

# Working Women in American Society (Spring 2026)

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**Instructor: Jocelyn Fischer**

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Virtual Office Hours: By appointment. Please email or message me if you would like to meet!

Zoom link for virtual office hours:

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/jaf525?pwd=uF1lPRanb0zp6o8ypIqvbplLFyAktUM.1>

This course is taught 100% online using **Canvas**.

**Canvas login:** <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>

## **Get Help**

### **Need Assistance with a technical question?**

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

**Helpdesk:** Rutgers Canvas Help

**Email:** [help@oit.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@oit.rutgers.edu)

**Call:** 833-648-4357

## **Course Overview**

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, 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.

## **Learning Objectives**

### **Learning Objectives – Rutgers CORE**

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.

### **Learning Objectives – SMLR**

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.

### **Learning Objectives – LSER 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 content**

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, class, and sexuality 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**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> week's Self-Introduction (3%)
2. Class participation in Discussion Forums (12%, 6% each)
3. Brief Summary of the week's readings (12%, 3% each)
4. Work Autobiography Paper and Occupational Data Paper (20%, 10% each)
5. Midterm/ Final Exams (44%, 22% for mid-term/ 22% for final)
6. Brief quiz on the week's materials (9%, 4.5% each)
7. Extra-credit assignment: Reflection Paper on Gender-and-Work-Relevant Movie (+2%)

### **Grading Scale**

- A 90.00 – 100%
- B+ 86.00 - 89.99%
- B 80.00 – 85.99%
- C+ 76.00 - 79.99%

- C 70.00 - 75.99%
- D 66.00 - 69.99%
- F 65.99% and below

## Class Policies

- **Messages Sent to Students' Canvas Inboxes**

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.

- **Exams**

Midterm/Final 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 exam/quiz must be completed in one sitting. No late submission is accepted. The format/contents of the two exams will be determined and announced later.

- **Submission of Assignments**

Students should submit assignments before the due date/time. Late submission will receive a 30% penalty of the total possible grade. An assignment that is late more than 3 days will not be accepted.

- **Extra-credit Assignment**

There is one extra-credit assignment (Reflection Paper on Gender-and-Work-Relevant Movie, +2%) in this course. No other extra-credit assignments will be given at the end of the semester.

## Course Schedule

### Unit I. Introduction

#### Week 1 – January 20 – Course Overview

Become familiar with the web site that has the on-line course. This is called the “course shell.”

- ❖ **Readings**

- Women in the labor force: a data book. BLS Reports published in April 2021.
- Click! (2015). Women's Work. Clio Visualizing History, Inc.

- ❖ **Assignment: Self-Introduction.** Introduce yourself to other students by writing an online introduction [Due January 26 (Monday)]

## Unit II. Women and Work in American Society

### Week 2 – January 27 – Theorizing Gender at Work

#### ❖ Readings

- Harmann, Heidi, and Jessica Milli. “Gender Discrimination in the U.S. Labor Market.” In Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*. New York and London: Routledge Press, 2021, chapter 18.
- Goldin, Claudia, and Joshua Mitchell. 2017. “The New Life Cycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, Expanding Tops.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31 (1): 161-82.

- ❖ **Assignment: Discussion Forum 1.** After reading the two reading materials, what do you think are the most important issues/problems to improve the quality of women’s work/career/life in American society? [Initial Posting Due January 29 (Thursday); Two Responses Due February 2 (Monday)]

### Week 3 – February 3 – The Intersection of Gender and Race at Work

#### ❖ 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.

- ❖ **Assignment: Brief Summary 1.** Summarize the two readings of this week using your own words. [Due February 9 (Monday)]

### Week 4 – February 10 – 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.

- ❖ **Assignment: Discussion Forum 2.** What do you think are the typical biases/stereotypes that people have about women, especially working women? Do you think those biases/stereotypes hinder women’s success in their careers? [Initial Posting Due February 12 (Thursday); Two Responses Due February 16 (Monday)]

### Week 5 – February 17 – Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

#### ❖ Readings

- 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. *The Glass Floor: Sexual Harassment in the Restaurant Industry*. Report.

❖ **Assignment: Brief Quiz 1 on the week's materials.** [Due February 23 (Monday)]

### **Unit III. Working Women in Organizations**

#### **Week 6 – February 24 – 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: Work Autobiography Paper** [Due March 2 (Monday)]

#### **Week 7 – March 3 – 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

❖ **Assignment: Brief Quiz 2 on the week's materials** [Due March 9 (Monday)]

#### **Week 8 – March 10 – Gender Diversity at Work**

❖ **Readings**

- Ali, Metz, & Kulik (2015) Retaining a diverse workforce: the impact of gender-focused human resource management
- Chatman (2010) Norms in mixed sex and mixed race work groups

❖ **Assignment: None!** Enjoy your Spring Recess!

-----SPRING RECESS— March 14-March 22-----

#### **Week 9– March 24 – Midterm Examination (Covers Week 1 through Week 8)**

Exam opens March 24 (Tuesday) and closes on March 30 (Monday)

### **Week 10 – March 31 – Women in High Level Positions**

#### ❖ **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

- ❖ **Assignment: Brief Summary 2.** Summarize the two readings of this week using your own words. [Due April 6 (Monday)]

### **Week 11 – April 7 – Gender Pay Gap**

#### ❖ **Readings**

- Blau (2025) Gender inequality in the labor market: Continuing progress?

- ❖ **Assignment: Occupational Data Analysis** (Assignment created by Professor Yana Rodgers) [Due April 13 (Monday)]

### **Week 12 – April 14 – Women’s Work and Men’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: Brief Summary 3.** Summarize the two readings of this week using your own words. [Due April 20 (Monday)]

### **Week 13 – April 21 – COVID-19 and Women’s Work**

#### ❖ **Readings**

- Kabeer, Naila, Shahra Razavi, and Yana Rodgers. 2021. “Feminist Economic Perspectives on the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Feminist Economics*, 27 (1/2), January/April 2021, 1-29.
- Hegewisch, Ariane, Martha Susana Jaimes, Melissa Mahoney, and Cristy Mendoza. 2025. “Women at Work Five Years Since the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Any Progress?” Washington, DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research. <https://iwpr.org/wp->

[content/uploads/2025/03/Women-at-Work-Five-Years-Since-the-Start-of-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-fact-sheet\\_March-2025.pdf](content/uploads/2025/03/Women-at-Work-Five-Years-Since-the-Start-of-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-fact-sheet_March-2025.pdf)

❖ **Assignment:** None. Enjoy!

### **Week 14 – April 28 – Balancing Work and Family**

❖ **Readings**

- Huang, Krivkovich, Rambachan, & Yee (2021) “For mothers in the workplace, a year (and counting) like no other”, McKinsey & Company Article. 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.

❖ **Assignment: Brief Summary 4.** Summarize the two readings of this week using your own words. [Due May 4 (Monday)]

### **Week 15 – May 7 – Final Examination**

Exam opens May 7 (Thursday) and closes on May 13 (Wednesday)

## **University Guidelines and Resources**

### **Academic Honesty**

The University’s policy on cheating and use of copyrighted materials is enforced in this class. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for more detail regarding these policies: <http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home/academic-integrity-policy/>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requiring accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services to determine his/her Coordinator. The Coordinator will then provide documentation to the student. Upon review and approval, the student must then provide this documentation to the instructor. Please refer to the Office of Disability Services for Students for more detail regarding this policy: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Students may make requests for accommodations: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/receiving-accommodations-online>

### **Counseling**

Rutgers Student Health provides comprehensive mental health programs for the campus community. They offer a variety of high-quality counseling services to Rutgers students in order to enhance both

academic and personal achievement and progress. Please click on the following link to learn more about their services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

## **SMLR Resources and Scholarships**

- a. Student resources – If you are in need of help in the areas of (a) mental health, (b) academic coaching, and (c) financial assistance, please refer to the link below: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2025-information-smlr-students>
- b. Scholarships – Below is a link to the information about SMLR’s scholarship offerings: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>