



RUTGERS

School of Management
and Labor Relations

Black Workers in American Society - 37:575:303:92/93

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Instructor:

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(Send a Canvas Message)

Course Description

This online course will examine the evolving position of Black workers in the U.S. economy: how it has changed at key points throughout history to the present day, and how access to opportunities in the labor market is informed by racial stratification in the larger society.

We will discuss various dimensions of racial labor market stratification (wages, mobility, benefits, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment) to assess Blacks' economic position in the labor market. The goal of the course is to challenge common notions of how people succeed in the labor market and to explore how systemic patterns of exclusion limit opportunities for Blacks. The course will focus on structural explanations for racial inequality in the labor market rather than purely individualistic ones. We will examine the social constructs of race and class to understand how Blacks at all levels in the labor market face common challenges in navigating the labor market.

Learning Objectives. The student is able to:

Core Curriculum:

- CCD-2. Analyze contemporary social justice issues and unbalanced social power systems.
- 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.

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (Goal 6)

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a work situation. (Goal IV)
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
 - Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues.
- Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).
 - Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work.
 - Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective.

- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems.
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)
- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context (HRM)

Course Learning Objectives:

- **Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world.** In this class we will explore how racial categorization, created through the social construction of race, affects one’s position in the labor market and consequently produces racial labor market inequality. Through this approach we will examine the socioeconomic dimension of the claim that although race is not a scientifically “real” concept, it is real in its consequences.
- **Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.** You will develop an understanding of concepts such as hierarchy, power and hegemony to develop a working knowledge of social change, particularly one that uses a complex, nuanced analysis of a social problem to devise effective policies to end social and economic inequality.
- **Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.** Through forum discussion and analysis of readings, we will take apart the author’s thesis, arguments and supporting evidence to critically evaluate the claims presented and compare them across other readings/authors drawing linkages and distinctions among different approaches and strategies for building arguments and supporting them.
- **Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.** We will use the idea that the labor market, as well as society at large, is organized in such a way that it can be examined using a structural approach. Through this lens we can view blacks’ position in the U.S. economy as part of a racial structure fortified by mechanisms such as institutional discrimination, exclusion, and access. We will explore this idea through multiple media: films, class readings chosen to represent a variety of perspectives, class discussions, and group exercises exploring hypothetical situations designed to bring your own experiences and perspectives into the discussion.
- **Apply concepts about human and social behavior to questions or situations.** We will approach issues such as the labor market consequences of persistent school segregation, resistance to integration, affirmative action, racial disparities in unemployment, the persistence of a racial wage gap amidst a shrinking education gap, using concepts such as social structure, social closure, hegemony, bias, and homophily.

Course Delivery

- Course written lectures.
- Research based papers and articles.
- Answer questions regarding the readings.
- Online threaded discussions with other students, posting at least 3 times a week.
- Course videos, and/or listening to audio files.

Course Materials

There is not a textbook for this course. All required readings, videos and assignments are located on the course website within Canvas.

Assessment of Online Forums and Weekly Written Questions

Forums - A forum is an interactive threaded discussion used to discuss course topics. Within these forums' students can communicate their insights and thoughts pertaining to a particular topic, as well as learn from one another in the process.

Threaded discussions are also a means for the instructor to identify whether a student comprehends required reading and/or video assignments. Forums include instructor-generated questions and suggested topic areas for discussion, and student-to-student interaction.

Weekly Written Questions - You will be asked to answer a series of questions from the assignment on most weeks. These assignments are designed to ensure that you understand the most important aspects of the reading or video. Your answers for each question should be no longer than they need to be to fully answer the question. In most cases 1-2 pages single spaced is enough for the entire assignment.

Overall Criteria for Grading - Scores on the weekly assignments as well as the online forums reflect whether you have achieved an accurate understanding of the various readings and whether you reflect those ideas well in written English. There are three sets of criteria on which students are graded. Earning the highest number of points within each assignment requires following these best practices:

Content (50% of points)

Content is well developed:

- ✓ Content that relates to required/recommended course material is accurate.
- ✓ Questions are thoroughly answered, and content is appropriate for the topic of inquiry.
- ✓ Content that indicates knowledge gained and potential for knowledge/skills to influence future thoughts/behavior is adequately linked to course materials (including any material brought into the course by a student). When required, citations are provided.

Reflection (40% of points)

Outstanding reflective skills:

- ✓ Answers indicate a high level of reflection and insight on the topic.
- ✓ Critical thinking is evident.
- ✓ A strong desire to reflect on topics is evident.

Organization & Mechanics (10% of points)

Organization of content and expression of ideas/thoughts is outstanding:

- ✓ Writing is fluent and lively.
- ✓ All answers are presented in a professional manner: using appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.
- ✓ All ideas/thoughts are well communicated. Answers to all questions are concise/to the point.
- ✓ Engages in a high-quality Internet search (when applicable). Instructions for completing assignments are followed.

Policies and Procedures

Class Sessions and Assignment Due Date Information:

The course begins on **Tuesday, January 20, 2026**. Last weekly assignment will be submitted by **Monday, May 4, 2026**.

Reading Days – **Thursday, December 11, 2025 and Friday, December 12, 2025**. The final assessment will be submitted by Friday, December 22, 2025.

Tuesdays are the beginning of each course week. ***A weekly message will be sent at the beginning of the week which will provide instructions for new assignments as well as grading feedback regarding prior assignments, and general course announcements. Students are responsible for the contents of weekly messages.

Written assignments (weekly questions and forum posts) will be accepted up to **72 hours late (12:01 am – 11:59 pm) for a 50% penalty**. Permission to submit a late assignment after this date will require documentation from a medical professional or other university official.

Things happen. When you don't have to attend a class session in person, it is 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 is a best practice not to wait until the last minute to take the exam, submit a comment in a forum, or upload a writing assignment.

Plan if you will be unable to complete an assignment on time. You may need to submit the assignment earlier than the posted due date. If you are unable to complete assignments due to illness or other COVID-19 related quarantine requirements, please notify your instructor immediately. Failure to notify your instructor of potential missed assignments at least 72 hours prior to the due date will result in grade penalties as per the course policy.

Resources for Student 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 success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

SMLR offers a number of scholarships and fellowships to support its students. These opportunities are only made available by the generous support of donors who graciously support our students and their endeavors. Please visit the following link for more information: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

Technical Assistance:

Rutgers Information Technology

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

Email: help@oit.rutgers.edu

Call 24/7: 833-OIT-HELP or 833-648-4357

Media Policy:

The recording and transmission of classroom activities and discussions by students or faculty is prohibited without written permission from the class instructor and all students in the class. Class participants must have been informed that audio/video recording or reposting of forum contributions may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any

copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments without written permission. You may not share any part of any recording without express written permission by all parties potentially affected by the recording.

Recordings, course materials, forum content, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

Exception:

It is not a violation of this policy for a student determined by the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center ("LNEC") to be entitled to educational accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study. Such recordings of lectures or class presentations are solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The restrictions on third party web and commercial distribution apply in such cases.

Destruction of Approved Recordings:

Students must destroy recordings at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class unless they receive the instructor's written permission to retain them or are entitled to retain them as an LNEC-authorized accommodation.

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's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations.

Academic Integrity Policy:

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation, and to regulations promulgated by the University. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academic freedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all students to pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please see the following link below for details regarding the Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected to refrain from cheating, fabricating information, plagiarizing, inappropriately denying others access to material, and facilitating others in academic dishonesty. <https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to "Turnitin.com" to ensure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from

another student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words!

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one’s own words another person’s written words or ideas as if they were one’s own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one’s work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

Turnitin for Plagiarism Detection:

In coordination with the Office of General Counsel, Rutgers Teaching and Learning with Technology advises instructors who use Turnitin for plagiarism detection to include the following statement in their course syllabus:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Sakai, Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If a student has previously used Turnitin through a learning management system (Canvas, eCollege, Moodle, or Sakai), then an account has already been established, which is the email address used in the learning management system. If a student has never logged into the Turnitin website, a password will need to be established by using the [Forgot Password link](#).

Instructor's Message Checking Policy:

Unless you receive advance notification, your instructor will check for messages daily on most workdays. (This excludes Saturday/Sunday, holidays, and official University breaks.) If a student sends a comment or question, your instructor will try to answer the message within 24 hours.

Students Message Checking Policy:

It is the responsibility of the student to check for incoming course related messages within the Inbox tool at least 3 times a week. This is in addition to engaging in forums in the course. Students receive at least 1 message a week. Messages are ALWAYS sent via Canvas. Forgetting or being unable to check your messages is not an excuse.

Grading Rubric

Everyone will have the opportunity to do well in this course. A final grade is based on the point system below. Number of points for each course assessment is detailed in the following chart.

	Raw Points Possible
Canvas Biography	14
Seven Forum Discussions (30 pts each)	210
Thirteen Weekly Written Assignments (52 pts each)	676
Final Research/Reflection Paper	100
Total	1000

Total Raw Points	RU Letter Grade
1000-900	A
899-860	B+
859-800	B
799-760	C+
759-700	C
699-600	D
599 and below	F

Weekly Schedule

Refer to weekly topic pages in course shell for a complete listing.

WEEK DUE	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: Jan 20 – Jan 26	Racial Bias in Young Children
Week 2: Jan 27 – Feb 2	Understanding Racial Economic Stratification
Week 3: Feb 3 – Feb 9	History of Black Workers in the United States
Week 4: Feb 10 – Feb 16	Black Workers, Labor Unions, and the Civil Rights Movement

Week 5: Feb 17 – Feb 23

Week 6: Feb 24 – Mar 2

Week 7: Mar 3 – Mar 9

Week 8: Mar 10 – Mar 13

Week 9: Mar 17 – Mar 23

Week 10: Mar 24 – Mar 30

Week 11: Mar 31 – Apr 6

Week 12: Apr 7 – Apr 13

Week 13: Apr 14 – Apr 20

Week 14: Apr 21 – Apr 27

Week 15: Apr 28 – May 4

Education, Employment, and Earnings

Access to Work

Understanding Institutional Discrimination and Mobility

Young and Black in America (Short Week)

Spring Recess (No Assignments)

Black Women in America

Black Men in America

American Economic Class System

Middle/Upper Class and Professional Black Workers

Black Workers in the Twenty-First Century (2001 - Present)

Final Research Paper