



**Working Women in American Society**  
**37:575:309**

**Sections 95 and 96 (Spring 2026)**

**Instructor: Dr. Laura Sosa**

**To Interact:**

Send a message via Canvas Inbox messaging tool

**Virtual Office Hours (Via Zoom):**

Sunday 5:00-6:00 PM

Thursdays 8:00-9:00 AM

Or By Appointment

[https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/las71?pwd=WVBnTm1DY0xEbINFYVVQS1pHNEFFQ09Links to an external site.](https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/las71?pwd=WVBnTm1DY0xEbINFYVVQS1pHNEFFQ09Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)

**Course Description**

*Focus on the contemporary experiences of working women, including an exploration of current legal strategies and social policies created to address their concerns.*

This course is designed to provide an overview of the dynamics of gender at work. Under the umbrella of work, this course includes organizational theory, embodied labor and issues around work and family, occupational stratification, the gender pay gap, gender diversity at work, women in low-wage work, and theories of gender and work

**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>

## Learning Objectives

### **Rutgers CORE:**

#### **Diversity and Social Inequalities (CCD)**

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.

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

#### **Social Analysis (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:**

IV - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation

V - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

#### **Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:**

1 - Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives, theories, and concepts in our field.

2 - Apply those concepts, along with substantive institutional knowledge, to contemporary developments.

6 - Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work

## Course Learning Objectives

This course will:

- (1) give students an overview of women's labor force participation, the wage gap, and theories of gender at work,
- (2) make students aware of the influence of gender and (to some degree) race and class in structuring opportunities to work and the rewards of work,

(3) help students to become critical consumers of popular and academic sources about work and to apply these abilities in written assignments, and  
 (4) develop students' abilities to carry out and present research on issues relevant to work

## Course Requirements

### Assignments and Assessments

<b>Course Conversations i.e. Discussion Forums</b>	28 points	1 @ 1 point (Intro) 9 @ 3 points (Conversations 1-8)
<b>Connecting to the Topic</b>	40 points	4@ 6 points each (Individual) 1@ 2 point (Small Team Prep) 1@ 7 points (Small Team) 1@ 7 points LinkedIn Learning
<b>Field Project Interview/Written Narrative</b>	25 points	1 @ 25 points (Individual)
<b>Roundtable Discussion (small team recording)</b>	7 points	1 @ 7 points (Small Team Discussion)
<b>TOTAL</b>	100 points	

### Course Conversations (Found in Discussion Forums)

- Worth 28 points (Intro = 1 point; Forum #s 1-9 = 3 points each)
- Begin on Tuesday and end on following Monday
- Initial postings are due by 11:59PM on the Friday of the Module's Week. The due date in Canvas reflects that date. For every day that the initial posting is late, **one point will be deducted.** Students are encouraged to be as interactive as possible all week – responding and asking questions. A reply to at least one peer is then due by the following Monday.
- See the Grading Rubric and Guidelines posted in Canvas.

- Grammar counts – you are not conversing in a text message.
- *Key things to remember are:*
  - Use our **course material** as the primary source for your posting. Use an in-text citation (e.g. Sandberg, 2012) within your posting to acknowledge the source of your ideas. You do not need to include a full reference unless you bring in external material as a compliment to the course material. Keep in mind that external material should NOT be the single source that you use in your posting. In addition, be careful with the validity of the source. Use only academic sources.  
**\*\*An initial posting that does not integrate any of the course material for the week, but relies solely on outside sources, will have two points deducted.**
  - **Timeliness is important** - a good discussion entails keeping the dialogue going (throughout the given week) with your classmates. In order to facilitate the dialogue, it is critical you adhere to the conversation post due dates so that you have sufficient time to respond to each other's posts. Please **do not wait until the last day** to post your responses. Due dates are as follows:
    - **By Friday of the week (due date indicated on Canvas)**, post your initial response to the question(s).
    - **By Monday of the week (at the latest)**, read, and respond to one (or more) of your classmates' posts.
    - It is highly encouraged to return to the Course Conversation after your initial post and read responses given to you by other students. Continue the dialogue throughout the week.

**\*\*Because it is unfair to your peers if you do not post your initial response by Friday, **one point will be deducted** from the total grade for every day that the initial post is late (assuming the post meets all requirements). e.g. If you post your initial post on Monday and then also reply on Monday, you will not be able to receive any points.**
- Note that Prof. Sosa will monitor the conversations and often comment or bring up other considerations. Be sure to read those comments and respond if appropriate. The purpose of my monitoring is to clarify and reinforce key points.

### Connecting to the Topic

- Worth 40 points (5 Individual; 2 Team)
- Students will critically analyze the material and demonstrate their understanding via either individual or small group assignments. One individual assignment will be a Linked In Learning course.
- Students will be grouped into small teams early in the course. These teams will work on all team related assignments together, including the Roundtable discussion, for the remainder of the course.
- Small group assignments are recordings of student discussions/panel simulations

with **cameras on** to simulate a professional organizational environment.

- Examples of individual assignments are narrated PowerPoint presentations, written analysis, LinkedIn Learning exercises, connection to news/data, podcasts, personal reflections, case studies, etc.

### **Field Project/Narrative Paper**

- Worth 25 points
- Students will individually conduct an interview with a woman who has at least 20 years of experience in the US workforce in a supervisory or technical role. You will need to use your network to identify an interviewee. Prof. Sosa can help you begin to build this network.
- Findings will be summarized in written narrative style (approximately five pages), integrate course terms, and shared with small team peers for the Roundtable Discussion. A sample of narrative style is available on Canvas.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

- Worth 7 points (team grade) – This is where the team pulls everything together.
- Virtually via Zoom, students will compare the individual interview narratives in an interactive small group discussion format (i.e. “roundtable”) to 1.) identify common themes and 2.) apply the theories and concepts within the course material to the perspectives of the interviewees.
- The roundtable will be recorded with cameras on; one submission per group. The purpose of having cameras on is to emulate a professional setting, an important practice for the workplace.
- All narratives uploaded to the small team should use a pseudonym.

## **Course Policies**

### **Communication**

Unless students receive advance notification, I will check my Canvas Inbox by 6 pm EST on regular workdays. This excludes Weekends and college break (e.g. Spring Break, Thanksgiving). If a student sends a comment or question, I commit to addressing the contents of the message within 24 hours. I will try but messages sent after Friday at 5PM or on the weekends may not be returned until Monday morning.

**Late Submission Policy** –I understand that unplanned events may happen in life which may disrupt your ability to participate in the class. Please get in contact with me as soon as possible to manage such situations. Without communicating with me prior to the due date, no late assignments will be accepted.

### **Grading Policy**

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 Artificial Intelligence (AI) in submissions**

Unless specified in the assignment, representing AI generated work as your own is considered plagiarism and a violation of Rutgers' academic integrity policy. Upon suspicion, the assignment will not be graded, and the possible violation will be reported through the university's Academic Integrity process.

### **Grammar and Citing Work**

Grammar counts in written work. Submitting poorly written assignments will result in a lowered grade. All work must include accurate citations and a reference page or will receive a zero. If AI is allowed in an assignment, you must also include a citation in APA or MLA format (e.g. for Chat GPT). If you are unfamiliar as to how to cite references and produce a reference page, be sure to contact a Rutgers librarian.

### **Course Schedule by Week**

*Note that additional material may be added to folders throughout the semester. Be sure to check the module's folders at the beginning of each week.*

## Week 1: Getting to Know Peers and the Course

Assignment: Introduce Yourself With A Short Video

Setting the Stage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iZkK5j2jHM>

- Women Have Always Worked: Why I Study Women's History (The U.S. Experience 1700 - 1920)

## **UNIT 1: Working Women in US Society**

## Week 2: History of Women in the US Labor Market

Readings

- Click - Women's Work - Women's Roles in the Workplace, Women's Roles in Modern Economy, History of Women and Work in Twentieth Century, History of Women's Work.pdf
- <https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>
- <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/labor-force-participation-rate-for-women-highest-in-the-district-of-columbia-in-2022.htm#:~:text=For%20the%20nation%20as%20a,was%2056.8%20percent%20in%202022.>
- <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>
- <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2022/>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data>
- Writings from the 1940s, Perceptions of Women Working
- Goldin and Mitchell (2017) The New Life Cycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, and Expanding Tops

Assignment: Course Conversation #1 and Connecting to the Topic #1 (Individual)

## Week 3: Men's Work versus Women's Work

Readings

- Britton (1997) Perceptions of the work environment among correctional officers: Do race and sex matter?
- Wingfield (2009) Racializing the glass escalator: Reconsidering men's experiences with women's work

## Assignment: Course Conversation 2

### Week 4: Gender Bias

#### *Readings*

- Ben Barres (2006). “Does Gender Matter?” *Nature* 442, no. 7099: 133-136.
- Tinsley, Catherine H., Sandra I. Cheldelin, Andrea Kupfer Schneider, and Emily T. Amanatullah (2009). “Women at the bargaining table: Pitfalls and prospects.” *Negotiation Journal* 25, no. 2: 233-248.
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/gender-identity/us-women-are-largely-dissatisfied-with-how-theyre-treated-most-men-dont-see-a-problem/>
- Women in Tech Statistics
- Forbes. Why Women Are Lagging in Tech Leadership

#### *Video*

- How to avoid gender stereotypes: Eleanor Tabi Haller-Jordan at TEDxZurich

Assignment: Connecting to the Topic #2 (Individual Narrated Power Point)

### Week 5: Landmark Legislation

#### *Readings*

- Equal Pay Act and Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
- Alphabet Settles Shareholder Suits Over Sexual Harassment Claim
- McDonald, Paula, and Sandra Backstrom (2008) “Fighting Back: Workplace Sexual Harassment and the Case of North Country,” *Australian Bulletin of Labour* 34 (1): 47-63.
- The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United Forward Together. 2014.

#### *Video*

- How To Recognize, Address, and Prevent Workplace Harassment

Assignment: Course Conversation 3; Small Team Contract

### Week 6: Balancing Work and Family/Impact of Pandemic

#### *Readings*

- Huang, Krivkovich, Rambachan, & Yee (2021) “For mothers in the workplace, a year (and counting) like no other”, McKinsey & Company Article. Also available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/for-mothers-in-the-workplace-a-year-and-counting-like-no-other>
- Slaughter (2012) “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All,” *The Atlantic* 2012 (7): 6 pages. Also available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/6/>.

- Alon, T., Coskun, S., Doepke, M., Koll, D., & Tertilt, M. (2022). From mancession to shecession: Women's employment in regular and pandemic recessions. *NBER Macroeconomics Annual*, 36(1), 83–151. doi:10.1086/718660From mancession to shecession.pdf
- Lyttelton, T., Zang, E., & Musick, K. (2023a). Parents' work arrangements and gendered time use during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 85

#### *Video*

- 3 Rules for better work-life balance: TED Talk
- By the numbers: Work-life balance: ABC News

*Assignment:* Connecting to the Topic #3 (Individual)

### Week 7: Gender Pay Gap

#### *Readings*

- Miller (2019) Women Did Everything Right and then Work Got Greedy. NYTimes
- Blau & Kahn (2007) The gender pay gap: Have women gone so far as they can?
- Cohen & Huffman (2007) Working for the women? Female managers and the gender wage gap
- How the gender pay gap and glass ceiling help some women

#### *Podcasts*

- The True Story of the Gender Pay Gap
- Interview with Nobel Laureate Claudia Goldin

#### *Videos*

- Jennifer Lawrence Opens Up on Hollywood's Gender Pay Gap
- OECD: Why is the gender pay gap such a stubborn problem? What can we do?

*Assignment:* Course Conversation 4 and Connecting to the Topic 4 (Individual)

### Week 8

- Work on Field project - Conduct interview

## **UNIT II – Working Women in Organizations**

### Week 9: Intersection of Gender and Race in Workplace

#### *Readings*

- Alonso-Villar, O., & Del Río, C. (2017). “The occupational segregation of African American women: Its evolution from 1940 to 2010.” *Feminist Economics*, 23(1), 108-134.
- Wingfield, A. H. (2010). Are Some Emotions Marked “Whites Only”? Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces. *Social Problems*, 57(2), 251–268.

- **The Occupational Segregation of African American Women Its Evolution from 1940 to 2010.pdf**
- **She Said Equinox Fired Her For Being a Black Woman. The Jury Agreed NY Times**
- **Pao Effect: Discrimination of Asian Women**

#### *Videos*

- **CBS Mornings: Google faces lawsuit alleging racial discrimination against Black women** (Links to an external site.)
- **Why you should not bring your authentic self to work | Jodi-Ann Burey | TEDxSeattle** (Links to an external site.)

*Assignment:* Course Conversation 5; Linked In Learning (2 courses)

### **Week 10: Tokenism**

#### *Readings*

- **Kanter (1977a) Men and Women of the corporation**
- **Kanter (1977b) Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women**

*Assignment:* Course Conversation #6

### **Week 11: Why Don't We Have More Women Managers?**

#### *Readings*

- **Ali et al. (2015) Retaining a diverse workforce: the impact of gender-focused human resource management**
- **Chatman, J (2010) Norms in mixed sex and mixed race work groups**
- **Theories relevant to Workplace Gender Diversity**
- **McKinsey 2024 Report on Women**

#### *Videos*

- **Ted Talk: Why we have too few women leaders | Sheryl Sandberg**
- **So We Leaned In, Now What?|Sheryl Sandberg**
- **Linked In Interview with Sheryl Sandberg**

*Assignment:* Course Conversation 7

### **Week 12: Women and Mentorships**

#### *Readings*

- **Kurtulus & Tomaskovic-Devey (2012) Do female Top managers help women to advance? A panel study using EEO-1 records**

- **McDonald & Westphal (2013) Access denied: Low mentoring of women and minority first-time directors and its negative effects on appointments to additional boards**
- **Women in Tech on Leadership**

#### *Videos*

- **Accenture CEO's Advice To Women: Stand Out**Links to an external site.
- **She's The CEO Of A Fortune 500 Company, And She's Rethinking Leadership.**

*Assignment:* Connecting to the Topic #5 (small team)

### **Week 13: Glass Ceiling**

#### *Readings*

- **The glass ceiling: Its definition, History and Effects**
- **Foley, Kidder, & Powell (2002) The perceived glass ceiling and justice perceptions: an investigation of Hispanic law associates**
- **Matsa & Miller (2011) Chipping Away at the Glass Ceiling: Gender Spillovers in Corporate Leadership. *American Economic Review*, 101 (3): 635–39.**

#### *Videos*

- **A glass ceiling - or a broken ladder?- BBC News**

*Assignment:* Course Conversation 8

**\*\*Interview Narratives Due**

### **Week 14: Contemporary Perspectives (students research articles)**

*Assignments:* Course Conversation 9 and work on Roundtable Discussion

### **Roundtable Discussions – Due during Final Exam Week**

**In Zoom, conduct recorded “Roundtable Discussion” in small group with cameras on; Submit one recording for team grade.**

**\*\*Note that material may be added during the semester.**