School of Management & Labor Relations

Youth at Work

Semester:	**Spring 2026**
Course and section number:	**37:575:215:99**
Course title:	**Youth at Work**
Location, modality:	**Online, Asynchronous**
Instructor:	**Matthew Fischer-Daly, Lecturer**
Contact information:	**Primary, Canvas; Secondary, email:**
	matthew.fischer-daly@rutgers.edu
Office hours information:	**Online, via Zoom by appointment**
Textbook:	**None; all readings provided on Canvas**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will study youth at work, encompassing child labor and young workers. Students will begin by examining the definition of child labor and theories on why it occurs and persists. They will engage with multiple explanations developed through studies focused on different contexts. Next, the course turns to an exploration of cases of child labor and efforts to end it in different countries and industries. The final section of the course looks at trends in youth work, including precarious work and the leisure and hospitality and retail sales industries, where most employed youth work in the United States.

Core Curriculum Learning Goals:
- CCD-1: Analyze the degree to which forms of human differences and stratifications among social groups shape individual and group experiences of, and perspectives on, contemporary issues. Such differences and stratifications may include race, language, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, abilities or other social distinctions and their intersections.
- SCL-1: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- SCL-2: Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.
- SMLR- IV: Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- o Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories, and concepts in their field of study.
    - o Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues.
- SMLR – V: Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions.
    - o Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work.
    - o Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective.
    - o Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts.
- SMLR – VI: Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance.
    - o Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work.
    - o Understand the legal, regulatory, and ethical issues related to their field.
- LSER – 1: Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories and concepts.
- LSER – 2: Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments.
- LSER – 6: Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Assignment	Points	Points that can be accrued	Percent of course total
Academic Integrity, AI, & Syllabus Quiz	1 @ 10 points each	10	1%
Essays	3 @ 60 points each	180	18%
Online discussions	3 @ 150 points each	450	45%
Research papers	2 @ 180 points each	360	36%
Total		**1,000 points**	**100%**

Grading scale:
A=90-100; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

Points are indicative; in the end, I will use my judgment in translating points into grades for the course. I will take into consideration improvement throughout the semester and exceptional work, leading to the possibility of increasing or decreasing a grade – ordinarily by one level (e.g. B and B+). Grading rubrics for each assignment are available on Canvas. **Extra credit is not offered in this course.**

Due dates of assignments are your responsibility as a student. Late submissions of any assignment in this course will be assessed a point penalty of 10-50%, depending on late-

submission history. Late submissions of more than one week will not be accepted. *Contact me as soon as possible with any emergencies that affect your ability to submit assignments on time.*

Essays: 3 @ 60 points each
Students are required to write and submit three essays (300-600 words) throughout the semester. In each essay, students are asked to engage critically with material studied in the course and write a clear response to questions about it. Instructions and prompts for each essay are posted on Canvas. Essays will be read only by the instructor.

Online discussions: 3 @ 150 points each
Each discussion consists of two parts. In the first part, students will write an initial post to the discussion, responding to a prompt. In the second part, students will read classmates' initial posts and post at least 3 replies that convey questions, insights, and constructive feedback. The Online Group Discussion Guidelines explains how to successfully participate in these online discussions and is available on Canvas.

Research papers: 2 @ 180 points each
In the first research paper, students will present your findings on child labor in a state of the United States. In the second research paper, students will present your findings on child labor in a country other than the United States. Instructions for each research paper explain the expectations for them and are available on Canvas.

COURSE PROTOCOLS

Class participation
This is an interactive class; students need to stay on track to effectively interact with others in the class. You are responsible for keeping up with due dates and notifying me of emergencies that interfere with class participation. As soon as a problem arises, email me. An online class provides you with flexibility on when to complete the course requirements; however, it also requires that you manage your time and complete them by the designated due dates.

Academic freedom
Faculty and students alike are free to express their viewpoints at appropriate times in class, including perspectives that differ from most in the Rutgers University community. Students may be exposed to views they find challenging, uncomfortable, or distressing. But, since Rutgers is a public institution, First Amendment speech protections apply. Legally, feelings of discomfort are not sufficient to restrict speech. Pedagogically, exposing people to different ideas—even challenging their most deeply held beliefs—is a feature, not a flaw, of academic life. Free inquiry is essential to a robust learning environment. Students and professors are at our best–and best able to contribute to society–when we are exposed to a wide range of challenging ideas.

For more information on academic freedom, please review these slides and the Rutgers academic freedom page.

Respect
Students are expected to contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters mutual respect, recognizes others' dignity, and demonstrates civility by adherence to class norms for discussion, debate, and all interpersonal interactions. Expressions of hatred or contempt based on race, color,

national and ethnic origin, age, gender and gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability will not be tolerated.

I am firmly committed to diversity and equality. In this course I will work to promote a respectful environment in which everyone feels safe and welcome and that affirms people of all identities, including those based on class, gender, nationality, and racial categories.

If your name is different than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to let me know your gender pronouns via Canvas Inbox, email, or in office hours—whatever your prefer.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or to reach out to Rutgers Student Affairs.

Course communications
Students are responsible for accessing course materials on Canvas and participating as instructed. You should check this course's Canvas site and your Rutgers email regularly throughout the semester for announcements and/or updates about this course. Students are responsible for promptly replying to my messages that request a response. **Please inform me of emergencies or issues that are likely to affect your participation or performance in the course. The sooner I know, the easier it will be to develop a plan to ensure that you succeed in the course.**

Class cancellations
This is an asynchronous (or non-synchronous), online course; therefore, most Rutgers class cancellations (e.g. due to weather) will not affect class participation and activities.

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is essential to your learning, to the mission of Rutgers, and to membership in the Rutgers community. It means honesty and is a fundamental value that supports trust among students and between students and teachers. Academic integrity is also a shared value; students, teachers, and administrators all play vital roles in promoting and ensuring it. In contrast, academic dishonesty violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and degrades scholarship. Please read the full Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and integrity
Clear, transparent identification of uses of artificial intelligence (AI) is part of academic integrity and essential to your development of critical thinking skills. You may use AI only if you fully and completely identify your use of it every time in every assignment. Identification requires, at a minimum, a citation (footnote, endnote, or parenthetical citation with full reference at the end of the text) identifying the AI program used and the prompt that you input into the AI program. Failure to identify use of AI in your assignments amounts to plagiarism and will be treated accordingly. You are required to read the Using AI in this class page, complete a quiz on it during the first week of this course, and follow the course policy throughout the course.

From the Office of Disability Services
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 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 as possible in your courses. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Rutgers' Resources for Success
The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at https://success.rutgers.edu/. Nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

Technical Assistance
Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology
Website: https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support
Call: 833-OIT-HELP

COURSE SCHEDULE:
*Note: *All due dates mean the end of the day (11:59 PM Eastern time zone) of the designated date (e.g. Week 1 assignments are due by the latest on February 3 at 11:59 PM ET)*

Week	Topic	Assignments
1 1/20 – 1/25	Course introduction	1. Review the syllabus 2. Review the Course Essentials, Know Your Sources, & Using AI in this Course pages 3. Academic Integrity, AI, & Syllabus Quiz 4. Discussion #1 initial post due 1/26
2 1/26 – 2/1	What is child labor? What is the current state of child labor? Reading: *Child Labour: Global estimates 2024*, ILO and UNICEF. Video: Child Labour: Global Estimates 2024 and the Road Forward	1. Discussion #1 initial post due 1/26, replies due 2/2. 2. Essay #1 due 2/9
3 2/2 – 2/8	Explanations of child labor Readings: 　1. "Global Child Labor: Past as Prologue", Hindman, H.D.	1. Discussion #1 replies due 2/2.

	2. "Child Labor: Myths, Theories and Facts", López-Calva, L.F.	2. Essay #1 due 2/9

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2/9 – 2/15
	Development and child labor
	
	Readings:
	    1. "Economic Growth and Child Labor in Low Income Economies.", Edmonds, E.V.
	    2. "It's a Hard-Knock Life: Child Labor Practices and Compliance with IMF Agreements", Mark et al.
	
	Film: *The End of Poverty?*
		1. Discussion #2 initial post due 2/16

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2/16 – 2/22
	Child labor during industrialization in the United States
	
	Readings:
	    2. "Industrialization of Child Labor" Hindman, H.D.
	    3. "'Us ain't never idle': The World of Work", King, W.
	
	Media:
	    1. "Characteristics of the Early Factory Girls" (1898), Harriet Hanson Robinson's
	    2. Lewis Hines photograph collection
		1. Discussion #2 initial post due 2/16, replies due 2/23
		2. Essay #2 due 3/2

6
2/23 – 3/1
	Contemporary child labor in the United States
	
	Readings:
	    1. *Fields of Peril*, Human Rights Watch
	    2. Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs Across the U.S., Dreier, H.
		1. Discussion #2 replies due 2/23
		2. Essay #2 due 3/2
		3. Research paper #1 due 3/23

7
3/2 – 3/8
	Child labor in global supply chains: the chocolate industry
	
	Readings:
	    1. "White Man's 'Burden' and the New Colonialism in West African Cocoa Production," Athreya.
	    2. "The Intersection of Corporate Social Responsibility and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex: Exploitative Child Labor in Côte d'Ivoire's Chocolate Industry.
		1. Essay #2 due 3/2
		2. Research paper #1 due 3/23

	Film: *The Dark Side of Chocolate*, Romano	
8 3/9 – 3/13	Research week	1. Research paper #1 due 3/23
9 3/23 – 3/29	Child labor in global supply chains: the gold industry Readings: 1. *No Golden Future: Use of child labour in gold mining in Uganda*, SOMO 2. "Moral Economies and Child Labour in Artisanal Gold Mining in Ghana," S. Okyere	3. Discussion #3 initial post due 3/30
10 3/30 – 4/5	Ending child labor Readings: 1. Magammana et al. "Drivers of Child Labour: Socio-Economic Insights from the 15 Worst-Affected Countries 2. Okyere, "Worker Voice and Organizing in Efforts to Eliminate Child Labor	1. Discussion #3 initial post due 3/30, replies due 4/6 2. Essay #3 due 4/13
11 4/6 – 4/12	Precarious work and the labor market for young workers Readings: 1. "Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition," Kalleberg. 2. "Labor Market Uncertainties for Youth and Young Adults: An International Perspective," Yeung and Yang.	1. Discussion #3 replies due 4/6 2. Essay #3 due 4/13
12 4/13 – 4/19	Digital, platform-mediated work and young workers Readings: 1. "Digital Taylorism: Freedom, Flexibility, Precarity, and Vulnerability," Anwar and Graham. 2. "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the recent employment effects of artificial intelligence," Brynjolfsson, Chandar, and Chen.	1. Essay #3 due 4/13

13 4/20 – 4/26	Young workers' asserting dignity in the United States Readings: 1. "Deepening Our Understanding of Labor Action: Examining How Workers Organize Different Types of Strikes in the United States," Kallas. 2. "Corporate union busting in plain sight: How Amazon, Starbucks, and Trader Joe's crushed dynamic grassroots worker organizing campaigns," Logan.	1. Research paper #2 due 5/11
14 4/27 – 5/4	Research week	1. Research paper #2 due 5/11