

Course Syllabus: Internship in Labor Studies 37:575:496

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

School of Management and Labor Relations

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Course Overview

This course is both an online class and an internship and is designed to supplement traditional classroom-based learning with experiential learning. The internship provides students with the opportunity to practically apply knowledge gained in their course of study in labor and workplace issues. Internships can be with a variety of host organizations, including labor unions, community organizations, government agencies and private industry. A minimum of 120 hours of substantive work in the placement setting is required. Whether you have arranged your internship yourself, or whether you have been assisted in arranging one by the instructor or other faculty member, **you should let the instructor know immediately if there is a problem with the internship so that she can either intervene appropriately or see if you can be transferred to a different situation.** Students should be both supported and challenged and encouraged to take initiative and develop life-long learning skills. Each intern works under a site supervisor at the host organization. The role of the site supervisor is to oversee the student experience and provide structure and mentorship throughout the internship. Supervisors are also required to submit midterm and final evaluations of the intern's work. I will be in touch with your internship supervisor at the beginning of the semester, at midterm and at the end of the class.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course satisfies LSERs requirement that majors take at least one upper level (i.e. 400 level) class. The assignment topics are tailored to the internship experience and are intended to encourage critical thinking about key areas in the field of labor studies. The number and length of assignments consider that students are balancing the demands of the class with hours in their internship organization. Through an internship and online learning assignments, students will have the opportunity to:

- Observe, analyze and think critically about professional behavior and conditions, culture and systems within their work organizations and compare their experiences to their peers;
- Apply theories and principles learned in academic coursework to specific situations with the internship experience; and
- Gain practical work experience and develop skills relevant to their career goals under professional supervision and guidance.

Method of Instruction

This course is delivered *entirely* online through the Learning Management System, Canvas. There will be no Face-to-Face classroom sessions. The course is delivered in *asynchronous* mode. This means the learning activities and communication takes place outside of real-time. There is no live presentation or lecture. You do not have to log-in at any specific scheduled time; you log-in at your convenience.

Course Structure

The course is structured by modules. Each module is comprised of:

- Introduction of the topic for that week
- Readings (PDFs, links to website articles, other)
- Media (videos)
- Discussion Forum
- Assignment (short paper)
- No quizzes or exams

The course is divided into 4 Modules:

- Module 1 - Introductions, Internships and Workplace Rights
- Module 2 - Analysis of Worksite Interviews
- Module 3 - Aspiring to Diversity
- Module 4 - Job Quality of Occupational Stress

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.

Methods of Evaluation/Grading Policy

Although an internship is intended to provide you with practical work experience, it is also an academic course, during which you are expected to submit assignments regarding your work. These assignments are designed to maximize the internship experience and integrate your education with real-world job opportunities. All interns, therefore, are required to meet with the supervising faculty member at the beginning of the internship to establish goals.

The final grade will be based upon the timely submission of the following items:

1. 30%: Three short papers (minimum two pages)
2. 40%: Four online forums
3. 25%: Final reflection paper
4. 5%: Supervisor feedback and evaluations.

If your supervisor's feedback is incomplete, I will weigh class assignments more heavily.

Note: Respect the privacy of individuals in your host organization. In referring to your internship supervisor and other staff in your host organization in your papers and online forums, please **respect their privacy by using their initials and/or job titles rather than full names.**

Papers

Writing is a critical skill in a professional environment and an important part of this course. Although content is important, clear and grammatical expression of thoughts and ideas, good sentence and paragraph structure, and correct spelling are expected in an upper-level undergraduate course.

Format for Papers:

Please include your name, the assignment name (e.g. Paper 1), and the date at the top left side of the page. Papers should follow standard rules of format: 12-pt Calibri or Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced.

Online Discussion Forums

Of great importance in an online learning environment is the opportunity for students to discuss their internship experiences with each other. Students are required to communicate their insights and thoughts while learning from one another in the process. The four online discussion forums offer the opportunity to discuss and compare your internship experiences and opinions about the readings with other members of the class.

The first post is expected to be substantive (minimum 400 words). You will respond to a question or set of questions in your first post; at least two subsequent posts (minimum 150 words) allow you thoughtfully compare and contrast your views to your classmates. Therefore it is important to read your classmates' posts. There is no minimum word length for additional posts (beyond the first three).

To encourage careful writing and editing, the first and longest post should first be written in word (or other writing program) and then pasted into the forum page. Writing and editing the first post in word tends to result in clearer writing and better marks on assignments; the shorter follow-up posts should also be carefully proofed and edited.

The assignment schedule provides specific due dates for each post. You must post at least three times per assignment to receive full credit for each forum.

How are the Forums Graded?

- **Comment quality.** The first post will count as 70 % of your grade for forum assignments, and the remaining posts 30%. The first post should offer a

thoughtful discussion of your perspective on the assigned readings based on your internship. Comment quality and clarity is also considered in your additional posts.

- **Clear, grammatical writing and use of citations.** This is as important in forums as in papers.
- **Participation.** Follow up posts should demonstrate that you have read your classmates' posts and pose thoughtful questions for other members of the class.
- **Timeliness.** If you always post at the last minute it will be hard for other members of the class to respond. Specific due dates are posted for the online discussion forums—late assignments will not only lose credit but diminish the opportunity for dialogue.

Assignment Schedule

Please Note: I start this class and the assignments two-weeks late to accommodate students who find internships after the start of the semester.

The assignment schedule below creates a schedule for readings and assignments. Assignments are due at seven to 14-day intervals. As this is an online course, you will not receive regular face-to-face reminders about submission deadlines. Canvas automatically gives you notice of what is due soon. Please keep track of and abide by *all* due dates. Assignments and readings may be changed. You will automatically receive an announcement through Canvas. Check the announcement(s) and proceed as needed.

Please email (abahruth@rutgers.edu) or text me (908-812-0974) if you need to talk about the course requirements or your internship placement. To prepare, review the entire syllabus carefully including assignment deadlines.

Assignments

Module #1: Introductions, Internships, and Workplace Rights:

In Module #1, you will introduce yourselves, describe your internship placement and learning objectives and respond to several articles on workplace rights that you may or may not know you even have. Additionally, you'll be writing a brief paper on the differences between traditional and learning organizations and relate what you have observed in your host organization to these specific characteristics.

The short readings below discuss basic workplace rights and things every worker (not just young workers) should know. The brief readings by Donna Ballman are drawn from her blog employeeattly.blogspot.com ([Links to an external site.](#)) which has received recognition from the American Bar Association. Read them before writing your initial discussion forum post.

Read:

- [10 Things Every Teen and Young Adult Should Know About Workplace Rights. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) Donna Ballman. June 10, 2016.
- [Top Six Illegal Policies in Your Employee Handbook. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) Donna Ballman. July 13, 2012.
- [When Experience Pays: Paid vs. Unpaid Internships.](#)  Magdalene Chan. Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL), April 17, 2014.

Module Discussion #1: Introductions, Internships, and Workplace Rights

In your first post: (400 word minimum)

- *Introduce yourself and your internship and why you took this particular position.*
- *In selecting your internship, how did you weigh the trade-offs between a paid and unpaid placement?*
- *What knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience and how does this internship relate to your future career plans?*
- *How do the points raised in the readings relate to your current and previous work experiences?*
- *If you were a peer counselor to young workers, what issues about workplace rights and reading the employee handbook would you stress?*
- *Is there anything that surprises you?*

Post your initial response to the above question(s). Cite your learning resources and external resources (eText, videos, other readings, blogs, etc) to support your response.

Read, and respond to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. Return to the Discussion forum and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

Short Paper #1

*According to researcher Amy Edmundson and colleagues at the Harvard Business School, traditional and learning organizations are organized around different values, styles of leadership and patterns of communicating. Review [the summary fact sheet comparing traditional and learning organizations](#)  and in your **two-page paper**, relate what you have observed in your host organization to the specific characteristics of “traditional” and “learning” organizations. Do you think your internship setting could be improved by adopting one or more “learning” or “traditional” practices? Explain.*

Module #2: How Relationships Shape Behavior of Work and Analysis of Worksite Interviews:

For Module 2 you will interview two colleagues within your host organization about their history and perspectives on your host organization. Try to select individuals with different roles so that you can get a wider perspective on their work history and background. In discussing individuals in your workplace, refer to them by initials and/or general titles to protect their confidentiality. Additionally, you will be reviewing resources related to workplace civility and workplace bullying for your second writing assignment.

Workplace (Adult) Bullying or Incivility is a big issue in many of today's workplaces and it can have devastating impacts on both victims and bystanders who witness this type of behavior towards others. Review the readings below and discuss the consequences, both to individuals and organizations, when a hostile workplace exists. Do you have any previous experience working in a hostile workplace? How does this compare with what you have observed in your host organization?

Read:

- [The Hidden Toll of Workplace Incivility](#) Christine Porath. December 2017. McKinsey Quarterly.
- [Workplace Bullying Institute 2017 Survey Results](#)
- [Workplace Bullying Institute \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (look around the site)
- [Workplace Bullying and Violence \(Links to an external site.\)](#)- Washington State Department of Labor and Industries
- [Workplace Bullying Factsheet](#) - Washington State Department of Labor and Industries
- [Disruptive Behavior in Healthcare](#) - Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

Watch/Listen:

- [Bullying on the Job](#)

Module 2 Discussion: Analysis of Worksite Interviews

For this forum, interview two colleagues within your host organization about their history and perspectives on your host organization. If possible, select individuals with different roles, who have been in the organization at least six months. Your questions should include:

1. *Their personal background (areas of undergraduate study and graduate study, their initial jobs, why they chose the career they did, how they got to their present position, etc.);*
2. *How would they characterize decision making, relationships and communication in your internship organization; and*
3. *What they enjoy most--and least--about the work they do.*

To prepare for the interview:

- *Think carefully about the potential interviewees, and identify individuals whose career path you would like to know more about. You may find that conducting the interview is helpful in establishing a stronger rapport with your internship supervisor.*
- *Explain the reason you are doing the interview (class assignment), and request the interview a few days ahead of time.*
- *Set a time and place to talk. If your work situation allows, schedule a time to sit down and talk in a quiet place even if it is only 10 minutes.*
- *Re-write the list of questions in your own words and think about flow and what you would like to add first.*
- *Give your full attention to the person you are interviewing and ask follow up questions.*
- *Jot down notes and take a few minutes after the conversation to add details that you didn't have time to write down.*
- *Don't forget to thank your colleagues for their time!*
- *Review "Tips for Conducting Qualitative Interviews" in the resources tab.*

In your first post (minimum 400 Words):

In discussing individuals in your workplace, refer to them by initials and/or general titles to protect their confidentiality. Share your observations from these interviews with specific attention to the following questions:

- *Did hearing about your co-workers' career path give you any insight into your future employment perspectives or path?*
- *What themes do you see emerging from the different work histories discussed here?*
- *Summarize their comments on decision-making, relationships and communication in your host organization. Are their views consistent with your observations (summarize the perspective you shared in your papers on learning organizations and relational coordination)?*
- *What did you find especially interesting or surprising?*

In your additional posts (minimum 150 words/each):

In your follow-up posts, compare and contrast the findings from your interviews with those of your peers. What themes do you see emerging from the various work histories shared in this forum?

Feel free to ask questions to create a dialogue. Make sure to check back to see what questions that I or other students ask you about what you have shared.

Post your initial response to the above question(s). Cite your learning resources and external resources (eText, videos, other readings, blogs, etc) to support your response.

Read, and respond to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. Return to the Discussion forum and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

Short Paper #2

Workplace (Adult) Bullying or Incivility is a big issue in many of today's workplaces and it can have devastating impacts on both victims and bystanders who witness this type of behavior towards others. Review the two readings below and discuss the consequences, both to individuals and organizations, when a hostile workplace exists.

Read/Review:

- Christine Porath. Dec. 2017. [The Hidden Toll Of Workplace Incivility](#)  McKinsey Quarterly.
- [Workplace Bullying Institute \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - visit the site, look around
- [Workplace Bullying Institute 2017 Survey Results](#) 
- See other readings from [module #2 Readings](#) for additional resources

Answer the following questions in your paper:

1. Do you have any previous experience working in a hostile workplace?
2. How does this compare with what you have observed in your host organization?

Module #3: Aspiring to Diversity:

Diversity is a value that many organizations officially embrace and yet individuals who do not represent the dominant culture may feel subtly or not so subtly excluded because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual preferences, age, gender or disabilities or other "differences" including pregnancy. In this module, you'll read various articles on discrimination and harassment in the workplace to reference for your written assignment. Additionally, you'll discuss your observations of these issues within your internship placement in your forum discussions.

Read:

- [Joe Gerstandt. Diversity: What It Isn't. Workforce Diversity Network](#) 
- [Rebecca Knight. Managing People From Five Generations. Harvard Business Review, September 25, 2014](#) 
- [Drew Harwell. Hundreds allege sex harassment, discrimination at Kay and Jared jewelry company. The Washington Post. February 27, 2017](#) 
- [Donna Ballman. I Reported Harassment and Now HR Wants to Meet With Me. What Do I Do? March 31, 2011](#) 
- [A New Survey Finds 81 Percent Of Women Have Experienced Sexual Harassment - NPR \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [EEOC: What You Should Know: What to Do if You Believe You Have Been Harassed at Work](#) 

Short Paper #3

Diversity is a value that many organizations officially embrace and yet individuals who do not represent the dominant culture may feel subtly or not so subtly excluded because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual preferences, age, gender or disabilities or other “differences” including pregnancy. And in many settings, workers face overt abuse, discrimination, and harassment from co-workers and supervisors.

Read/review the following articles as a basis for your paper.

- Drew Harwell. Feb. 27th, 2017. [Hundreds allege sex harassment, discrimination at Kay and Jared jewelry company](#) . The Washington Post.
- Donna Ballman. March 31, 2011. [I Reported Harassment and Now HR Wants to Meet With Me. What Do I Do?](#) 
- [EEOC: What You Should Know: What to Do if You Believe You Have Been Harassed at Work?](#) 

In your paper, reflect on the questions below:

- *Have you encountered discrimination or watched it unfold against others in your internship or in any previous work settings?*
- *Why are harassment and other forms of discrimination and abuse tolerated in some work settings and not in others?*
- *What is the impact of discrimination on individual workers and society? You can reflect on current events, such as the “Me, Too” Movement.*
- *How is HR likely to view a harassment complaint?*
- *What can work organizations do to prevent or end harassment?*

Module 3 Discussion - Aspiring to Diversity

Note that diversity doesn't refer only to racial and ethnic minorities but to class, age, disabilities, sexual preference and other aspects of identity. Based on [Module 3 Readings](#), post your response to the questions below:

In your first post (400 words minimum):

- What are your observations related to racial and gender inclusion/exclusion within your internship placement?
- Do you notice any difference between the career/life stories of the men and women you talk to in your workplace, or, if this is a same-gendered workplace, why do you think that is?
- Drawing on the readings from last week and your paper responses, how do you view the relationship between diversity and discrimination?
- Based on the readings, what are the lessons for building relationships in inter-generational workplaces or creating more successful diversity programs?

In your additional posts (150 words minimum):

Compare and contrast your views, observations, and interpretations of the readings with your peers. Post your initial response to the above question(s). Cite your learning resources and external resources (eText, videos, other readings, blogs, etc) to support your response.

Read, and respond to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. Return to the Discussion forum and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

Module #4: Job Quality and Occupational Stress:

In this final module, you'll discuss in the forum your experiences and opinions on the different factors of job quality, such as the role of social support, teamwork, good communication, and trustworthy supervisors. You'll also discuss the causes of stress at work, from such situations as unrealistic job demands, job insecurity, the characteristics of low wage jobs, and work/life/family balance. Lastly, you'll submit your final reflection paper on your internship experience.

Read:

- [Stress at Work](#) . U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services Public Health Service Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). 1999.

- **Note:** This is an older report but the concepts are still relevant and are clearly presented. You can skim much of the report – **key concepts explained on pp. 8 – 15.**
- [Stressful Workplaces, Shorter Lives.](#) Teresa Tritch. 2015. Taking Note - The Editorial Page Editor's Blog. The New York Times, October 22, 2015.
- [“The Workplace Is Killing People and Nobody Cares”](#)  - A new book examines the massive health care toll today’s work culture exacts on employees. March 15, 2018 | by Dylan Walsh
- [A Toxic Work World.](#) Anne-Marie Slaughter. 2015. The New York Times.
- [NIOSH’s Quality of Work Life Questionnaire \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - reflects more recent research.

Module 4 Discussion - Job Quality and Occupational Stress

A number of different factors are discussed in the following readings including the role of social support, teamwork, good communication, and trustworthy supervisors. Other causes of stress considered in these readings include job demands, job insecurity, the characteristics of low wage jobs, and work/life/family balance. And the article by Anne- Marie Slaughter, in your [Module 4 Readings](#), raises the issue of the social safety net.

In your first post (400 words minimum):

Respond to the following questions:

- Are there any concepts in the questionnaire or the articles that surprised you?
- Identify a few key concepts about work-related stress in the readings and discuss these perspectives in the context of your own experiences, for example, what are the key sources of occupational stress you’ve encountered during your internship, other jobs, or the “job” of being a college student?
- How have your experiences with occupational stress—or the experiences of family or close friends—shaped your goals for the kind of work you want to do and the type of organization you want to work in?
- Based on the readings and thinking about your own experiences, to what extent can occupational stress be avoided or controlled by an individual or through the intervention of HR?

In your additional posts (150 words/each minimum):

Compare and contrast your views, observations, and interpretations of the readings with your peers. Post your initial response to the above question(s). Cite your learning resources and external resources (eText, videos, other readings, blogs, etc) to support your response.

Read, and respond to two (or more) of your classmates’ posts. Return to the Discussion forum and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

FINAL PAPER:

Prepare an 8 to 10-page paper in which you assess and reflect on your internship. The paper should build on the reflections and analyses you have shared over the course of the semester through your papers and forum posts and cite specific readings that are relevant to analyzing your internship organization. Describe your accomplishments in the internship and how you feel your accomplishments impacted or impacts the organization, if at all; discuss the career implications of your internship experience, detailing the connection between your formal education in your major and the internship; discuss what professional, academic, and personal impact the internship had on you, explaining what you learned about yourself and any insights gained; include how you did on meeting the learning outcomes established at the beginning of the internship; discuss how the internship may or may not have influenced your career goals, how it did or did not meet your expectations, and whether you would recommend your internship sit to future students.

Make sure to:

- 1. Provide internship site information including the name, type of business/organization (purpose); location; internship supervisor; and mission of the internship site.*
- 2. Summarize your responsibilities including the title of your position (if any); goals of the internship with examples of how these goals were achieved; specific tasks and/or assignments you were given, and any impact of your work on the internship site; etc.*
- 3. Analyze and describe the strengths of your organization in terms of the concepts covered in readings and journals (for example, leadership, communication/relationships/teamwork, culture, diversity) and any positive lessons you hope to emulate and integrate into your own approach.*
- 4. How did your accomplishments in the internship relate to your personal, professional and/or academic goals? What have you learned about the kind of work you enjoy and find meaningful from your internship experience? Have values related to the role you hope work will play in your life changed as a result of this internship?*
- 5. **Making the connections between learned knowledge and practical experience is incredibly valuable, both to you as students, and to us as faculty.** Throughout this course, you've been able to make observations on your internship experience in a number of areas that have been related to the coursework of your formal education within SMLR, such as employment law, occupational safety and health and diversity in the workplace. What other observations have you made at your workplace that you can relate to material learned in the classes you have taken? (You can also expand on the topics already covered as they related to coursework you've completed.) Are there*

things that you have learned that you believe should be included in the curriculum within the SMLR?

6. *Would you recommend your internship site to future students—why or why not? Would it be possible for the organization to provide a better experience for future interns? Explain how.*

Student Responsibilities

Online learning requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While online learning offers you flexibility and convenience to learn from anyplace, anytime, *you are still expected to adhere to the all due dates.*

You are expected to:

- Have access to a reliable computer, and access to the Internet
- Log in to Canvas for your course **frequently**
- Check for any announcements, update to the syllabus, assignments, and/or discussions and respond accordingly
- Actively participate in the Discussion Forum
- Complete the assigned readings and/or media
- Complete all assignments
- Adhere to all due dates
- Refer to [Study Guides and Strategies \(Links to an external site.\)](#)Links to an external site. for effective learning practices.

Student Code of Conduct

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional, responsible, courteous, and respectful manner at all times during the course. Offensive language, harassment, posting videos or other media that is not related to the course, and/or any other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated; and will result in dire consequences, including dismissal from the course. Your responses to discussion posts, or any other communication with your classmates and/or your instructor must be of the highest professional and respectable standard. Refer to [Discussion Post Guidelines](#) when communicating in your Canvas class.