

Youth and Work 37:575:215 Spring 2026

This course is 100% asynchronous online

Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Professor Mary Gatta, PhD

Email- gatta@smlr.rutgers.edu It is best to reach out via email to me. I will respond within 24 hours. I am also happy to set up phone calls and/or Zoom meetings.

Course Description

This course will explore the experiences of youth in the labor market. It is divided into two large areas:

- **Historical Understanding of Child Labor.** We will begin by examining the work experiences of children and youth in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Our journey starts with a discussion of child labor, including its definitions within social and economic contexts. We will investigate several industries—such as manufacturing, textiles, homework, and agriculture—to better understand the causes and effects of child labor in U.S. history. We will explore why this topic matters both socially and economically, review the reform programs that emerged with the National Child Labor Committee and Lewis Hines' photographs, and consider how the history of child labor in the U.S. can inform our understanding of current child labor issues, both domestically and globally.
- **Young Workers Today.** Here we will review the contemporary experiences of young people in the labor market. This section will explore how young individuals prepare for work, their perceptions of education and workforce development pathways, and their aspirations for future careers. We will focus on the experiences of young workers across racial, socio-economic class, and gender lines, and analyze how public policy can address some of these inequalities. We will explore work in the service sector, internships and the gig economy.

In addition, throughout the course will explore various **public policies** that are designed to improve the experiences, safety and economic security of young workers in the labor market. We will focus on the historical and contemporary roots of these policies, the impacts on young workers and the impact of the changing labor market on the needs to adaptations/changes in public policy.

Course Learning Outcomes

Rutgers Core (SCL)/ Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department Goals	NACE Career Readiness Competencies
SCL-1: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.	Critical Thinking
SCL-2: Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.	Critical Thinking Communication

Course “Meeting” Schedule:

This is an online course that is asynchronous. That means that while we will not “meet” at the same time in person or online, we will still have a schedule that we will follow. The weeks in the course typically begin on Monday and end on Sunday evening at 11:59 p.m. You often will have things due on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, just like any course that meets twice a week. The schedule and the assignments are subject to change.

There will be an *optional* virtual "meet your professor and classmates" [live Zoom session in my Zoom meeting room](#). The “meet your professor and classmates sessions” will be held on:

- Thursday January 22 from 5:00 PM to 5:30 PM (EST)
- Friday January 23 from 12 PM to 12:30 PM (EST)

Course Support

Technical Resource- Contact helpdesk staff if you need assistance using **Canvas**.

Email: <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support> or **Call:** 833-OIT-HELP

Student resources- If you are in need of help in the areas of (a) mental health, (b) academic coaching, and (c) financial assistance: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2022-information-smlr-students>

SMLR Scholarships- <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

Course Resources

There are two books for the course which you can access via the Rutgers library system. The links will take you to the Rutgers Library where you will need your NET ID and password. The books are:

[Hugh Hindman, 2002. Child Labor: An American History](#)

[Yasemin Besen-Cassino 2014. Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America](#)

Those links and other the reading and visual materials required for this course will be posted online on the course website on Canvas in each module.

Students with Disabilities

To receive consideration for accommodations students with a disability must send their letter of accommodation to their instructors and discuss the needed accommodation(s) as early in the semester as possible. For more information regarding the process of applying for a letter of accommodation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>

Cheating/Plagiarism

There are serious consequences, including expulsion, for cheating and taking someone credit for someone else's work without attribution, this includes, using text written by a generation system as one's own (e.g., entering a prompt into an artificial intelligence tool and using the output in a paper), using the internet to answer questions on exams or on papers, when advised to use only class materials. The university has clear, strict policies on these matters. They include signing in for another student. I will report all violations. If you have not done so already, please familiarize yourself with the [university's academic integrity policy](#) If you have any questions, please see me.

What is the AI Policy of this Course?

AI tools can be a powerful resource for learning, especially when used thoughtfully. In this course, you are welcome to use AI to help you:

- Brainstorm ideas and topics
- Create outlines or mind maps
- Explore different ways of approaching a question or problem
- Generate study questions or summaries of concepts

However, the actual writing you submit—whether it's a paper, discussion post, or other written assignment—must be your own original work. Think of AI as your brainstorming partner, not your ghostwriter. If you use AI at any stage, be sure to:

- Indicate which AI tool(s) you used

- Briefly explain how you used it (e.g., “used ChatGPT to generate a list of potential subtopics, then created my own outline”)
- Revise and adapt any AI-assisted material into your own words and ideas

By using AI in this way, you can take advantage of its strengths—speed, variety of ideas, and fresh perspectives—while still developing your own voice, critical thinking, and writing skills.

For each written assignment (forums, papers, exams) you must disclose if you used AI and how you used it at the END of that assignment.

Example of Proper AI Use Disclosure

For this assignment, I used ChatGPT to generate a list of potential subtopics for my paper on work and life. I selected three that I found most relevant, revised them, and created my own outline. All writing, analysis, and examples in the final paper are my own.

OR

For this assignment I did not use AI at all.

How Does This Course Prepare You for Work?

In this course, you will be building skills that employers are seeking. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified 8 career readiness competencies that employers find college graduates need for success in the workplace and lifelong career management. Included below are 2 of the career readiness competencies you will develop in this course.

NACE Competency	In the Workplace...	In this Course...	Articulating Your Skill
<p>Communication- Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.</p>	<p>In the workplace, you can expect to articulate your thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral form to colleagues inside and outside the organization.</p>	<p>In this course, you will demonstrate communication by writing evidence based reflective papers in which arguments presented in the scientific literature are identified, analyzed, and critically evaluated. You will also demonstrate this skill by participating in forum discussions with your peers.</p>	<p>On your resume, you can articulate communication by including the title of your papers and detailing your methodology and findings in succinct bullet points.</p>

<p>Critical Thinking</p> <p>Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.</p>	<p>In the workplace, you can expect to exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.</p>	<p>In this course, you will demonstrate critical thinking by writing evidence based reflective papers in which you critically analyze experiences, connect them to relevant theories and research, and use this combination to draw meaningful conclusions and show personal growth. You will also develop this skill in your forum discussion with your peers.</p>	<p>On LinkedIn, you can articulate critical thinking by sharing the articles you researched and the conclusions you drew from your papers to encourage discussion with others in your field of interest.</p>
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Things happen. When you don't have to attend a class session in person, it's easy to let a situation in your personal or professional life get in the way of online course work. In addition, remember the first rule in computer use: the computer or Internet connection will act up at the most critical time. Because "things happen" it's a best practice not to wait until the last minute to take the quizzes, submit a Forum comment, or upload a writing assignment. Feel free to reach out to me as soon as issues arise.

Contact the Canvas 24/7 toll free helpdesk if you experience any technical problems that prohibit you from completing an assignment. Technical problems are not a valid excuse for missing a due date. Contact information is located on the front page of the syllabus and in various locations in the course. (Course Homepage, Course Tools page.)

Assignments-

Assignment	Points	Outcomes/Skills
Videos to Senators (2) 50 points each	100	SCL/LSER 1 and 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
Forums (6 out of 7 graded) 50 points each	300	SCL/LSER 1 and 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
Short Evidence-Based Paper (2) Public Service Announcement and Youth Workers in Service Work (100 points each)	200	SCL/LSER 1 and 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
NACE Workplace Skills (2) (50 points each)	100	SCL/LSER 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
Midterm Exam	100	SCL/LSER 1 and 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
Comparative Young Workers Course Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal (50 points) • Proposal Discussion (50 points) • Paper (100 points) 	200	SCL/LSER 2: NACE Critical Thinking and Communication
Total	1000	

Assignment Descriptions

Forums. These are online discussions throughout the semester. You will be graded on 6 of the forums (so you can skip one of them). For the forums the goal is for you to think critically, engage with your peers, and deepen your understanding of the course material. You will be randomly placed into a discussion group which will be your group all semester. Each week, you are expected to post one original response to the weekly prompt and reply to at least two of your classmates' posts. Your initial post should be between 150–250 words and should be submitted

by Wednesday at 11:59pm. Replies should be between 75–150 words each and are due by Saturday at 11:59pm.

When writing your posts, use complete sentences and maintain college-level writing. Support your points with examples, evidence, or references when appropriate. A strong reply goes beyond agreement; it might ask a follow-up question, offer a new perspective, or respectfully challenge a viewpoint. Avoid short or vague comments like “I agree” without explanation. Posts should be respectful and on-topic. Forums open on Monday of each week and close on Sunday of each week. For this reason, you cannot submit late posts.

Video Presentations to our Senators. Twice during the semester, you will work to create a video presentation to our US Senators (Senator Booker and Kim) to persuade them about a current issue impacting young workers. The first assignment will be *an individual video you create on child labor and farms*, and then your classmates will provide peer review. For the second video you will be a *group presentation on paid internships*. Your group members will be your forum discussion group that you have been interacting with all semester. Specific directions for each are in the modules.

Short Evidence- Based Papers Throughout the course you will have 2 short papers. One paper will be a *Public Service Announcement on Child Labor* (in the first half of class and this will include a video component); and the second paper will be *Young Workers in the Service Sector—Observation Paper* (in the second half of class). Each paper will be 750-1000 words. Specific directions for each paper will be provided.

Both papers will critically analyze experiences/readings/data, connecting them to relevant theories and research, and using this combination to draw meaningful conclusions and show personal growth. You need to be sure to cite the readings and videos from the week (you do not need to reference all the readings but enough to support your thoughts).

NACE Workplace Skills. You will complete 2 workplace skills writings where you will assess yourself on 2 NACE competencies related to your work and classes. Specific directions will be provided.

Midterm Exam. You will complete a midterm exam from the first half of class. You will be able to use your notes, readings and videos. Specific directions will be provided.

Comparative Young Workers Course Paper. The course paper will be an opportunity to dig deeper into one of the concepts we studied this semester. The heart of this paper will be a comparison of different groups of young workers on the topic. You can compare by demographic types (young workers by gender, race, class, education, country, immigration status, etc) OR by occupation/industry.

As an example- you may want to explore more about the experiences of young workers in gig work, you can explore the differences in the experiences of male and female young gig workers.

Or you can explore the different experiences of gig workers in the US as compared to another country. Or you can explore young gig workers in different industries—perhaps in food delivery and AI computer work. *This is just one example!* There are lots of ideas that you can develop to engage in a comparative analysis of young workers. ***The paper will be spread during the semester and will consist of a proposal, discussion board and paper.*** Specific directions will be provided

Grading

Each assignment is worth a certain number of points as identified in the assignments section of the syllabus. The highest number of points a student can earn is 1000. Points accumulate to determine final grade. It is your responsibility to monitor your grade as you are going through the course. At any time, please reach out to me with questions.

A	= 1000– 900
B+	= 899 – 860
B	= 859 – 800
C+	= 799 – 760
C	= 759 – 700
D	= 669 – 600
F	= 599 – 0

Course Schedule

Module 1- Introduction to the Course

Tuesday January 20 to Sunday January 25

Resources

- Go over the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the course requirements.
- Take some time to learn basic functions on Canvas.
- Review the NACE competencies/skills for career readiness
<https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined>

Assignments

Forum 1: Introductions!

Introduce yourself to your peers (and me) In that introduction please provide an overview of your background and experience, including any information you would like to share on our current/past jobs.

You will make your introduction post via video (about 1 to 2 minutes) by Saturday January 24th at 11:59pm

NACE Workplace Skills #1.

As we delve into this class on people, work and organizations we are also going to incorporate our own workplace skills throughout the semester. To start this off, you will take the NACE Competency Assessment Tool and self-assess yourself on Critical Thinking and Communication. After you assess each of the 2 competencies please briefly:

- Share how landed on your self-rating. (about 200 words)
- Explain how you may have used the skill in the past and/or how you hope to continue to develop the skill. (about 200 words)

This assignment is due by Saturday January 24th at 11:59pm

Part 1- Historical Understanding of Child Labor

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the ways child labor can be a social problem
- Students will critically examine the role of Industrialization in understanding child labor
- Students will explore the experiences of child workers in various industries in the 19th/20th century.
- Students will understand the role of the National Child Labor Committee and reform movements.

Module 2- What is Child Labor?- Children in the Cocoa Fields

Monday January 26 to February 1

We are going to start by looking at child labor in cocoa fields historically and today to gain a general sense of what we will be exploring in the first half of class.

Readings

- Cocoa's Child Laborers, Washington Post
- [Some chocolate has a dark side to it – child labor](#), The Conversation

Videos

- [Dark Side of Chocolate](#)

Assignments

Forum 2- How We Get Our Chocolate

Based on the readings and the video [The Dark Side of Chocolate](#), discuss the following questions in your post:

1. Were you previously aware of how cacao was harvested? What was your overall reaction to learning this material?
2. Do you think the Fair-Trade system can address some of the problems documented in the film? Why/Why not?

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday January 28th at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Saturday January 31 at 11:59pm**

Module 3—Is Child Labor a Social Problem

Monday February 2 to Sunday February 8

This week we want to understand what it means to define child labor as a social problem, and the role of Industrialization historically in the use of child labor

Readings

- [Hindman, Chapter 1 Introduction: Child Labor as a Social and Economic Problem](#)
- [Hindman: Chapter 2 Industrialization of Child Labor](#)

Video

- [PBS – Triangle Shirtwaist Factory](#)
- [Interactive Site from Cornell University ILR School on Triangle Fire](#)

Assignments

Forum 3- Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

For this forum you want to think about the discussion in Hindman on the impact of Industrialization on child labor and how child labor can be defined a social problem within the context of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory work and fire. Discuss

1. How did aspects of Industrialization (mass production, profit motives, lack of government oversight and safety) contribute to the fire?
2. Why do you think the Triangle Shirtwaist fire was such a pivotal moment for activism and labor unions?

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday February 4 at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Saturday February 7^h at 11:59pm**

Module 4- Child Labor I—Child Labor in Mines and Food

Monday February 9 to Sunday February 15

This week we are going to look closely at child labor in two industries- coal mines and agriculture.

Readings

- [Hindman, Chapter 4: Children in the Coal Mines](#)
- [Hindman Chapter 9: Agriculture and Food Processing](#)
- [Children as young as 12 work legally on farms, despite years of efforts to change law, NPR](#)

Videos

- [Fingers to the Bone: Child Farmworkers in the United States](#)
- [Children on US Tobacco Fields](#)
- [Slaughterhouse Children \(graphic images\)](#)

Assignments

Video Presentation to Senators #1- Child Labor on Farms

or this discussion there are 2 main parts. First you will create a video presentation about child labor in agriculture today for our US Senators. Then you will comment on two other students presentations in a peer review format-- what did you think about their presentation? Was it effective? Were their solutions reasonable? Did they clearly demonstrate their data and evidence to build their case?

First, you will create an individual 4-5 **minute video presentation** addressed to your State's Senators on the topic of **child labor on farms today**.

Second, you will respond to 2 of your classmates.

By Wednesday Feb 11 at 11:59pm you need to upload your presentation. Be sure the audio and video is on. You can choose to use a PPT presentation or not. The most important thing is that you convey your ideas clearly, succinctly and grounded in data

Then by **Saturday Feb 14** at 11:59pm read and respond to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. You want to think of this response as a peer review. To guide you, I suggest that when reviewing another student's video presentation, watch it twice—first to understand the overall message and then to take notes. Give feedback on the clarity and accuracy of the content, how well the presentation is organized, the speaker's delivery (such as voice, pace, and confidence), the effectiveness of any visuals, and how engaging the presentation is overall. Provide specific, respectful comments that point to exact moments in the video when possible. Include one strength, one suggestion for improvement, and one encouraging comment to help the presenter grow.

Module 5—Child Labor II- Child Labor in Homes and Street

Monday February 16 to Sunday February 22

This week we are going to look at child labor in tenement home work and street trades; and pay special attention to gender segregation in those fields.

Readings

- [Hindman Chapter 7: Tenement Homework: Birthplace of the Sweatshop](#)
- [Hindman, Chapter 8: The Street Trades](#)

Videos

- [Newsboys' Strike of 1899 | The Kids Who Beat Pulitzer and Hearst ...](#)
- [Mother Jones and the March of the Mill Children](#)

Assignments

Forum 4- Gender Segregation and Child Labor

For this forum we want to reflect on both the work experiences of the child workers in the tenement homework and the street trades; and the gendered nature of that work. As you do discuss in the forum:

1. Do you think gender stereotypes and socialization impact the work of the child workers? Does this reflect gendered work (the association of jobs/task based on stereotypes/culture norms)?
2. Do you see similarities in the gender distribution of work today for young children? Maybe think about chores around the house that children typically perform in families or first job experiences?

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday February 18th at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Saturday February 21st at 11:59pm**

Module 6—State of Child Labor Today in US

Monday February 23 to Sunday March 1

This week we are going to pivot to explore child labor today in the US.

Readings

- [Fact Sheet #43: Child Labor Provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\) for Nonagricultural Occupations- US DOL](#)
- [Child Labor Bulletin 102 Child Labor Requirements in Agricultural Occupations Under the Fair Labor Standards Act- US DOL](#)
- [NJ Department of Labor- Child Labor Laws](#)
- Betsey Wood and Jack Fline, [States are weakening child labor laws, 8 decades after the feds took kids out of the workforce,](#)
- David Weil , [“This Ancient Atrocity”: The Return of Child Labor in the United States: Why Now? What Should be Done?](#)
- [Perdue Farms and Tyson Foods under federal inquiry over reports of illegal child labor,](#) NPR
- [The Restaurant Industry Has a Child Labor Problem,](#) Eater

Video

- [How Does Child Labor Still Exist in America?](#)
- [Child migrants put to work in unsafe and illegal conditions](#)

Assignment

Public Service Announcement and Reflection Paper on Child Labor Today

For this assignment you create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) on Child Labor Today and write a reflection based on the readings/videos for the week. In the PSA you will share a

key themes of child labor today in the US that you think are important for the public to be aware of; and what changes you recommend.

Your PSA should be 2-3 minutes and your reflection paper should be 750 to 1000 words and due on **Saturday February 28th at 11:59pm**

Module 7- History of Child Labor Essay Questions

Monday March 2 to Sunday March 8

This week will be our mid-semester essay exam focused on the readings and videos from Modules 2 to 6. The exam will be due Saturday March 7 at 11:59pm

Part 2- Young Workers Today

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the current state of teen workers' labor force participation
- Students explore the role of the service economy in teen workers' experiences
- Students will understand systems of inequality within the teenage workforce

Module 8- Teen Labor Force Participation Today

Monday March 9 to Sunday March 13—SHORT WEEK BECAUSE OF SPRING BREAK

This week we are going to explore teenagers' labor force participation in our current world and the pros and cons of teenage labor.

Readings

- [From Classroom to Career: The Hidden Power of Teenage Work Experience](#), OECD
- [During COVID-19, teen summer jobs were at lowest since Great Recession](#), Pew Research
- Jeylan T. Mortimer , [The Benefits and Risks of Adolescent Employment](#)
- [More teens are working. Here's why a job is 'becoming more compelling' for them, economist says](#) CNBC

Videos

- [How Working Affects Teenagers and their Careers](#)
- [Inside Walmart's plan to hire more teenagers](#)
- [Teen Employment](#)

Assignments

Forum 5- Should Teenagers Work?

This week, you have learned about the decline in teen labor force participation, its causes and the pros and cons regarding whether teenagers should work. Based on the information you have gained from the videos and articles you have read this week, **please prepare an evidenced based on argument on whether teenagers should work.** (your choice of whether they should work will not impact your grade; instead how you argue your choice will be the focus of your grade)

In this discussion forum, you should prepare an initial post that describes whether you think adolescents should be working. You should prepare your post just as you would in a debate - that means that you need to have good reasons for why you have taken the position you have. You should make sure to cite any articles/videos you are using to support your position.

Then respond to at least 2 of your classmates, and if possible, respond to students who took a different position than you did.

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday March 11th at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Friday March 13th at 11:59pm**

Spring Break March 14 to March 22

Module 9- Teen Workers in the Service Economy

Monday March 23 to Sunday March 29

This week we are going to look closely at teenager workers in the US service economy.

Readings

- [Besen-Cassino, Chapter 2: “Would You Like an Application with Your Coffee?”](#)
- [Besen Cassino, Chapter 3: Fun or Exploitation? The Lived Experience of Suburban Youth Work](#)
- [Besen-Cassino Chapter 6: “White, Young, Middle Class”: Aesthetic Labor, Race, and Class in the Youth Labor Force](#)
- Kristen Harknett, Daniel Schneider and Adam Storer, [Early Career Workers in the Service Sector](#)

Assignment

Young Workers in the Service Sector—Observation Paper

For this assignment you will conduct an observation of young workers in any New Jersey mall/retail store/restaurant and compare what you see to Besen’s description of young workers in mall establishments.

1. Based on the readings, make a list of what you expect to see. You will turn this list in with your write-up.
2. Conduct your observation. You are just to observe NOT interview any of the workers or customers. Make sure to collect data on:
 - The Workers: how many people are working, who is working where, what are the demographics of the workforce (approximate age, gender, race) what are their uniforms/dress like, are they smiling, what do they look like; is there any evidence of emotion work
 - The Work: does it look like they have fun; what work practices did you observe; does there seem to be socializing/friendships; what is the nature of the work, what is the condition of the store (clean, dirty, etc); did you observe any hiring signs
 - The Store Atmosphere: what store are you in; what does the store look like; what music is playing; what is the 'feel' of the store; what customers does the store cater to; how is that displayed; what product is being sold; what type of customers came in the store (age, gender, race, etc) how do customers behave; how do the customers and workers interact' are the customers young/old;
3. Write up your observations and compare them to Besen and descriptions. In particular, you can focus on a subset of these ideas--compare the demographics of the workers (gender, race); the presentation of workers, the role of consumption, the 'branding' of young workers, and the amount of "socializing" that goes on. Did you see what you expected to see based on the readings? What didn't you see, or what did you see that surprised you? Did your mall stores seem like the model one for teens? Why or Why not? **Be sure to cite your work as supportive evidence for your points of view.**

Your paper should your list of expectations; and your observation analysis. Your paper should be 750 or so words and due on Saturday March 28 at 11:59pm

Module 10- Gig Economy and Teen Workers

Monday March 30 to Sunday April 5

This week we are going to explore the experiences of teenager workers in the gig/freelance economy

Readings

- ["We are so tired " What young gig workers say about the future of work"](#) The Worker's Lab
- [The Risks and Benefits of the Gig Economy for Low-Income Young Adults](#). Jobs for the Future

Videos

- [Gig economy appeals to young people, CNBC International](#)
- [Gig economy: The plight of delivery workers • FRANCE 24](#)
- [Working Without Borders: The Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work](#) (this panel discussion video is an hour long)

Assignments

Forum 6- New Jersey Gig Worker Policy

For this forum you want to evaluate [New Jersey Department of Labor's ABC rule](#) for independent contractors. This is a 3-part approach to determine if a worker is an employee or an independent contractor (gig workers). Review this [PBS NJ Spotlight video](#) explaining the rule and positions on both sides. And here is [Economic Policy Institute's public comments](#) supporting the rule and [NJ Business and Industry Association public comments](#) opposing the rule

For this forum you want to support or oppose the rule and explain your reasoning using evidence. Your choice of whether you support or oppose the rule will not impact your grade.

Then respond to at least 2 of your peers. Try to respond to students who hold a view different than your view. Be sure to be constructive and respectful in your response. Did their view and analysis get you thinking about the issue from a different perspective? Is there a middle ground?

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday April 2 at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Saturday April 4 at 11:59pm**

Module 10- Course Project Prep

Monday April 6 to Sunday April 12

This week will be preparing our proposal for our course paper. You will spend the week preparing your research proposal for our course paper.

Course Paper

The course paper will be an opportunity to dig deeper into one of the concepts we studied this semester. **The heart of this paper will be a comparison of different groups of young workers on the topic.** You can compare by demographic types (young workers by gender, race, class, education, country, immigration status, etc) OR by occupation/industry. For instance, if you want to explore more about the experiences of young workers in gig work, you can explore the differences in the experiences of male and female young gig workers. Or you can explore the different experiences of gig workers in the US as compared to another country. Or you can explore young gig workers in different industries—perhaps in food delivery and AI computer work. *This is just one example!* There are lots of ideas that you can develop to engage in a comparative analysis of young workers.

Assignment

Paper Discussion

In this discussion forum, share your emerging ideas for your final paper and explain what you hope to explore or argue. As you read your classmates' posts, offer constructive feedback by noting what you find clear, compelling, or original, and gently suggest areas that could be strengthened or clarified. Aim to build on each other's thinking—ask questions, highlight connections, and provide insights that help your peers refine their projects. This space is meant for collaboration, so engage respectfully and supportively as you develop your ideas together. This is a **REQUIRED** Discussion Forum (not one that you can skip)

Your first post is due **Wednesday April 8**. Briefly describe the topic, question, or argument you plan to explore in your final paper. Explain why it interests you and what you hope to discover or show. Share any early sources, examples, or ideas you're considering.

Your second post is due **Friday April 10**. Read, and respond to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. Read your peers' posts and respond with supportive, specific feedback. Point out what is strong or promising in their ideas, ask clarifying questions, and offer suggestions for how they might refine or deepen their topic or approach. Keep your comments constructive and respectful

Paper Proposal

For this week you will spend time developing your topic and completing a paper proposal. The proposal will consist of:

- a research question that you will be investigating and why it is important. Be sure to explain why the comparison you are proposing within the category of young workers is important. This should be about 200 words.
- You then want to include at least 5 sources you have found for your paper. Be sure to include the full bibliographic citation AND 3-4 sentences on why it is a good source. You can include course materials but I encourage you to also include some outside sources

Proposal Due by **Saturday April 11** at 11:59pm

Module 12—College/Work Based Learning to Careers

Monday April 13 to Sunday April 19

This week we are going to explore the ways young workers can engage in work-based learning programs as part of college and labor unions.

Readings

- [Unpaid Internships And The Need For Federal Action](#), NACE

- Josh Kahn and Sasha Patil [The Class of 2023: Inequity Continues to Underpin Internship Participation and Pay Status](#),
- In Defense of Unpaid Internships - The Atlantic
- Unpaid Internships - Bad for Students, Bad for Workers, Bad for Society - The Atlantic
- [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- Martha Ross, Richard Kazis, Nicole Bateman, and Laura Stateler [Work-based learning can advance equity and opportunity for America's young people](#)
- [Union-Based Apprenticeships for Young People](#), Urban Institute
- Mary Gatta, [Nearly Two-Thirds of Employers Use Skills-based Hiring Practices for New Entry-level Hires](#)
- [A Perspective on Unpaid Student Teaching Internships](#) Samantha Carvello

Video

- [BBC Documentary - Unpaid Internships](#)
- [Why unpaid internships still exist despite hardships for young workers](#)

Assignments

Video Presentation to US Senators #2- Should Work Based Learning Be Paid? (GROUP Assignment)

For this project, your group will work together to create a 6–8 minute video presentation addressed to your U.S. Senators. Your goal is to persuade them on whether internships and other types of work-based learning should be paid. The video needs to be uploaded by Saturday April 18 at 11:59pm.

Module 13- Young Workers and The Future

Monday April 20 to Sunday April 26

This week we are going to explore the factors impacting the future of young workers opportunities.

Readings

- [Kevin Roose, "For Some Recent Graduates, the A.I. Job Apocalypse May Already Be Here," The New York Times, May 30, 2025.](#)
- [Noam Scheiber, "Which Workers Will A.I. Hurt Most: The Young or the Experienced?" The New York Times, July 7, 2025.](#)
- [Natasha Singer, "Goodbye, \\$165,000 Tech Jobs. Student Coders Seek Work at Chipotle," The New York Times, August 10, 2025.](#)
- Joshua Kahn and Sasha Patil [The NACE Take: Who Is the Early Career Gen Z Professional?](#)
- Annelies Goger, Samia Amin, and Christina Yancey, [To prepare young people for the AI workplace, focus on the fundamentals](#)

Videos

- [The future of work and education TEDTALK by Rona van der Zander](#)
- [Julia Pollak on how young people are shifting workplace culture](#)
- [Gen Z's Work Ethic: What Boomers Don't Get](#)

Assignments

Forum 7- What Do You Think Will Be The Future of Work for Young People?

For this forum I just want you to reflect on what the future of work may look like for young people today. Work is ever changing—we are seeing labor market changes, the impact of AI, workplace culture changes, work modality (in person v virtual) and many more things. Young people will be navigating this changing landscape for the next 50 or more years. What do you think are the biggest challenges young people will face? What changes do you think they will be making in our workplaces? What are you excited about for young people and work? What are you concerned about for young people and work?

Your initial post should be made by **Wednesday April 22nd at 11:59pm** and your comments to 2 other students should be made by **Saturday April 25th at 11:59pm**

Module 14 Skills Based Hiring

Monday April 27 to Sunday May 3

This week we will review skills-based hiring and the skills employers are looking for in college graduates. We will also complete our NACE Workplace Skills II reflection..

Readings

Kevin Grey, Almost Two-thirds of Employers Use Skills-based Hiring to Help Identify Job Candidates, NACE

Kevin Grey, The Attributes Employers Look for on New Grad Resumes—and How to Showcase Them, NACE

Assignment

- **NACE Workplace Skills #2.** Take a skills-based assessment that we completed earlier in the semester again on the 2 competencies (communication and critical thinking). Did your assessment of your skill levels change? You want to write a self-assessment performance review where you:
 1. Highlight how you have further developed these skills this semester (using examples to illustrate them from this class, and if you would like, include how you have developed these skills in other classes, hobbies or other aspects of your life this semester)
 2. Reflect on how your skills will be important to the future of work. Be sure to include specific examples.

This assignment should be 500-800 words and is due by **Saturday May 2 at 11:59pm**

Module 15- Final Course Paper

This week we are going to complete our final course paper