

PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR STUDIES, Spring 2021
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
37:575:395
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This course will allow students at the end of their studies in labor and employment relations to take a broader perspective on some of key concepts and issues related to labor. Students will explore historical and contemporary scholarship that will challenge assumptions and deepen understanding of issues like the divisions of labor, interests, wealth, work and leisure, opportunity and inequality, and power and freedom. Students will be asked to: 1) read the assigned scholarship for the arguments and to take a position on those arguments, 2) scrutinize the argument and its relationship to the evidence, 3) participate in discussions, and 4) reflect on the issues through writing. Throughout the course, we will notice that the boundaries between the workplace and its outside are blurred.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES and INCLUSION

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate learning in the areas below.

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)

Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1)

Additional course objectives from the instructors

- Identify core concepts of the field of labor & employment relations
- Apply those concepts to understanding contemporary developments in work
- Synthesize information from multiple sources to generate new insights

Reasonable Accommodation Requests

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>. 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>.

COURSE READINGS

All course readings will be posted on Canvas.

January 21 - Introduction

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Introduction
- Review the syllabus.
- Discuss class mechanics

January 28: Our Labor Question

READINGS DUE

- “The ‘revolution now in progress’: social economics and the labor question”, by Roseanne Currarino, *Labor History*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2009.
- “Supply-Chain Tourist; or, How Globalization Has Transformed the Labor Question” in *A Contest of Ideas: Capital, Politics, and Labor*, by Nelson Lichtenstein, 2013.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Turn in questions for class discussion.
- Watch movie: “American Dream”
- Hand out paper assignment.

February 4: Economics

READINGS DUE

- “Who Wants to be an Economist?” and “See the Big Picture”, *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, Kate Raworth, 2017.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Submit questions for class discussion.
- Weekly entry due.

February 11: Interests?

READINGS DUE:

- Chapters 1, 2, and 3, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith, 1776.
- “Nurture Human Nature: From Rational Economic Man to Social Adaptable Humans”, *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, Kate Raworth, 2017.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

- Weekly Entry due
- Submit questions for class discussion.

February 18: Fear of Government

READINGS DUE:

- “The Intellectual History of a Dangerous Idea: 1962-1942”, *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*, by Mark Blyth, 2015.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

- Weekly entry due
- Submit questions for class discussion.

February 25: Worshipping Price and Fearing Democracy

READINGS DUE

- “Employment and Independence”, in The Constitution of Liberty, by Friedrich A. Hayek (1960).
- “The Power of the Market”, pgs. 13-27, in Free to Choose: A Personal Statement, by Milton and Rose Friedman (1979).

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for class discussion

March 4: Labor Creates Value, Owns Property, and Demands More

READINGS DUE:

- Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 10 – Section 1- A Critique of Political Economy: Capital, Vol. 1, by Karl Marx (1867)
- “What Does Labor Want?”, by Samuel Gompers (1893).

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for class discussion.

March 11: Unpaid Claims

READINGS DUE:

- “The Case for Reparations”, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Atlantic*, June, 2014.
- Selected readings from The Second Shift, by Arlie Hochschild.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for class discussion.

March 25: In the Absence of Work

READINGS DUE

- “Kellogg’s Six-Hour Day: A Capitalist Vision of Liberation through Managed Work Reduction”, by Benjamin Hunnicutt
- “When Work Disappears: New Implications for Race and Urban Poverty in the Global Economy”, by William Julius Wilson.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for class discussion.

April 1: Work’s Many Meanings

READINGS DUE

- Selected readings from *Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Feelings*, by Arlie Hochschild.
- Lose Yourself, Waterboy Caught Sleeping, etc., from *Working Words: Punching the Clock and Kicking Out the Jams*, edited by M.L. Liebler.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Submit draft paper.
- Submit questions for class discussion.
- Weekly Entry due.

April 8: Race

READINGS DUE

- “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States”, in *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*, by Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, 2014.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for group discussions.

April 15 – Organizing workers – Solidarity and Mutualism

READINGS DUE

- “Worker Mutualism in an Age of Entrepreneurial Capitalism”, by Dorothy Sue Cobble. *Labour and Industry: A Journal of Social and Economic Relations at Work*. Volume 26, 2016
- Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act
- Selected chapters from *Rivthead: Tales from the Assembly Line*, by Ben Hamper.
- “Shiftless of the World – Unite!”, from *Race Rebels*, by Robyn D. G. Kelley.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due.
- Submit questions for group discussion

April 22 – Organizing the Company- Management

READINGS DUE

- Selected chapters from *The Palgrave Handbook of Management History*.
- “The Rise of Shareholder Value Thinking”, in *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*, by Lynn Stout, 2012.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

- Weekly entry due
- Submit questions for group discussion

April 29: Bureacracy and its Discontents

READINGS DUE:

- Selections from “Bureaucracy”, by Max Weber.
- “Uses of Industrial Power”, by David Brody

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT

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- Weekly entry due
- Submit questions for group discussion
- Hand out final and review.

May 6, 2021 - FINAL PAPER and FINAL DUE

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, Etc.

Attendance (2 points per class)

We will meet 14 times this semester, by Zoom. You are allowed one unexcused absence. The total points awarded for attendance is, therefore, 26 points.

Weekly Entries (6 points per entry)

You will turn in a short response to the readings. The response will include: 1) answers to questions posed by the professor; 2) your reflections and thoughts on the topic; and 3) your attempt to connect elements of the reading or the week’s topic to current events.

Questions for Class Discussion and Participation (5 points per class)

During our video-conference class, we will discuss the readings. To do this, you will need to submit your questions on the readings and topics on the Wednesday, prior to class, show up to class, be prepared to discuss the materials; and listen to your classmates and respond. The professor will monitor discussion and submit grades for your weekly questions and participation.

Take Home Final (100 points)

You will be given one take-home final. It will be a short answer/short essay final that will help you retain some of the core concepts.

Paper (100 points)

You will write one paper this semester that will be no longer than 8 pages, double spaced. The goals of this paper assignment are: 1) sharpen your writing skills; 2) provide you with an opportunity to make an argument about work; and 3) provide you with an opportunity to weave some of the themes we cover during this semester into your argument about the future of work. Taking a position and defending it is an important skill to learn. This paper assignment will help you develop this skill. Your draft or outline will be due halfway through the semester, and you will receive a temporary grade. The professor will provide you with feedback on the structure of

your argument, grammar and sentence structure, and the professor will provide you with ideas on how to weave some the readings into your paper. You will then submit your final draft on May 13, 2021, if you choose.

“Office Hours”

Please let me know if you want to meet with me. I will schedule a Zoom meeting.

Timeliness and Academic Integrity

All assignments must be submitted by the scheduled due date and time. Assignments may be turned in one week from that due date and time; however, those late assignments will be docked points. I will not accept assignments that are turned in any later than one week past due the date.

Please also review Rutgers University’s Academic Integrity policy. Visit academicintegrity.rutgers.edu for information on this policy. The policy must be applied in this class. Thanks.

Troubleshooting Problems

We are conducting the course via Zoom. We might run into many problems with this format, including the ability to maintain a continuous connection, audio and visual quality, an inability to find a quiet location, etc. Please know that we will work through these problems. If you are experiencing any issues with the online/Zoom format, please let me know. I will work with you to ensure that you can access the class.