

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

School of Management and Labor Relations

Occupational Safety and Health – 575:338

Instructor: Amy J. Bahruth - abahruth@rutgers.edu

Class Schedule and Course Materials:

This class will meet each Monday evening from 5:40 pm to 8:40 pm in the Labor Education Center Auditorium (Room 137) starting on Monday, January 23rd. Reading materials, assignment instructions and submissions, quizzes, and other course-related activities will be facilitated through Canvas. There are no textbooks required for this course. All course materials: reading materials, videos, audio are provided here, within the learning management system (Canvas).

PLEASE NOTE: Until further notice, masks will be required in this class. I am, after all, teaching about health and safety and masking, along with vaccination, are our best protections at this point in time.

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).

Course 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

Course Structure:

The course is structured by weekly modules. Each week is comprised of:

1. Introduction of the topic for that week
2. Readings (PDFs, links to website articles, other)
3. Multimedia (lectures, interviews, podcasts, or other)
4. Discussion
5. Assignment (paper or other. There may not be an assignment every week)
6. Quiz (There may not be a quiz every week)

The course is divided into 14 weeks/classes:

- Class 1 (January 23) - Introduction
- Class 2 (January 30): Occupational S&H History
- Class 3 (February 6): Introduction to OSHA
- Class 4 (February 13): Principles of Industrial Hygiene – Part #1
- Class 5 (February 20): Principles of Industrial Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment – Part #2
- Class 6 (February 27): Hazard Analysis and Putting it in Practice
- Class 7 (March 6): Intro. to Workers' Comp; Permit-Required Confined Spaces
- Class 8 (March 20): Hazard Communications
- Class 9 (March 27): Means of Egress and Workplace Violence
- Class 10 (April 3): Indoor Air Quality and Ergonomics
- Class 11 (April 10): Asbestos
- Class 12 (April 17): Electrical Standard and Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO)
- Class 13 (April 24): Walking Working Surfaces and Bloodborne Pathogens
- Class 14 (May 1): Presentations and OSHA Paperwork

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 and forums, 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.

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. You can email me at abahruth@rutgers.edu for all correspondence. This includes requests for excused absences.

Groups. Groups will discuss course reading, prepare presentations and participate in-group activities together through classroom and canvas forums. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance on the class project will be evaluated both by the instructor and the other members of your group. You will be placed in random group breakout rooms for discussion but will have the opportunity to select members of your team for the purposes of the group project.

Attendance:

- **You should plan to attend every class session** – especially if you want the OSHA 30 card. I am required to take attendance under the requirements from the Federal Department of Labor for students who wish to obtain the OSHA 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.
- **Attendance will be 5% of your overall grade.** Signing attendance sheets is a requirement for obtaining an OSHA 30 card.

Assignments:

Grading Criteria

- **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.**
- **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.
- 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.
- **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.

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.

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 two (2) reaction papers on the following reading assignments:

- OSHA's Recommended Guidelines for Safety and Health Programs
- Workers' Compensation - "How NJ Fails Injured Workers"

The reaction papers are to be a minimum of a **full three 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: <https://jordanbarab.com/confinedspace/>; Links to an external site.www.OSHA.gov; <https://ohsonline.com/Home.aspx>; <https://www.ehstoday.com/>; <https://www.coshnetwork.org/>; <http://www.usmwf.org/> and 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 in Canvas. Your grade will drop by a point for each week it is late – no exceptions.

3. **Quizzes:**

You will be responsible for eleven (11) 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. 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 OSHA 30 card.

5. **Midterm 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.

6. Group Project:

PLEASE NOTE: There will be two options for your group project. **You can self-select your groups but are limited to a group of five (5) of your classmates.**

Option #1:

You will work in your assigned group of approximately five (5) of your classmates. I will have a list of various locations on the Rutgers Campuses for which you will conduct a hazard analysis, or you can select a location of your choice. **However, you must let me know your chosen location as soon as possible so we don't have two or more groups assessing the same building.** You will be looking at the building and grounds to assess hazards. You will get checklists of things to look for throughout the semester and some ideas for questions to ask the workers in the buildings, if you happen to meet any along the way.

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 brief description of the buildings and/or grounds, including the safety and health hazards 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.

Option #2:

- You can choose to do presentation on materials related to the topics below. There are materials, videos and other resources associated with each of these topics. If you select this as an option, you should be prepared to assess what you've
- read and prepare an overview of the material – make sure it's presented from the perspective that this is NEW information for your classmates.
 - Make sure to identify the hazards associated with that industry and identify any OSHA standards that are applicable.
 - Assess and identify what controls you would recommend, to minimize or eliminate hazards identified.
 - I will have questions for you to consider in your analysis. This is not an exhaustive list of questions – you might have different information or thoughts you'd like to share. You do not have to cover every one of the questions - I'm basically looking for you to present a new topic to the class and highlight what you feel is the most important information we should know.
 - You can make this personal – how do you feel about the information you learned? Has this information changed you in any way? How and why?

Topics include:

- Combustible Dust
- Apple, Inc.
- Gasland – the documentary
- Farmworkers
- Meatpacking Industry
- Temporary Workers

I suggest as a way to do this that everyone read/view the material, take notes of what they think is most vital for us (the new audience) to know and then come together as a group to have a discussion on how you want to present this material to the class. You can then split up the work any way that makes sense and each person should contribute something to the entirety of the project.

Group Presentation:

Your group should be prepared to present on May 1st – the last day of class. Be as creative as you wish in developing your presentations. You can use pictures/video, power point or any other medium. 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.

Your presentation should be approximately 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 overview of your topic.
- 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?

7. 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.**

Methods of Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Grading Components	% of Final Course Grade
Attendance and Participation	10%
Weekly Articles	15%
Reaction Papers	15%
Quizzes and Forum Discussions	15%
Group Project	15%
Mid Term Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

Grading Scale

Points Range	Grade	Performance
93 - 100	A	Outstanding
88 - 92.99	B+	Good
83 - 87.99	B	Good
78 - 82.99	C+	Satisfactory
73 - 77.99	C	Satisfactory
72 - 67.99	D+	Poor
66 and below	F	Poor