Depend on Race," New York Times, June 16, 2000.: [Click Here](#)
- "Black Workers are Being Left Behind by Full Employment" *Brookings Institute* . June 26, 2019: [Click Here \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- "Whites Account for Under Half of Births in the U.S.," *New York Times*, May 17, 2002, p. 1.: [Click Here](#)

Due: [Rights check quiz](#). Quiz closes before class.

Week 8 (March 11)

The New Immigration

- Effects of immigration on wages and work
- Public policy debates regarding US immigration policy

Read for Class:

- *New York Times*, 1/27/2007, "Study of Immigrants Links Lighter Skin and Higher Income: [Click Here](#)
- Immanuel Ness, Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005). Chapter 2, "The Political Economy of Transnational Labor in New York City: The Context for Immigrant Worker Militancy," pp. 13-39: [Click here](#)
- Ellis Island Web site, "Immigration Timeline." Be sure to review information about the predominant nationalities of immigrants in various periods: [Click here](#)

Spring Break--No Class March 18

Week 9 (March 25)

Gender, Work, and Family

- Women's participation in the paid labor force

- Gender inequalities and discrimination
- Work/family policies and the law

Read for Class:

- Textbook Chapter 5: A Fair Day's Work?
- Textbook Chapter 6: Gender Chasms in the New Economy

Reminder: Quiz 2 on Unit 2 next week (Week 10)

Unit 3: Improving Working People's Lives

Week 10 (April 1)

The Legacy: The New Deal & Labor

- A new relationship between government and working Americans in the 1930s
- Union growth and consolidation in the 1930s-40s
- The CIO and the sit-down strike
- The “New Deal System’s” achievements and limitations

Read for Class:

- Jack Metzgar, Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). “Getting to 1959,” first part pp. 17-39: [Click Here](#)

In Class: Quiz 2 on Unit 2 (open book)


Reminder: [New Deal legislation assignment](#) due before class next week (Week 11)

Week 11 (April 8)

Unions Today, Part I

- What do unions do?
- Collective bargaining
- Are unions good or bad for the economy

Read for Class:

- Kim Kelly, "What a labor union is and how it works," March 12, 2018, *Teen Vogue*: [Link](#)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Union Members 2015.”: [pdf](#) 

- Michael D. Yates, [Why Unions Matter](#). New York: Monthly Review Press, "At the Table," pp. 66-78.: [Click Here](#)
- Explore: "Learn about Unions" on the AFL-CIO website. See various pull down items, but be sure to review "Collective Bargaining," and "The Union Difference" at the bottom of the bargaining page.: [Click here](#)

Due before class: [New Deal legislation assignment](#)

Reminder: [Union knowledge check quiz](#). Quiz opens Week 11 and closes before class in Week 14. Take quiz on your own time as much as you need to until you get a perfect score.

Week 12 (April 15)

Unions Today, Part 2: Union Organizing & Membership

- How unions are formed
- Union membership trends over time
- **Begin collective bargaining simulation**

Read for Class:

- "The Process of Establishing Collective Bargaining," pp. 65-66 of [Fact Finding Report](#), Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, May 1994.
- Watch: Professor Carla Katz discusses union organizing in 3 Q&A videos
 - What if you want to organize? : [click here](#)
 - What to expect from employers? : [click here](#)
 - How should the law be changed? : [click here](#)
- Posted materials for bargaining exercise

Reminder: [Union knowledge check quiz](#). Quiz closes before class in Week 14. Take quiz on your own time as much as you need to until you get a perfect score.

Due at end of class: [Union or management plans](#)

Week 13 (April 22)

- Finish collective bargaining simulation

Due at end of class: [Final bargaining agreement](#)

Due before the beginning of next class: Ratings of team members (Link will be provided)

Week 14 (April 29)

Public Policy and the Future of Work

Read for Class

- Textbook Chapter 8: Reshaping the Contours of the New Economy
- Watch: video of Nobel prize winning economist Paul Krugman discussing public policy changes that could reduce unemployment and put more Americans back to work. May 17, 2012 on *Democracy Now.*: [Click here](#)

In Class: Quiz 3 on Unit 3 (open book)

Due: [Union knowledge check](#). Quiz closes before class.

Week 15 (May 6)

- Farewell and Short Final Exam