Note that this is a draft syllabus incorporating some details from our course from our Canvas web site. The full syllabus is available in digital form on the Canvas site. All information presented below remains subject to the full details provided on Canvas.

Spring 2026 - EMPLOYMENT LAW 37:575:315:96
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
School of Management and Labor Relations

Professor: Peter Rokkos
Email: peter.rokkos@rutgers.edu
Cell Phone: 732 216 4209
Office: Janice H. Levin Building 94 Rockafeller Road, Suite 215

Office Hours: Office hours for Professor Rokkos are typically between 2:00-4:00PM Wednesdays (although please email to confirm as this time changes) and otherwise by appointment. I strongly encourage students to schedule some time for office hours, either in an office or at various areas across campuses, so please reach out.

Class Mode: Fully Online, Asynchronous

Course Structure Overview: This course will be presented over 14 weeks with a focus on providing weekly ongoing interaction and material development and requiring student participation in each particular segment. My goal is to present the materials in a manner that maximizes interactions weekly with students, the topics covered and current events. This balance will require your help so your weekly participation in lectures, discussion forums and other forms in a timely manner is greatly appreciated. My strong desire is for all of you to be active and contributing over the course of the semester.

Course Delivery Format: The course delivery mode is fully online and asynchronous; meaning that the learning activities take place online only at your own time frame subject to the deadlines and deliverables noted below.

Note: Even though you don't need to log in at any specific time, you are required to adhere to all course work due dates.

We will be utilizing the Canvas learning management system to access learning materials, post announcements, submit Assignments, post to Discussion forums, communicate via the Inbox feature, attend sessions through Zoom if applicable, and take exams. Be sure to check this site frequently as there will be announcements and instructions updated regularly.

Course Overview

This course provides an exploration of the laws and regulations governing the workplace, focusing on the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees. Students will examine the workplace legal landscape including an overview of the court system, anti-discrimination laws, harassment issues, workers compensation employment related torts, workplace safety, and wrongful termination. Through case studies, forum discussions, and other exercises, students will gain a foundational understanding of the legal frameworks shaping modern employment relationships.

The course officially starts on January 20. Please review the Learning Support Resources module, including the course Tools Tutorials. In the course tools tutorials section be sure to complete the Canvas tutorials (if you are new to Canvas). You need to introduce yourselves in the Week 1 Discussion: Introductions forum and work on an exercise using generative AI that is discussed there. Assignments and Discussion activities will be available starting on January 20.

Since this is an asynchronous course, our discussion forums will take the place of direct in-class participation. It is very important not only to share your weekly post, but also to respond to at least ONE of your colleagues' posts. There will be several discussion forums (in addition to the week 1 introductory discussion forum). You are required to participate in all of them.

We will have two exams (midterm - 20% of your overall grade, and a final - 20% of your overall grade) and various assignments and discussions that will be worth the remaining 60% of your grade.

Excerpts from relevant sections of the online syllabus are included below for informational purposes:

Course Learning Objectives
This course will survey how employment is regulated in the United States by the legislature and the courts and provide students with an understanding of how to interpret that regulation. Through the process of legal reasoning, case studies, historical analysis and review of current events, the student will gain knowledge of:
- The best practices in employer and employee relations;
- How to prevent legal disputes;
- Methods of judicial, administrative, and alternative dispute resolution; and
- The complex statutory framework of employment regulation.

At completion of this course, students should be able to:
- Effectively Navigate the state and Federal framework of employment relations regulation;
- Understand the legal process as it pertains to employment laws, both judicial and administrative;

- Understand legal reasoning and methods of statutory interpretation as it pertains to employment law;
- Demonstrate and understanding of employment relations which emphasizes good professional practice and preventive law;
- Acquire tools for further study of employment regulation.
- Apply employment relations legal concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understand contemporary developments related to work.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance.

All courses within the SMLR program are intended to advance students' cognitive skills and processes. This course, in particular, is central to lifelong learning and participation in society and the workplace in the following areas and students are expected to master:

Labor Studies & Employment Relations Department:
- Apply employment relations legal concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2)

School of Management & Labor Relations:
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)

Additional Course Objective(s) from the Instructor:

Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Produce quality research papers with proper convention of attribution/citation
- Produce high quality executive summaries
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

Understanding Context - **Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions**
- 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 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

- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a global context

Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance
- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work
- Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to their field
- Develop management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of labor practices

Method of Instruction
This course is delivered **entirely** online through the Learning Management System, Canvas. There will be no Face-to-Face classroom sessions. The course is delivered in **asynchronous** mode. This means the learning activities and communication take place outside of real-time. You do not have to log in at any specific scheduled time; you log in at your convenience. However, there may be times, if you're working in groups on an assignment, you would need to set up a live session via the Canvas conference, Zoom or email features. There may also be times when the instructor conducts a live chat session or a virtual office hour to address questions. In that case, you will be notified in advance so you can schedule the time.

Note: this **is not a self paced course**. you are expected to adhere to all due date of assignments, forums, exams and/or other activities with due dates.

Required Course Materials
Required Readings
- Robert N. Covington, Employment Law in a Nutshell. 5th Edition. West Nutshell Series. (referred to as "Nutshell").
https://a.co/08lzBCZLinks to an external site.
- Additional required readings are noted in the respective modules (weeks) Reading & Media pages in the form of an external link and/or a downloadable/viewable document.

Required Multimedia (Audio/Video)
- Instructor generated and other video presentations are noted in the respective modules (weeks) Reading & Media pages in the form of an external link, and/or embedded within the Canvas pages.

Recommended: The reading of business publications such as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times or the Harvard Business Review is highly encouraged. Many business publications are available through the University Library– a service for which you have already paid. Additional web sites offering business insights in general and specific articles on Employment Law will be discussed in class and linked through Canvas. These sources can provide you with details for the Discussion forum posts and other aspects of our course.

Course Structure
The course is structured by weekly modules. A week typically runs from Monday to Sunday (subject to holidays and breaks). Each week is comprised of one or more of the following components:

Introduction of the topic for that week - reading
Readings (PDFs, links to website articles, other)
Multimedia (lectures, interviews, podcasts, or other)
Discussion
Assignment (paper or other; there may not be an assignment every week)

The course is divided into 14 weeks:

- Week 1: Introduction, The Court System, Briefing Cases
- Week 2: Employment at Will
- Week 3: Other Exceptions to Employment at Will: Whistleblower Protection Laws; Torts
- Week 4: Employment Contracts; Non-Compete & Confidentiality Agreements
- Week 5: Constitutional Issues: Public vs Private Entities, Free Speech, Drug Testing
- Week 6: Privacy Issues
- Week 7: Midterm Examination Period
- Week 8: Discrimination - Title VII, EEOC, Race, Religion, Color
- Week 9: Discrimination - National Origin, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Transgender Status, Disability
- Week 10: FMLA & FLSA
- Week 11: Workers Compensation, OSHA and Collective Bargaining
- Week 12: ADR; Vicarious Liability and Current Issues in Employment Law
- Week 13: Downsizing; Putting It All Together
- Week 14: Real World Perspectives
- Final Exam

Course Topics and Schedule

Note: Depending on current events or other situations, topics and schedule may *slightly* change as the semester develops.

Week # and Date	Topic	Learning Activities

Week 1:	• Introduction • The Court System • Briefing Cases	• Review Learning Support Items • Introduce yourselves in Week 1 Discussion: Introductions forum • Complete all activities in Week 1: Introduction, The Court System, Briefing Cases
Week 2:	• Employment at Will • Remedies	• Complete all activities in Week 2: Employment at Will
Week 3:	• Employment at Will • Whistleblower Protection • Torts	• Complete all activities in Week 3: Other Exceptions to Employment at Will: Whistleblower Protection Laws; Torts
Week 4:	• Non-compete Agreements • Confidentiality Agreements	• Complete all activities in Week 4: Employment Contracts; Non-Compete & Confidentiality Agreements
Week 5:	• Constitutional Issues • Privacy • Free Speech • Drug Testing	• Complete all activities in Week 5: Constitutional Issues: Public vs Private Entities, Free Speech, Drug Testing
Week 6:	• Privacy Issues • Workplace Bullying	• Complete all activities in Week 6: Privacy Issues
Week 7:	• Midterm Exam	• Complete all activities in Week 7: Midterm Examination Period
Week 8:	• Discrimination • Title VII • EEOC • Religion	• Complete all activities in Week 8: Discrimination - Title VII, EEOC, Race, Religion, Color

Week 9:	• Discrimination • Race • Color • National Origin	• Complete all activities in Week 9: Discrimination - National Origin, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Transgender Status, Disability
Week 10:	• Discrimination • Sex • Sexual Orientation • Transgender Status • Disability	• Complete all activities in Week 10: FMLA & FLSA
Week 11:	• FMLA • FLSA	• Complete all activities in Week 11: Workers Compensation, OSHA and Collective Bargaining
Week 12:	• Workers Compensation • Mandatory Arbitration	• Complete all activities in Week 12: ADR; Vicarious Liability and Current Issues in Employment Law
Week 13:	• Current Issues in Employment Law • Covid and its Impact	• Complete all activities in Week 13: Downsizing; Putting It All Together
Week 14:	• Catch up and Wrap Up	• Complete all activities in Week 14: Real World Perspectives
Final Exam	To be posted on approximately 5/3	Final Exam

Grading Components

Grading Components	% of Final Course Grade
~10 Assignments (each worth 10 points) and ~14 Discussion Forum entries (each worth 5 points)	60%
Midterm Exam, (Week 7 covering Modules 1 to 6)	20%
Final Exam (after Week 14 covering Modules 1 to 14)	20%
Total	100%

Your grade for this course will depend on your performance across several different activities. In addition to scoring well on exams, successful performance requires that you participate in class discussions and assignments most of your final grade. Final course grades will be computed as follows:

Point Equivalent to Final Grade

Points Range	Grade	Performance
100-90	A	Outstanding
89 - 85	B+	Good
84 - 80	B	Good
79 - 75	C+	Satisfactory
74- 70	C	Satisfactory
69 - 60	D	Poor
59 and below	F	Poor

Note: Rounding up or down for 'in between grades' will be based on multiple factors including participation and effort; but will only be considered for 1% point. For example, an 84.6% may round up to an 85% for a B+ if participation and effort are exceptional; an 84.4% will in all but exceptional instances not round up; and a 83.9% will not be considered for rounding up to a B+. The thresholds for final letter grades will be re-scaled if a conventional standard seems unreasonable.

Student Code of Conduct

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional, responsible, courteous, and respectful manner at all times during the course. Offensive language, harassment, posting videos or other media that is not related to the course, and/or any other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated; and will result in dire consequences, including dismissal from the course. Your responses to discussion posts, or any other communication with your classmates and/or your

instructor must be of the highest professional and respectable standard. Refer to Discussion Post Guidelines when communicating in your Canvas class.

TurnItIn Statement

Students (You) agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (via Canvas) 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 you do not agree please contact me immediately.

Generative AI Statement

I encourage the use of ChatGPT, Grok, Gemini, CoPilot and similar generative artificial intelligence tools for research for my class. AI is an incredibly useful tool.

WE WILL BE INTEGRATING GENERATIVE AI EXTENSIVELY INTO OUR COURSE, however there will be rules for when and where its use will be acceptable. Please follow the directions for each assignment and reach out with any questions if they are unclear.

Any use of ChatGPT and other tools that plagiarize or use the output from these tools directly into your work must be cited in accordance with our class citation policies. Use of this output directly in your answers is a violation of the Rutgers Academic Integrity policy with respect to plagiarism.

In other words, if you need to provide a description of Workers Compensation, and look it up on Wikipedia, then copy and paste what it says into an answer, Turnitin and other software will identify this as plagiarism. If you similarly ask ChatGPT to write a 100 word description of Workers Compensation, copy that and paste what it says into your answer, it will be detected by software as cheating. However if you ask ChatGPT to help you research the topic, for example, ask it to describe workers comp in relation to (INSERT SOME TOPIC AND DETAILS FROM CLASS like) Walmart or Amazon discouraging unionization efforts...you get a much richer reply that you can then write your answer from as a resource...(but if you copy and paste, software can track that...). Does that help?

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