

Instructor: Mingwei Liu

To Interact: Send a message via Canvas
Inbox messaging tool

This course is taught 100% online using Canvas.

Learning Objectives

Rutgers Core: SCL

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 particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions. (Goal V)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)
- Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations. (Goal VII)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (Goal 1).
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

Get Help

Need Assistance with a technical question?

It is the student's responsibility to be able to perform technically in the course. Contact helpdesk staff if you need assistance using the **Canvas**. Your instructor cannot assist you with technical issues – but the helpdesk staff can!

Helpdesk: Rutgers Office of Information and Technology

Email: <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support>

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>

(Goal 2).

Course Description

This class will look at the key issues in the management of people, primarily in for-profit corporations in the United States. It will not teach detailed management techniques and methods. Instead, we will discuss theoretical concepts that will help us understand and analyze real world challenges in the changing workplace.

Key questions and themes include:

- What is work, what is a workplace and what is an organization?
- Why should organizations put people first for success and sustainability?
- How and why are organizations changing?
- What are the incentives in the workplace for workers and managers?
- What are the effects of new forms of work organization such as temping, freelancing and outsourcing on workers and organizations?

Course Requirements

Readings and Other Resources

There are no required books for this course. Readings will be posted on Canvas.

Assignments and Assessments

Exams	20 points	Midterm (Week 1 – 7): 10 points Final (Week 9 – 14): 10 points
Projects	20 points	Midterm (Week 1 – 7): 10 points Final (Week 9 – 14): 10 points
Short Assignments	24 points	4 @ 6 points each
Forums	32 points	8 @ 4 points each
Polls	4 points	4 @ 1 point each
TOTAL	100 points	

Exams

Worth 20 points (Midterm: 10, Final: 10)

Students are assessed on knowledge gained in weeks 1–7 and 9–13. Each exam consists of two short essay questions, each worth 5 points. Exams are timed.

Midterm and Final Projects

Worth 20 points in total

You will create a short video presentation summarizing two weekly topics from the class for the midterm and final project, respectively. Specific directions will be provided. Each video presentation is worth 10 points.

Short Assignments

Worth 24 points

Four short assignments, each 6 points

Short Assignment Essays should combine personal reflections with academic sources and evidence to create a more rigorous and insightful piece. It involves critically analyzing experiences, 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). Throughout the semester, you will write 4 short evidence-based reflection essays, each of which is about 600-800 words. Specific directions for each paper will be provided.

Forums

Worth 32 points

Forums 1 – 8 – each 4 points

Students are organized into discussion groups of 6 – 10 members.

For Forums open Tuesday; Closes Monday 11:59 pm. **(No late submission will be accepted)** 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 150–250 words and submitted by Thursday at 11:59pm. Replies should be between 75–150 words each and are due by Monday at 11:59 pm.

When writing your posts, use complete sentences and maintain a college-level writing style. 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. Because the forums are in real time, you cannot complete the late ones.

Polls

Worth – 4 points

Four polls, each 1 point

Course Policies

Message Checking Policies

Messages Sent to Instructor's Canvas Inbox

Unless students receive advance notification, the instructor will check his Canvas Inbox by 18:00 pm ET on regular workdays. (This excludes Weekends and Spring Break) If a student sends a comment or question, the instructor will address the contents of the message within 24 hours.

Messages Sent to Student Canvas Inbox

It is the responsibility of the student to regularly check for incoming course messages. Messages are always sent through the Canvas messaging system. Students will receive a notification when a new message has been sent to his/her Canvas inbox. Forgetting or being unable to check for messages in one's Canvas inbox is not an excuse.

Weekly Messages

A weekly message will be uploaded into the announcements area of the course Tuesday mornings. Reviewing the weekly message is a required activity. Weekly Messages present timely information on course activities/assignments and content.

Taking Exams and Forum Engagement

Exams may be taken anytime between the open and close day and time. Exams must be completed by 11:59 pm on the close date. Once a student logs into the exam area, the quiz must be completed in one sitting.

All students are responsible for offering 3 comments in forum discussions. When a student does not participate fully or at all by 11:59 pm on the day the commenting period closes, points cannot be made up.

Late Submission Policy – Short Assignments

Assignments can be submitted up until 11:59 pm on the stated due date with no penalty. Late assignments will be accepted. But your grade for a late assignment will be lowered by 20% for each day past its due date.

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 Portfolio or writing assignment.

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.)

Grading

Each assignment is worth a certain number of points as identified in the assignments section of the syllabus. Highest number of points a student can earn is 100. Points accumulate to determine final grade.

Decimal points will not be rounded. For example, your final grade is B+ if you earn 89.99. It is your responsibility to monitor your grade and take steps to improve it.

A	= 100 – 90
B+	= 89.99 – 85
B	= 84.99 – 80
C+	= 79.99 – 75
C	= 74.99 – 70
D	= 66.99 – 60
F	= 59.99 – 0

Students with Disabilities

To receive consideration for an accommodation, 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>

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

Academic Integrity

Conduct yourself in accordance with the Rutgers University Academic Integrity policy.

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

Use of "AI" in 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.

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.

Schedule by Week

Week 1 Introduction (Jan.20-Jan.26)

- Go over the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the course requirements.
- Take some time to learn basic functions on Canvas. Make sure to resolve any Canvas-related issues for your and the instructor's convenience. Watch the instructional videos about the use of Canvas.

Assignments

- Forum 1: Introduce yourself in a few sentences and provide an overview of your background and experience, including your current job if any.
- Poll 1: Think about your dream job. Why do you want to get the job?

Week 2 What is "people" strategy? (Jan.27-Feb.2)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Pfeffer & Veiga.(1999) Putting people first for organizational success. Academy of Management Executive, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 37-48.
- Fuller, J., & Raman, M. (2023). The High Cost of Neglecting Low-Wage Workers Six mistakes that companies make-and how they can do better. HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, 101(5-6), 40-48.
- Ton, Zeynep. 2023. The Obstacles to Creating Good Jobs and How Courageous Leaders are Overcoming them. Harvard Business Review 101: 49–56.

Videos

- Ton, Zeynep. 2013. The Good Jobs Strategy. TED.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sD67LKqXGrg>

Assignments

- Short Assignment 1: Choose a grocery store or supermarket where you have shopped. What is your shopping experience at this store, such as price, quality, and customer service? Why do you like or dislike shopping at this store? In your opinion, has this store adopted any aspect of the Good Job Strategy described by Zeynep Ton? Please give specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Week 3 What is work? (Feb.3-Feb.9)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Budd, J. (2011). The Thought of Work. Cornell University Press. Pp. 19-42.
- May Wong, 2025. New survey indicates work-from-home is here to stay, Stanford Report

Videos

- David Bluestein, 2023. The Psychology of Work
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DRSAGhkWRk>
- The Work from Home Divide with Steven Davis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utlw6mMdy10>

Assignments

- Forum 2: Is working from home good for companies and employees? Do you like working from home? Why or why not?
- Poll 2: Is work a curse or a freedom?

Week 4 Why do people work? (Feb.10-Feb.16)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Jeffrey, P. (1998). Six Dangerous Myths about Pay. Harvard Business Review
- Ledford Jr, G. E., Fang, M., & Gerhart, B. (2013). Negative effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation: more smoke than fire. World at Work Quarterly.

Videos

- Schwartz, B. (2014). The Way We Think about Work is Broken., TED
https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_the_way_we_think_about_work_is_broken
- Ariely, D., (2012), What makes us feel good about our work?, TED
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work
- Pink, D. (2009). The Puzzle of Motivation., TED
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation

Assignments

- Poll 3: What motivates you to work/study hard?
- Forum 3: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Monetary incentives are the most powerful to motivate employees. Explain your view (*Note. Your choice [agree vs. disagree] will not affect the evaluation*).

Week 5 What is an organization? (Feb.17-Feb.23)

Reading

- PowerPoint
- Nohria, Nitin “Note on Organizational Structure.”
- Sorensen, J. “Note on Organizational Culture”

Videos

- Seth Godin 2014. This is broken.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZiDS-4Xd2k>
- Why Zappos Pays New Employees to Quit
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RrxnRRa7M>

Assignments

- Short Assignment 2: Watch the video “Why Zappos Pays New Employees to Quit” and answer the following questions:
 1. Why would Zappos offer to pay its employees to quit?
 2. Why is the fit between employee and company values so important to Zappos and its customer service strategy?

Week 6 The Unionized Workplace (Feb.24-Mar.2)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Pfeffer, J., (2007), In Praise of Organized Labor: What Unions Really Do.
- Sherk, J., (2014), The Argument that Most Workers are Better off without Unions, Washington Post
- McCarthy, Justin. 2022. “U.S. Approval of Labor Unions at Highest Point Since 1965.” Gallup, August 30, 2022.

Videos

- Labor Unions: History of Unions & Collective Bargaining
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yZFcskizd4>
- What is a labor union? How do unions work?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KjQpKkYfFQ>

- Milton Friedman – The Real World Effects of Unions
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzYgiOC9cj4>

Assignments

- Forum 4: Are labor unions good or bad? Are they still relevant in today's economy? Explain your views (*Note. Your choice [agree vs. disagree] will not affect the evaluation*).

Week 7 Restructuring and Offshore Outsourcing (Mar.3-Mar.9)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Vietor, R. H., Rivkin, J. W., & Seminerio, J. (2008). The Offshoring of America. Harvard Business Review.
- Doig, S. J., Ritter, R. C., Speckhals, K., and Woolson, D. (2001). Has Outsourcing Gone Too Far? The McKinsey Quarterly.
- Girod, S., and Karim, S. (2017). Restructuring or Reconfiguration? Harvard Business Review.

Videos

- Apple Chinese Factory
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cRBBRwBKIE&t=704s>

Assignments

- Forum 5: Watch the video "Apple Chinese Factory". What caused Foxconn suicides? Should Apple be responsible for the suicides? Why or why not?

Week 8 Mid-Term Project and Exam (Mar.10-Mar.16)

Spring Break

Week 9 Skills and Jobs in the "New" Economy (Mar.24-Mar.30)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Weise, Michelle R. (2020). "Research: How Workers Shift from One Industry to Another." Harvard Business Review, July 07, 2020.
- Natalie Campisi, 2025, 2030 Job Market Forecast: The Skills And Roles You'll Need, Forbes
- Tamayo, Jorge, Leila Doumi, Sagar Goel, Orsolya Kovács-Ondrejko, and Raffaella Sadun. 2023. "Reskilling in the Age of AI." Harvard Business Review 101, no. 5 (September–October 2023): 56–65.
- Kevin Grey. 2025. The Attributes Employers Look for on New Grad Resumes—and How to Showcase Them.

Videos

- How AI is changing the job market - What in the World podcast, BBC World Service
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_kF_SDB0-c
- 15 Jobs That Will Disappear In The Next 20 Years Due To AI
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r211u89eUaY>
- Is AI really taking our jobs? The future of work explained
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqfunA6aSS4>

Assignments

- Short Assignment 3: Identify three jobs that did not exist before 2010. What do they have in common? How do you prepare yourself for changing jobs in the "new" economy?

Week 10 The Gig Economy (Mar.31-Apr.6)

Information in this document is preliminary, subject to change

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Heller, N. (2017), Is the Gig Economy Working?, New Yorker
- Editorial Board, (2017), The Gig Economy's False Promise, New York Times
- Cameron, L. (21 June 2024). How Micro-Choices and Games Motivate Gig Work. Harvard Business Review.
- Ramy Zeid, Dana Alrayesse, Mehmet Ali Soytas and Nayib Riveria, 2025. The Gig Economy and the Future of Work: Global Trends and Policy Directions for Non-Standard Forms of Employment. World Bank

Videos

- Here's How the Gig Economy Could Work, CNBC
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4V4jTjkOFEE>
- Uber Drivers: Are They Employees or Contractors?, Bloomberg
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umQQ-9c5XLU>
- Not Uber, Not TaskRabbit: Inside The Real Gig Economy, NBC news
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGCG6JTCK0c>
- Americans Future Job Market
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OVpafuJIYI&t=6s>

Assignments

- Forum 6: In your opinion, are Uber drivers employees or independent contractors? Explain why.

Week 11 Corporate Social Responsibility (Apr.7-Apr.13)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Friedman, M. 1970. The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. New York Times Magazine 32, no. 13: 122-126.
- Evan, William M., and R. Edward Freeman. "A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation: Kantian Capitalism." In Contemporary Issues in Business Ethics. 5th ed. Edited by Joseph R. DesJardins and John J. McCall. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005, pp. 76-84.
- Bonini, S. M. J., L. T. Mendonca, and J. M. Oppenheim. 2006. When Social Issues Become Strategic. McKinsey Quarterly.
- Winston, A. (2022). Sustainable business went mainstream in 2021. Harvard Business Review.

Videos

- What is a corporation?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpjypnxnS4U> (watch 11:00-17:00)
- Porter, M. (2013). The Case for Letting Business Solve Social Problems.
https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_porter_why_business_can_be_good_at_solving_social_problems
- Milton Friedman on Self-Interest and the Profit Motive
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPqdRqacpFk&index=3&list=PLEDBC45346CFEE362>
- IBM Study
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdkYieDuVvY>

Assignments

- Short Assignment 4: Why is social responsibility important to a business?

Week 12 Regulating Global Value Chains (Apr.14-Apr.20)

Readings

- PowerPoint
- Anon. 2006. The Evolving Debate on Trade and Labor Standards. International Labor Organization.
- Witte, J. M. Realizing Core Labor Standards

Videos

- Starbuck's Coffee Commodity Chain
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osW9dfueb_4
- Walmart Supply Chain
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZC4neLax5o>
- Nike Sweatshops: Behind the Swoosh
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5uYCWVfuPQ>

Assignments

- Forum 7: In his columns, Nicholas Kristof argues that while sweatshops seem exploitative, they are often a "dream" for the extremely poor because the alternatives—like scavenging in trash dumps—are far worse. He suggests that these factories provide a steady income and act as a necessary historical stepping stone toward a country's industrial development. However, critics counter that this logic ignores the human rights of workers and allows wealthy corporations to profit from dangerous conditions and "poverty wages." In your opinion, are sweatshops a helpful or harmful force for poor people in developing countries?

Week 13 AI, Algorithm, and Future of Work (Apr.21-Apr.27)

Readings

- Molly Kinder, Xavier de Souza Briggs, Mark Muro, and Sifan Liu. 2024. Generative AI, the American worker, and the future of work. Brookings Institution.
- Milena Nikolova, Femke Cnossen, and Boris Nikolaev, 2024. Robots Make Your Work Less Meaningful, Brookings Institution.
- Matesch, A. and Nguyen, A. 2019. Explainer: Algorithmic Management in the Workplace. Data & Society.
- Mohlmann M (2021) Algorithmic nudges don't have to be unethical. Harv Bus Rev.

Videos

- AI is transforming the world of work, are we ready for it?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQX_wlW9Nh0
- How Will AI Change the World?
https://www.ted.com/talks/ted_ed_how_will_ai_change_the_world
- What exactly is an algorithm? Algorithms explained | BBC Ideas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnBF2GeAKbo>
- When Your Boss Is a Bot: The Rise of Algorithmic Management
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6eq9C_6SaU

Assignments

- Poll 4: Do you trust AI for data-driven decisions?
- Forum 8: How will AI (artificial intelligence) change the workplace? What will be the benefits and risks?

Week 14 Final Project and Exam (Apr.28-May.4)

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