

## **SOCIOLOGY 427: THE LABOR FORCE**

Fall, 2015  
Class Times: 9:30-10:45 Tuesday/Thursdays  
Bingham 103

Professor Arne Kalleberg  
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### **OVERVIEW OF COURSE TOPICS**

This course examines the changing nature of the labor force and provides an introduction to some key issues in the study of work and employment. Most of the material will deal with the U.S. in the 20th and 21st centuries, though we will also make cross-national and historical comparisons. We will discuss various policies that might help to tackle these and other issues facing the labor force of the future.

The course is divided into four main parts.

The first part provides an overview of the U.S. labor force, such as: definitions of employment, unemployment and underemployment; labor force participation rates of various groups; and trends in/characteristics of working time and unemployment.

Second, we discuss various ways in which work is structured in terms of occupations and industries, employment relations, and organizations.

Third, we examine characteristics of the workers in the U.S. labor force, such as their education, gender, race and ethnicity, and age. Topics to be studied include: work and inequalities between men and women; racial and ethnic inequality; and the relations between work and family.

Fourth, we will study ways that people are matched to jobs in industrial societies. We will discuss issues related to: job search and hiring practices; migration and immigration; and the distribution of jobs among regions in the U.S. and among countries in the world

### **READINGS**

Reading assignments for each class are listed in the attached reading list. You are responsible for doing ALL the readings by the assigned date, even if we do not discuss them in class. Class always goes better when students do the reading. There will be times when you cannot do the readings; you should come to class anyway. We will read two books (both available in paperback at the UNC bookstore and on Amazon.com):

Arne L. Kalleberg, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013, 978-0-87154-480-3)

Louise Roth, *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015, ISBN: 9780691166728)

Copies of the other readings are available for download from the course Sakai website (***under the dates for which they are assigned in the “Course Calendar”***) or are available on-line at the URL given in the syllabus.

## GRADING

My teaching goals are for students to: become familiar with important issues related to the labor force; understand the social and other contextual reasons for why work is organized and experienced the way it is in the U.S. and other advanced industrial societies; think about various social and economic policies that might be used to address some central problems related to work; and acquire knowledge and skills that will help them in their future careers.

In line with these goals, I will base your grade on the following criteria:

(1) 35% of your grade will be determined by your *group work* (i.e., joint written paper and class presentation) on two things:

--A policy brief (15%: presented in various classes from September 15 to November 3).

--A research paper dealing with an issue related to the labor force (20%: presented in various classes on November 24 and December 1).

(I will assign you to one of ten teams of about five students each.)

(2) 30% of your grade will be based on two short *individual* papers:

--A research paper on occupations (15%: due on September 10).

--An essay that compares a book (Roth, *Selling Women Short*) to a movie (“Anchorman”) (15%: due on October 13).

(4) 20% of your grade will be based on the final exam (scheduled for December 8 at 8:00 am).

(5) 15% of your grade will be based on your class participation.

More information on all these assignments will be posted on the course Sakai website (under “Assignments”).

Please note that it is a University rule to have a final in this course and it can only be rescheduled if you have three finals within a 24-hour span. If you are in this situation, please let me know as soon as you are aware of this conflict and I will do what I can to reschedule the final to accommodate your schedule.

Final letter grades for the course will be based on the following cutoff points (which may be adjusted slightly if overall class performance is unexpectedly low or high):

A-/A :	90 and over
B-/B/B+ :	80-89
C-/C/C+ :	70-79
D-/D/D+ :	55-69
F :	< 55

Class attendance and participation are very important. I urge all of you to attend class regularly and to read the assigned materials on time.

## **HONOR CODE**

The UNC Student Honor Code covers all exams and assignments in this course (please read carefully the Honor Code: <http://instrument.unc.edu>). With respect to the individual paper assignments, this means that what you turn in should be your own work. On the final exam, you should ask me for clarification of questions you don't understand, but you must not get information from any other materials or people.

## **HOURS**

My office hours are 11-12 on Tuesdays and 10-11 on Wednesdays in Hamilton Hall 261.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT**

Mr. Michael Schultz, an advanced Sociology graduate student who works on projects related to the labor force, is the instructional assistant for this course. His email address is: [schultzm@live.unc.edu](mailto:schultzm@live.unc.edu) and his office is located in Hamilton Hall 210. His office hours are 10:45-12:00 on Thursdays.

## **ETC.**

E-mail is the best way to contact me (My email address is: [arnekal@email.unc.edu](mailto:arnekal@email.unc.edu)). It is especially good for brief communication (questions with short answers). E-mail is not a substitute for asking questions in class.

If you have questions about the subject or procedures of the course, please ask them in class. Others will benefit from your questions.

If you have a disability that requires consideration, please tell me at the start of the semester; I will be happy to do what I can to accommodate you.

Please turn off cell phones (or set them to silent mode) in class.

You may use laptops, but *only* for class purposes: please do not check email or browse the web for things unrelated to what we are discussing in class. *If this becomes problem, I reserve the right to ban the use of laptops in class.*

Disasters occur. If one happens to you and it affects your ability to meet course requirements, tell me immediately. Do not wait.

Check your email and the course Sakai site regularly. Readings or assignments may change over the course of the semester and so visiting our Sakai site at least every few days will ensure you have the most current information.

## SOCIOLOGY 427: THE LABOR FORCE (Fall 2015)

### COURSE CALENDAR AND READING LIST

**\*\*ANY CHANGES IN THIS COURSE CALENDAR WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON THE SAKAI COURSE WEBSITE\*\***

**August 18**                      **COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**I.        OVERVIEW OF THE U.S. LABOR FORCE**

**August 20**                      **CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS**

*Questions:* What do we mean by "work" and "labor force"? How does the U.S. conceptualize and measure the "employed" and "unemployed"? How valid is the government's unemployment measure as an indicator of joblessness?

Concepts enumerated and defined: [http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps\\_htgm.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm)

For reference: A labor force glossary: <http://www.bls.gov/bls/glossary.htm>

**August 25**                      **PATTERNS OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION,  
EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

*Questions:* How do patterns of labor force participation differ by gender, age, education and other characteristics? What are the types and causes of unemployment?

Mitra Toossi. 2002. "A Century of Change: The U.S. Labor Force, 1950-2050." *Monthly Labor Review* (May): 15-28.

Arne Kalleberg. 2013. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 40-58.

"Labor Force," *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter 2011-12, pp. 26-32.

For reference: Current U.S. labor force characteristics: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm>

**August 27**                      **NO CLASS**

Meet with your Team, Get Acquainted with Each Other, and Choose Policy Brief Topics

## September 1            **WORKING (AND NON-WORKING) TIME**

*Questions:* Why do some people work more hours than others? What does it mean to be “overworked” and who is more likely to overwork? What does it mean to be “underworked”? Who works part-time and what are the characteristics of part-time work? Why do people remain unemployed or underemployed if they want to work more? What are the consequences of prolonged unemployment?

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 148-194

Don Peck, “How a New Jobless Era will Transform America” *The Atlantic* (March 2010).

## II. WORK STRUCTURES/INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

### September 3            **OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES**

*Questions:* What are occupations and industries? What is the difference between them? How do occupations differ? How do industries differ? What are the major changes in occupations and industries in the twentieth century? What changes in occupations and industries can we expect in the future?

Ian D. Wyatt and Daniel E. Hecker. 2006. “Occupational Changes during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” *Monthly Labor Review* (March): 35-57.

“Occupational Employment,” *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter 2011-12, pp. 6-25.

“Industry Employment,” *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter 2011-12, pp. 33-39.

More information on occupations:

(O\*Net): <http://online.onetcenter.org/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>

More information on industries: <http://www.bls.gov/iag/home.htm>

### September 8            **OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS**

*Questions:* What do we mean by occupational “skills”? What kinds of jobs are likely to be automated by computers and which are not? What kinds of skills are likely to be in great demand in the future and which are not?

Frank Levy and Richard Murnane. 2013. “Dancing with Robots: Human Skills for Computerized Work.”

Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Education and Training Outlook for Occupations, 2012-22”

More information on occupational skills: <https://www.onetonline.org/skills>

**September 10                    CHANGING EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS:  
OLD DEAL, NEW DEAL AT WORK**

**-- Research Paper on Occupations Due --**

*Questions:* How has the nature of the employment relationship changed? What is meant by the “new deal at work?” How does it differ from the “old deal”? Why have jobs become more precarious and insecure?

Arne Kalleberg. 2013. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 21-39.

Peter Cappelli. 1999. *The New Deal at Work*. Harvard University Press: 18-37.

**September 15                    PRECARIOUS WORK AND NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT  
RELATIONS**

*Questions:* What is meant by “contingent work” and “nonstandard work arrangements?” What accounts for their growth in the U.S. labor force?

Arne Kalleberg. 2013. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 82-104.

Peter Coy, Michelle Conlin, and Moira Herbst. “The Disposable Worker.” *Business Week*, January 18, 2010.

James Surowiecki. 2015. “Gigs with Benefits: Are Uber Drivers Employees?” *The New Yorker*, June 6.

David Bensman. 2014. “Misclassification: Workers in the Borderland.”

<i>Policy Brief:</i> Should UBER drivers be considered employees?
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**September 17                    JOB QUALITY**

*Questions:* What is meant by “job quality”? What is a “good job” and a “bad job”? Where do “good” and “bad jobs” come from?

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 1-18; 61-81; 164-176; 179-194.

<i>Policy Brief:</i> How can we create more Good Jobs (and fewer Bad Jobs)?
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## September 22      **LOW WAGE JOBS**

*Questions:* What criteria are used to classify people as members of the “working poor”? Are low-wage jobs necessarily low-skilled jobs? What has happened to the middle class in recent years?

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 116-119.

Heather Boushey et al., 2007. *Understanding Low-Wage Work in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Economic Policy and Research (March).

David Bradley. 2015. “The Federal Minimum Wage: In Brief.” Congressional Research Service, January 13.

*Policy Brief:* Should the U.S. Federal Minimum Wage be increased? If so, to what amount?

## September 24      **OCCUPATIONAL POWER AND UNIONS**

*Questions:* What are unions? What do unions do in the U.S.? Why do some occupations have more power than others?

Ruth Milkman. 2013. “Back to the Future? U.S. Labour in the New Gilded Age.” *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 51 (4): 645-665.

James Walker. 2008. “Union Members in 2007: A Visual Essay.” *Monthly Labor Review*, October, pp. 28-39.

Kim Weeden. 2002. “Why do Some Occupations Pay More than Others? Social Closure and Earnings Inequality in the United States.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108: Read pp. 60-70.

“Gawker and Salon Unionize”

*Policy Brief:* Why have unions failed to organize Walmart stores, while writers and editors at Gawker and Salon are organizing?

### III. LABOR FORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

#### September 29            **MEN, WOMEN AND WORK: SEX SEGREGATION OF OCCUPATIONS AND WORKPLACES**

*Questions:* What are the differences between the kinds of occupations and jobs men and women work in? Why do men and women tend to work in different kinds of jobs and occupations?

Louise Marie Roth, *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street* (Princeton University Press 2006): Introduction, Chapter 1

Ariane Hegewisch et al. 2010. "Separate and Not Equal? Gender Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap." Institute for Women's Policy Research Briefing Paper C377.

#### October 1                    **MEN, WOMEN AND WORK: GENDER PAY GAP**

*Questions:* What do we mean by a "gender pay gap"? What causes this gap? What are some of the conditions that lead to a greater or smaller gender wage gap?

Louise Marie Roth, *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street* (Princeton University Press 2006): Chapters 2, 3, 8, 9.

Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2007. "The Gender Pay Gap: Have Women gone as Far as They Can?" *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February 7-23.

*Policy Brief:* How effective has the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act been in reducing gender pay gaps? Does it need to be amended? If so, how?

#### October 6 and 8            **NO CLASS**

#### October 13                 **GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

**--Book Report/Movie Review due --**

*Questions:* How does a popular film ("Anchorman") illustrate issues discussed in Louise Roth's book, *Selling Women Short*? How do men and women's experiences differ in dealing with their bosses, their co-workers and their clients? To what extent does unequal treatment of men and women at work constitute gender discrimination?

Louise Marie Roth, *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street* (Princeton University Press 2006): Chapters 4, 5, 7.

Roger Parloff. 2007. "The War Over Unconscious Bias." *Fortune*, October 15.

*Policy Brief:* How can we reduce Unconscious Gender Bias at work?

**October 15                    FALL BREAK**

**October 20                    WORK AND FAMILY**

*Questions:* What do we mean by "the relationship between work and family"? How do the relations between work and family lives tend to differ for men and women?

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 227-252

Louise Marie Roth, *Selling Women Short* (Princeton University Press 2006): Chapter 6.

Erin Rehel and Emily Baxter. 2015. "Men, Fathers, and Work-Family Balance." Center for American Progress.

More information on family and work research: Families and Work Institute:  
<http://www.familiesandwork.org/>

*Policy Brief:* How effective has the Family and Medical Leave Act been in helping people deal with work-family issues? Does it need to be amended? If so, how?

**October 22                    RACE INEQUALITY AT WORK**

*Questions:* What accounts for work-related inequalities between different races and ethnic groups? What is the role of discrimination in perpetuating these inequalities? How do employers' perceptions of skills differ based on workers' race and ethnicity?

Philip Moss and Chris Tilly. 1996. "'Soft' Skills and Race: An Investigation of Black Men's Employment Problems." *Work and Occupations* 23: 252-276.

U.S. Department of Labor. 2011. "The Black Labor Force in the Recovery." July 11.

Sendhil Mullainthan. 2015. "Racial Bias, Even When We Have Good Intentions." *New York Times*, January 3.

*Policy Brief:* What can be done to reduce Racial Inequality in employment?

## IV. MATCHING PERSONS TO JOBS

### October 27 EDUCATION AND WORK

*Questions:* What is the relationship between education and work in the U.S.? How has the linkage between education and work changed over time?

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 69-98

Jaison Abel et al. 2014. "Are Recent College Graduates Finding Good Jobs?" *Current Issues in Economics and Finance*, N.Y. Federal Reserve 20 (1)

Mary Daly and Leila Bengali. 2014. "Is it Still Worth Going to College?" *FRBSF Economic Letter*, May 5.

*Policy Brief:* Is a College degree necessary to get a good, satisfying job, or are there alternative ways to get such jobs?

### October 29 (MIS) MATCHING PERSONS AND JOBS

*Questions:* What do we mean when we say that persons and jobs are "mismatched"? What causes mismatches? What can be done to reduce mismatches? Can you give an example of a mismatch that is *not* discussed in the reading?

Arne Kalleberg. 2008. "The Mismatched Worker: When People Don't Fit Their Jobs." *The Academy of Management Perspectives* 22 (1): 24-40.

### November 3 GETTING A JOB: JOB SEARCH AND HIRING PRACTICES

*Questions:* How do people get information about job openings? How do organizations recruit and hire people to work for them? What is the role of social networks and contacts in getting jobs?

Peter Cappelli. 2001. "Making the Most of On-Line Recruiting." *Harvard Business Review* (March), pp. 139-146.

Lorraine Mirabella. 2012. "Online Hiring Systems Frustrate Job Applicants." *Raleigh News and Observer*, September 22.

"What You Can Ask and What You Can't on an Employment Interview"

*Policy Brief:* How effective has Affirmative Action been in reducing discrimination in hiring? Is another approach likely to be more effective in reducing discrimination in hiring?

**November 5 CAREERS: SEQUENCES OF JOBS**

*Questions:* How are jobs linked to other jobs to form “careers”? What factors help people to advance in their careers?

Peter Cappelli and Monika Hamori. 2005. “The New Road to the Top.” *Harvard Business Review* (January): 25-32.

Olivia Crosby. 2005. “Career Myths and How to Debunk Them.” *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Fall.

Amy Gallo. 2015. “Setting the Record Straight on Switching Jobs.” *Harvard Business Review*, July.

**November 7 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS AND WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND GLOBALLY**

*Questions:* What do we mean by “geographical mismatch”? What causes it? What areas of the U.S. are growing and declining in terms of “where the jobs are”? What do we mean by a “global” division of labor? Why do American companies outsource work to other countries? How does the global division of labor affect work and the labor force in the United States?

Enrico Moretti. 2013. *The New Geography of Jobs*, pp. 1-17.

Alan S. Blinder. 2006. “Offshoring: The Next Industrial Revolution?” *Foreign Affairs* 85: 113-128.

**November 12 MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION-I**

*Questions:* Why do people immigrate to the United States? What are the historical patterns of immigration to the U.S.? What kinds of jobs do immigrants get? What is the significance of immigration for the U.S. labor force?

Frank Bean D., Susan Gonzalez-Baker, and Randy Capps. 2001. “Immigration and Labor Markets in the United States,” Read pp. 674-685.

William A. Kandel. 2014. “U.S. Immigration Policy: Chart Book of Key Trends.” Congressional Research Service, December 17.

**November 17                    MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION-II**

*Questions:* How does illegal immigration affect work as well as workers who are U.S. citizens? What kinds of immigration law reforms are needed in the U.S. to address work-related problems caused by illegal immigrants?

Roger Lowenstein. 2006. "The Immigration Equation." *New York Times Magazine*, July 9.

Adam Davidson. 2015. "Debunking the Myth of the Job-Stealing Immigrant." *New York Times Magazine*, March 24.

**November 19                    CHALLENGES FOR LABOR FORCE POLICY**

*Questions:* What kinds of social and economic policies are needed to address these problems related to work? What are the roles of the government and business in tackling work-related problems?

Arne Kalleberg, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 179-215.

**November 24                    PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS**

**November 26                    *No Class: Thanksgiving Recess***

**December 1                    PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS**

**December 8                    FINAL EXAM (8:00 am)**