

## **SOCIOLOGY 389: SOCIOLOGY OF WORK**

Spring Semester 2017

Tarbutton 106

*Instructor:* Jennifer Nelson

*Class Times:* TThF 9:00-9:50 a.m.

*Email:* [j.l.nelson@emory.edu](mailto:j.l.nelson@emory.edu)

*Office:* Tarbutton B01 (basement level)

*Office Hours:* Monday 3-4 p.m. or by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Work is not only something economists study; it is a basic site of social relations. As Sociologist Judy Aulette puts it: “Work takes up much of our time on earth and is a (perhaps the) key place where we strive to be human, express ourselves, our talents, and our values.” Following this insight, and the lead of classical social theorists (Durkheim, Marx, Weber) and contemporary sociologists alike, this course examines the experience of work: where we work, what we do, how work impacts and is shaped by other parts of our lives (i.e., family, gender, race, class), and what problems we face at work. Further, in this course, we examine the workplace as a critical setting for understanding how group and inter-group relations develop, and how these reveal and often help produce the power dynamics, struggles for resources, and group prejudices that are evident in broader society. This is especially important to consider in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace, as both workplace diversification *and* income inequality are increasing compared to 50 years ago. The U.S. workforce has become more diverse by race, ethnicity, and gender, but at the same time, gaps in the status (and skills) associated with different jobs are widening. We also consider and assess evidence regarding the potential of workplace relations for societal restoration. By the end of the course, you will:

- gain insight into the range of workplace experiences and structures in many different types of work (e.g., service work, industrial work, technical work, semi-professions, professions);
- examine the implications of workplace change in 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplaces for economic inequality by race and gender (i.e., have inequalities narrowed, widened, or remained stable), using the history of work to inform your analysis;
- relate research on labor market outcomes for different groups of workers to their subjective experiences of their work;
- become familiar with the inequalities in professional and management occupations by class, race and gender; and
- apply competing theories about work to interpreting present-day problems, trends, and transformations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace in America.

## COURSE GOALS

All of the assignments and exams in this class relate to the following three goals, common to all courses in the Sociology Department:

1. <b>Written Communication:</b> Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.
2. <b>Social Research:</b> Students should be able to formulate empirical research questions, identify the major methods for collecting data to answer questions and the major advantages and disadvantages of each method, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles to employ in analyzing data.
3. <b>Sociological Theory:</b> Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions.

Substantive Goals: This course is designed to help you develop your understanding and approach to research on workplaces from a sociological perspective, a process that involves:

- Writing in the expository mode for the three written assignments, which furthermore call specifically for synthesis and analysis of multiple sources (Goal 1);
- Obtaining and evaluating empirical research relevant to the issues you are interested in exploring, as well as demonstrating competence in evaluating the empirical merits and drawbacks of the research we review in class (Goal 2);
- Applying and using sociological concepts, terms, and theories to interpret work-related issues (Goal 3); and
- Thinking critically about your own life and experiences with work from a *sociological perspective*, which means also understanding your own social location and how that location influences your opportunities, decisions, perceptions, and actions (Goal 3).

Non-Substantive Goals: In addition to mastering the above concepts, theories, and methodologies that are central to the discipline of sociology, it is my hope that you will develop important **theoretical foundations** by the end of this course that you are able to apply to, build upon, or contrast with theories you have encountered in other sociology or social science courses (Goal 3). I hope that this course will also serve as an opportunity to strengthen your critical **writing skills**, that is, your ability to synthesize separate authors' arguments in a manner that goes beyond summarizing and instead demonstrates analytic and interpretive value. Toward this end, I will evaluate not only the content, but also the written structure of your three written assignments using rubrics (rubrics to be distributed at later date).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade for the course will be determined by the following components:

**1. Attendance is strongly encouraged and is part of your participation grade.** I will use lectures to give you additional information not found in the readings, and I will also provide frameworks for understanding and integrating the readings with the lecture material. We will also have discussion in class to help clarify all the material, so you need to show up so that you can participate in this. *Missing two or fewer classes will benefit your participation grade.* This includes mandatory attendance at one movie night, held outside of class time. Please note: absences due to personally-chosen, alternate activities (e.g., vacations, interviews, other jobs) are strongly discouraged, and will not be looked upon favorably nor be accepted as excuses for turning work in late.

## 2. Participation (20% total)

Not only your attendance, but also your participation during class counts. Your voluntary responses to my questions about the lecture material, your own observations of social life, your interpretations of the material, or your recall or analysis of the readings, as well as your willingness to engage when I pose a question specifically to you are important. Part of your participation grade also contains your 5-minute “Media Minute” mini-presentation to the class once during the semester, and a once-weekly, multiple-choice reading quiz. These quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent, except for one time with an excused absence. For the Media Minute, you will sign up for a day to present an interesting recent newspaper or magazine article about a contemporary workplace issue (e.g. about an industry in the news; workplace policies or employer regulations; or current occupational trends) to the class. I will provide a midterm participation grade to each student based on these things, so that you have a sense of how to improve if necessary.

## 3. Three written assignments (60% total)

Below are general guidelines for the three papers. I will hand out detailed instructions for these assignments during the semester. All written assignments must be printed and given to me during class. I do not accept assignments through email or handed into my box. Late papers will lose one partial letter grade (e.g., an A becomes an A-, etc.) per day it is late. To get a sense of what I expect in your written assignments, please see Canvas for examples of successful papers. Please use ASA citation format in all written assignments.

*Paper 1*, worth 10%, is a short assignment in which you will be asked to interview someone who has worked in a self-defined “boring” job and document and analyze their experiences on-the-job. I will provide you with an interview protocol (i.e., list of questions) which you will use for your informal interview. You will write your respondent’s answers to your questions and turn this in with your 2-3 page essay in which you analyze the themes pertaining to their working conditions (e.g., interactions, enjoyment, monotony, autonomy) that you discovered in the interview. On the day on which the assignment is due, I will divide students into groups based on the workplace or industry that is the focus of their papers (food service, office work, retail, manual labor, seasonal work, child care, etc.). We will together compare recurring themes across industry groups. Together, students will speculate on how each industry may influence particular sources of worker satisfaction and dissatisfaction on the job. Doing so will help us understand how work experiences – and workers’ responses to them—may be tied to structural components of particular workplace industries.<sup>1</sup> (2-3 pages) Due Friday, February 3.

*Paper 2*, worth 10%, is a short assignment which will involve analyzing General Social Survey (GSS) data on a variety of work experiences and behaviors (e.g., number of hours usually work a week; labor force status; occupational prestige score—these are listed under “Employment,” “Industry,” and “Occupation” question categories), and seeing how these are associated with an array of social statuses and attitudes (e.g., marital status; work satisfaction; values; income; education; etc.). On your final written product, you will be expected to state why you thought a relationship between these variables would exist and/or exhibit an interesting relationship based on at least one of our course readings; conduct two identical crosstabs examining the association of your two variables of interest at two points in time; and interpret your findings in words, comparing change or lack of change in the trends over time. We will have one class period devoted to running practice crosstabs using a few examples from GSS data, in which I will explain how to do the analysis. (1-2 pages) Due Friday, March 24.

*Paper 3*, worth 40% total, is a progressive research project which will be due in installments, then be revised as a whole and submitted to me as a complete research paper (about 12-15 pages long, total). You will have the option to conduct your own original research study which focuses on work experiences in

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<sup>1</sup> This assignment has been adopted from Michael Ramirez’s recommended assignment, which was posted on the American Sociological Association’s TRAILS web page on 06/04/2013.

one particular industry, workplace organization, and/or around one particular work-related outcome, and use either qualitative or quantitative methods to do so. You will employ either interviews, as you did in Paper 1, with six participants total, or conduct more detailed analysis of relationships between independent and dependent variables using control variables using GSS data, much as you did in Paper 2.

First, you are required to turn in a one-page research proposal (5%), in which you state your research question and hypotheses/general expectations, based on our lectures and readings. Once approved by me, this is followed by a two-page methods section (5%), in which you explain the strengths and weaknesses of your data and analytic strategy (i.e., interviews or survey data, using thematic analysis or cross-tabulation analysis). This is followed by a 3-4 page literature review (10%), which will require you to incorporate at least two readings from the syllabus and two readings from empirical, academic, peer-reviewed literature (I recommend that you locate these additional articles using SocINDEX; I will show you how to use this database in class), to help you (a) define your concepts, (b) what sociologists already know about either or both of these concepts and their relationships with one another, and (c) refine your hypotheses. You will turn in your interview or statistical findings, with your own written interpretation of the interview excerpts or cross-tab results (10%). This should be about 7-10 pages long and include both the results themselves and your interpretation of them, presented in an organized manner (consider using subheadings).

The final write-up of your complete project, which combines the research question, methods section, literature review, and findings, will be due on our University-scheduled final examination day, Thursday, April 27, at 3:00 p.m. (10%). I will hand back your previous assignments with my feedback and comments for revision within one week after each part is due. I expect you to address my comments, make revisions, and turn in the original drafts with your final paper.

### 3. One exam (20% total)

*Midterm Exam*— an in-class, written examination to be given on TBA. The exam will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions, and will cover both the readings and lecture material.

### Grading Summary and Scale

Your final course grade will be calculated as:

Paper 1	10%
Paper 2	10%
Paper 3	40%
Proposal (5%)	
Methods section (5%)	
Literature Review (10%)	
Findings section (10%)	
Final product (10%)	
Participation	20%
Media Minute (5%)	
Reading Quizzes (10%)	
Attendance/Participation (5%)	
Midterm Exam	20%
TOTAL	100%

I use a grading scale consistent with the University recommendations.

A = 93%-100%  
 A- = 90%-92%  
 B+ = 87%-89%  
 B = 83%-86%  
 B- = 80%-82%  
 C+ = 78%-79%  
 C = 73%-77%  
 C- = 70%-72%  
 D+ = 67%-69%  
 D = 60%-67%  
 F = 59% or below

## REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Amy S. Wharton. 2015. *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change in a New Economic Era*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Routledge. **Marked below with a (W)**.
2. Kunda, Gideon. 2009. *Engineering culture: Control and commitment in a high-tech corporation*. Temple University Press.
3. Hodson, Randy. 2011. *Dignity at Work*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Various readings uploaded to Canvas. Often these are excerpts from books. **Marked below with an asterisk (\*)**.

## Readings

We do not have a typical “textbook” for this class; rather the readings are comprised of original articles from different authors (many are contained in the Wharton reader), a chapter/excerpt from one book, and journal articles that will be made available on Canvas. Thus, much of what you will be reading is actual sociological research. On the following pages is a schedule of the readings required for the course. You are expected to complete the readings **before** class each week. We will discuss some of the readings in class, so both the reading and class attendance are important. Some of the readings are more difficult than others, and some weeks there is a heavier reading load than other weeks. I will give you guidance on “how” to read the articles, particularly the more difficult ones. If you have trouble understanding any of the readings or the lecture material, please feel free to talk to me during office hours.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Accommodating Disabilities:

If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), please inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (e.g., not the day of an exam) so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. Proper documentation from the Office of Disabilities Services will be required. Please contact their office to get more information on available services and accommodations, as well as documentation requirements. They can be reached at 404-727-6016 or at <http://www.ods.emory.edu>.

### Academic Conduct:

All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the policies of Emory College with respect to conduct and academic honesty. Anyone engaging in acts that violate these policies, such as plagiarism or cheating, will be referred to the Honors Council. For more information on the Emory Honor Code, see [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor\\_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html).

### Make-Up Policy:

My permission is needed to make-up exams and the short assignments. If you are going to miss an exam or assignment, please make every effort to notify me before the missed class and to gather appropriate material to justify your absence. If you are unable to notify me before the class/due date, please try to have a friend, roommate, etc. contact me via e-mail and inform me of your absence. A mutually convenient time will be arranged for you to make up the assignment. Makeup assignments will **only** be allowed in a situation of an excused absence (e.g., illness, family emergency, etc.). A note from the Dean will be required to adjust the date of submission of your final paper, which is the equivalent of your final exam.

### Classroom Etiquette

Please avoid disruptions such as arriving late, packing or leaving early, or doing anything that is not course related. Laptops and tablets are permitted, but I reserve the right to ban them if they are used for non-course-related activities. Please turn off cell phones during class.

## CLASS & READINGS SCHEDULE

<u>WEEK/ DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READINGS (read before day of class)</u>
<b>TOPIC I: What Is Work? How and why do we study it sociologically?</b>		
Tues. Jan. 10	Introductions Key terms and concepts Student Inventory Sheet	N/A
Thurs. Jan. 12	Theories of Work: Labor and Alienation	“Alienated Labor” / Karl Marx (W)
Fri. Jan. 13	<i>continued</i>	<i>Dignity at Work</i> , chapters 1-2 / Randy Hodson
Tues. Jan. 17	Theories of Work: Bureaucracy and Control	“Bureaucracy” / Max Weber (W) “The Division of Labor” / Harry Braverman (W)
Thurs. Jan. 19	<i>continued</i>	“The Fundamentals of Scientific Management” / Frederick Taylor (W)
Fri. Jan. 20	Methods for Studying Work	“Over the Counter” / Leidner (W)  <i>Paper #1 assignment distributed</i>
<b>TOPIC II: How is work different for higher and lower social classes, men and women, and different racial groups? Examining Work and Inequality</b>		
Tues. Jan. 24	An overview of discrimination and social expectations at work  Social Class on the Job	“Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms” / Lauren Rivera (W) “The Smile Factory: Work at Disneyland.” / John Van Maanen* <b>Recommended:</b> “Looking Good and Sounding Right: Aesthetic Labor and Social Inequality in the Retail Industry” / Williams and Connell (W)
Thurs. Jan. 26	Gender and Sexuality on the Job	<i>Men and Women of the Corporation</i> , Chapter 1 / Rosabeth Kanter (*) “Normative Discrimination and the Motherhood Penalty” / Stephen Benard and Shelley Correll (W)
Fri. Jan. 27	<i>continued</i>	“If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You the Boss?: Explaining the Persistent Vertical Gender Gap in Management” / Heather A. Haveman and Lauren S. Beresford (W)

**Recommended:** “Pride and Prejudice: Employment Discrimination against Openly Gay Men in the United States” / Andras Tilcsik (W)

Tues. Jan. 31	Race on the Job	<p>“Are Some Emotions Marked ‘Whites Only’?: Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces” / Adia Harvey Wingfield (W)</p> <p>“Jobs, Opportunities, and Fairness: The Stakes of Equal Opportunity” from <i>The American Non-Dilemma: Racial Inequality without Racism</i> / Nancy DiTomaso *</p>
Thurs. Feb. 2	<i>Continued</i>	<p>“Documenting desegregation: Segregation in American workplaces by race, ethnicity, and sex, 1966–2003” / Tomaskovic-Devey et al. *</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> “Rediscovering the Color Line Within Work Organizations” / Steven Vallas *</p>
Fri. Feb. 3	Presentations	<p>PAPER #1 DUE</p> <p><i>Black Corporate Executives</i> (excerpt) / Sharon Collins *</p>

**TOPIC III: What’s “new” about the new economy? Technology, Service Industries, and the Organization of Work**

Tues. Feb. 7	Technology and Organization	<p>“Neo-Taylorism at Work: Occupational Change in the Post-Fordist Era” / Martha Crowley et al. (W)</p>
Thurs. Feb. 9	<i>continued</i>	<p><i>Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High Tech Corporation</i>, Chapter 2 / Gideon Kunda</p>
Fri. Feb. 10	Agriculture, Construction, and Manufacturing	<p><i>Manufacturing Consent</i> (excerpt) / Michael Buroway (*)</p> <p><i>Dignity at Work</i>, Chapter 5 / Randy Hodson</p>
Tues. Feb. 14	High-Tech Jobs	<p><i>Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High Tech Corporation</i>, Chapter 1 / Gideon Kunda</p>
Thurs. Feb. 16	<i>continued</i>	<p><i>Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High Tech Corporation</i>, Chapter 3 / Gideon Kunda</p>
Fri. Feb. 17	Services	<p>“The Managed Heart” / Arlie Hochschild (W)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> “I’m a Teacher, not a Babysitter” / Jennifer Nelson and Amanda Lewis *</p> <p><i>The Managed Hand</i> (excerpt) / Miliann Kang (W)</p>
Tues. Feb. 21	<i>continued</i>	<p><i>Dignity at Work</i>, chapter 3 and p. 228-230 / Randy Hodson</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> “Making Firefighters Deployable” / Matthew Desmond (W)</p>

**TOPIC IV: Labor Unions: How did they start and why have they declined in the U.S.?**

Thurs. Feb. 23	Collective Responses to Work	<i>Dignity at Work</i> , chapter 7 / Randy Hodson Watch film ( <i>Title TBA</i> )
Fri. Feb. 24		NO CLASS <i>The Time Bind: When Work becomes Home and Home becomes Work</i> , Chapters 1-2. / Arlie Russell Hochschild (*)

**TOPIC V: What does the new economy mean for work-life balance? Work and Family**

Tues. Feb. 28	Flexible work arrangements	“Shift Work in Multiple Time Zones: Some Implications of Contingent and Nonstandard Employment for Family Life” / Vicki Smith (W) <b>Recommended:</b> <i>Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s</i> , chapters 1-2 / Arne Kalleberg *
Thurs. Mar. 2	Work/Family issues – who pays?	“Stereotyping Low-Wage Mothers Who Have Work and Family Conflicts” / Lisa Dodson (W) “Fathering, Class, and Gender: A Comparison of Physicians and Emergency Medical Technicians” / Carla Shows and Naomi R. Gerstel *
Fri. Mar. 3		<i>MIDTERM EXAM</i>

**SPRING BREAK**

**TOPIC VI: What extent of control do workers have over their work? Comparing Professionals, Managers, and Occupations**

Tues. Mar. 14	What is a profession?	“The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor.” / Andrew Abbott * <i>Dignity at Work</i> , Chapter 6 / Randy Hodson
Thurs. Mar. 16	The struggle for and limits of professional control	“Time Work by Overworked Professionals: Strategies in Response to the Stress of Higher Status” / Phyllis Moen et al. (W)
Fri. Mar. 17	GSS workday	<i>Engineering Culture</i> , Chapter 3 / Gideon Kunda
Tues. Mar. 21	The managers’ role in corporate culture and normative control	<i>Engineering Culture</i> , Chapter 4 / Gideon Kunda <b>Recommended:</b> <i>Moral Mazes</i> (excerpt) / Robert Jackall *



Thurs. Mar. 23	<i>continued</i>	<i>Engineering Culture</i> , Chapter 5 / Gideon Kunda
Fri. Mar. 24	Worker responses to poor managerial practices	PAPER #2 DUE <i>Dignity at Work</i> , Chapter 4 / Randy Hodson
Tues. Mar. 28	Support and Sales Occupations	<i>Dignity at Work</i> , Chapter 8 / Randy Hodson
Thurs. Mar. 30	Marginal jobs	<i>When Work Disappears</i> (excerpt) / William Julius Wilson *
Fri. Mar. 31	<i>continued</i>	“Professionalizing Body Art: A Marginalized Occupational Group's Use of Informal and Formal Strategies of Control” / Michelle Lee Maroto (W)

**TOPIC VII: Will tomorrow’s workplace look like today’s? Large Corporations, Globalization, and the Future of Work**

Tues. Apr. 4	Large corporations	One-page research proposal due
Thurs. Apr. 6	<i>continued</i>	
Fri. Apr. 7	<i>continued</i>	Methods section draft due
Tues. Apr. 11	Globalization	<i>Global Cinderellas</i> (excerpt) / Pei-Chia Lan *
Thurs. Apr. 13	<i>continued</i>	Literature review section draft due
Fri. Apr. 14	The future of work	<i>Dignity at Work</i> , chapter 9 / Randy Hodson
Tues. Apr. 18	<i>continued</i>	Findings section draft due
Thurs. Apr. 20	<i>continued</i>	<i>Dignity at Work</i> , chapter 10 / Randy Hodson
Fri. Apr. 21	Conclusion and Reflections	LAST DAY OF CLASS
Thurs. Apr. 27		Final papers (PAPER #3) due on FINAL EXAM DAY Location TBA 3:00-5:30