

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

Fall, 2018  
Class Times: 9:30-10:45 Tuesday/Thursdays  
Peabody 203

Professor Arne Kalleberg  
Hamilton Hall 261 (962-0630)  
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### **OVERVIEW OF COURSE TOPICS**

This course examines the changing nature of the labor force and introduces 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 comparisons and emphasize issues facing the labor force of the future.

The course is divided into two main parts.

The first part provides an overview of the *structure of work and the U.S. labor market*, such as: what is work; definitions of and trends in employment and unemployment; labor force participation rates of various groups; types of employment relations and the gig economy occupational skills and technology; job quality and income inequality; and unions and other sources of occupational power.

Second, we examine characteristics of the *workers in the U.S. labor force*, such as: how people are matched to jobs; education and work; work-related inequalities between men and women; racial inequality; relations between work and family; the distribution of jobs among regions in the U.S. and among countries in the world; and migration and immigration.

### **READINGS**

Reading assignments for each class are listed in the attached reading list and/or on the Sakai course page. Readings are not optional; you are responsible for doing ALL the readings by the assigned date. All readings can be downloaded from the Sakai course page (*under the dates for which they are assigned in the "Course Calendar"*) or are available on-line at the URL listed.

### **GRADING**

My teaching goals in this course are for students to: become familiar with important issues related to the labor market and 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 creatively about what social and economic policies 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) 40% of your grade will be based on 4 short (4-page) papers--each worth 10%--that are due at various times throughout the semester (September 18, October 4, November 13, and December 4).
- (2) 20% of your grade will be based on your performance on regular in-class activities that will require a mixture of group and individual work. These include group answers to questions, completed group activities, short in-class writing assignments, and short quizzes.
- (3) 20% of your grade will be based on the mid-term exam (scheduled for October 16 in class)
- (4) 20% of your grade will be based on the final exam (scheduled for December 11 at 8 am).

Full information on the written assignments is posted on the course Sakai website (under "Assignments").

I strongly urge all of you to attend class regularly (I will be taking attendance each class) and to read the assigned materials on time.

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 = 93-100; A- = 90-92  
 B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82  
 C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72  
 D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66  
 F = BELOW 60

## **HONOR CODE**

The UNC Student Honor Code covers all exams and assignments in this course (please read carefully the Honor Code, <https://ethicsandintegrity.unc.edu/report/academics>). With respect to the individual paper assignments, this means that what you turn in should be your own work. On the exams, you should ask the instructional assistant or 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 Tuesdays/Thursdays, 11-12 in Hamilton Hall 261.

## INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT

Ms. Kaitlin Shartle, a Sociology graduate student, is the instructional assistant for this course. Her email address is: [kshartle@live.unc.edu](mailto:kshartle@live.unc.edu) and her office is in Hamilton Hall 162. Her office hours are Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2-3.

## 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.

No cell phone use in class: please turn off cell phones (or set them to silent mode).

We will be using laptops for class exercises, so please bring your laptop to each class. However, there is no use of laptops (and tablets) in class *except* in cases that I announce.

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 are likely to change over the course of the semester and so visiting our Sakai site at least every few days (and always before class) will ensure you have the most current information.

*Basic rules for class discussion:*

- 1) Raise your hand before talking.
- 2) If you have already spoken more than 1-2 times that day, I may not call on you if there are other hands that are up.
- 3) Try to keep your responses focused. I may cut you off if you begin to ramble in order to keep the discussion on track; if I do so, please do not be offended.
- 4) Do not attempt to dominate class discussion. Show respect for those you disagree with. At the same time, I encourage your taking the opposite point of view with a credible argument.

**SOCIOLOGY 427: THE LABOR FORCE (Fall 2018)**

**COURSE CALENDAR AND READING LIST**

**(Any changes to the course calendar or reading list will be announced on Sakai)**

**August 21 COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**PART I: THE STRUCTURE OF WORK AND THE U.S. LABOR MARKET**

**August 23 STUDYING WORK--I**

*Questions:* What do we mean by “work” and “jobs”? What are the conceptions of work throughout history? What are the different types of work? In what sense can the examples from *GIG* be considered to be “work?”

John Budd, “Introduction” in *The Thought of Work* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2011)

*GIG*: Drug Dealer, Mother, Prisoner, and Palm Reader

**August 28 STUDYING WORK—II**

*Questions:* What are the different motivations for working? What is meant by work as a “curse”? What is meant by work as “freedom”?

Barry Schwartz, *Why We Work*, pp. 10-34

John Budd, “Work as a Curse,” and “Work as Freedom,” in *The Thought of Work*

**August 30 LABOR FORCE CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS**

*Questions:* What do we mean by the “labor force”? How does the U.S. conceptualize and measure the “employed” and “unemployed”?

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

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>

**September 4                    PATTERNS OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION,  
EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

*Questions:* How and why do patterns of and trends in labor force participation differ by gender, age, education and other characteristics? What are the types and causes of unemployment? Why do people remain unemployed (or underemployed) if they want to work, or work more?

"Projections of the Labor Force: 2014-2024," *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, December 2015. <http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/projections-laborforce.htm>

Vernon Brundage, "Trends in unemployment and other labor market difficulties"

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

**September 6                    CHANGING EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS:  
OLD DEAL, NEW DEAL AT WORK**

*Questions:* What is meant by the "new deal at work?" How does it differ from the "old deal"? What led to the change in the nature of the employment relationship from the "old" to the "new" deal? How does the example of the trucking industry illustrate the changes in employment relations?

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

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

Steve Viscelli, *The Big Rig: Trucking and the Decline of the American Dream*, pp. 17-48.

**September 11                NO CLASS**

**September 13                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?

Steve Viselli, *The Big Rig: Trucking and the Decline of the American Dream*, pp. 164-243; 274-298.

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

## September 18      THE GIG ECONOMY

*Questions:* What is meant by the “gig” economy? What explains the “rise” of the gig economy? Should UBER drivers be considered employees?

Jim Stanford, “The resurgence of gig work: Historical and theoretical perspectives,” *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 2017, Vol. 28(3) 382 –401

Arne Kalleberg and Michael Dunn, “Good Jobs, Bad Jobs in the Gig Economy,” *Perspectives on Work* (2016)

James Sherk, “The Rise of the ‘Gig’ Economy: Good for Workers and Consumers” (October 2016)

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

-- *Short Paper # 1 Due* --

## September 20      TYPES OF OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES

*Questions:* What are occupations and industries? What is the difference between them? What 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/>  
 "Projections of occupational employment, 2014–24" *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, December

More information on industries:

<http://www.bls.gov/iag/home.htm>  
<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/projections-industry.htm>  
 "Projections of industry employment, 2014–24" *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, December 2015.

## September 25      TECHNOLOGY AND SKILLS

*Questions:* What do we mean by “technology”? What do we mean by occupational “skills”? How does technology affect skills? What kinds of skills are likely to be in great demand in the future and which are not?

Rudi Volti, “Technology and Work” (just read pp. 122-135) in *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work*

“The March of the Machines” (*New York Times*, 1928)

Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots*: Introduction, Chapter 1

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Education and Training Outlook for Occupations, 2012-2022”

## September 27      ROBOTS AND JOBS

*Questions:* What kinds of jobs are likely to be automated by computers and which are not? What kinds of new occupations and skills may be created or grow as a result of computers and automation?

Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots*: Chapters 3, 4, 7 (pp. 192-196), Conclusion

Frank Levy and Richard Murnane. 2013. “Dancing with Robots: Human Skills for Computerized Work” (read only pp. 1-18)

BBC News, “Will a Robot Take Your Job?”

## October 2      JOB QUALITY AND LOW-WAGE JOBS

*Questions:* What is meant by “job quality”? How can we define “good jobs” and “bad jobs”? Why are there so many low-wage jobs in the U.S.? Should the U.S. Federal Minimum Wage be increased? If so, to what amount should it be increased?

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, pp. 1-18

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.

Rudi Volti, “Minimum Wage Laws,” pp. 175-178

**October 4**                    **INCOME INEQUALITY: CEOs vs. WORKERS**

*Questions:* What explains the rise in income inequality in the United States in recent years? Why do CEOs and other executives earn so much more than workers? Is this kind of income inequality necessarily a bad thing? How can we reduce income inequality?

Lawrence Mishel, Elise Gould, and Josh Bivens, “Wage Stagnation in Nine Charts.” Economic Policy Institute, January 6, 2015.

Lawrence Mishel and Alyssa Davis. “Top CEOs Make 300 Times More than Typical Workers.” Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief # 399, June 2015.

Joseph Stiglitz, “Inequality is Not Inevitable.” *New York Times* June 27, 2014.

-- *Short Paper # 2 Due* --

**October 9**            **UNIONS**

*Questions:* What are unions? What do unions do in the U.S.? Why do some occupations have more power than others? Why have unions failed to organize Walmart stores, while writers and editors at Gawker and Salon are organizing?

Jake Rosenfeld. *What Unions No Longer Do* (Harvard University Press, 2014), “Introduction” and Chapter 1.

Economic Policy Institute, *How Today’s Unions Help Working People*

Rachel Swarns, “At Gawker Media, New Economy Workers Strive to Form a New Kind of Union.” *New York Times* (June 14, 2015)

**October 11**                    **OCCUPATIONAL POWER**

*Questions:* What are differences among the various strategies that occupations can use to increase their power? What is the rationale behind licensing occupations? What are the pros and cons of occupational licensing?

Kim Weeden, “Why Do Some Occupations Pay More than Others? Social Closure and Earnings Inequality in the United States” *American Journal of Sociology* 2002 (Read only pp. 55-70)

Morris Kleiner, “Why License a Florist?” *New York Times* (May 28, 2014)

**October 16**                    **MID-TERM EXAM**



**October 18**            **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**

**PART II:                WORKERS IN THE LABOR FORCE**

**October 23**            **GETTING A JOB: JOB SEARCH AND HIRING PRACTICES**

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

Rudi Volti, “Getting a Job” (Read pp. 169-175; 178-191)

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”

**October 25**    **NO CLASS**

**October 30**    **EDUCATION AND WORK**

*Questions:* What is the relationship between education and work in the U.S.? How have the linkages between education and work (and the “school-to-work transition”) changed over time? Is a college degree necessary to get a good, satisfying job, or are there alternative ways to get such jobs?

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.

Jeffrey Selingo, “Wanted: Factory Workers, Degree Required,” *New York Times* (January 30, 2017)

Jeffrey Selingo, “Six Myths about Choosing a College Major,” *New York Times* (November 3, 2017)

**November 1 (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 6 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? 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?

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

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/>

**November 8 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?

Steven Sweet and Peter Meiskins. 2017. “Gender Chasms in the New Economy,” pp. 208-217; 222-231.

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.

Maria Charles and David B. Grusky. 2004. Chapter 1—“The Four Puzzles of Occupational Sex Segregation” in *Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Women and Men*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (Read only pp. 12-28)

**November 13                    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?

Steven Sweet and Peter Meiskins. 2017. “Gender Chasms in the New Economy,” pp. 208-217; 222-231.

Claire Cain Miller, “The Gender Pay Gap Is Largely Because of Motherhood.” *New York Times* May 13, 2017.

-- *Short Paper # 3 Due* --

**November 15                    RACE INEQUALITY AT WORK**

*Questions:* In what ways are there work-related inequalities between different races and ethnic groups? What accounts for these inequalities? What is the role of incarceration in perpetuating inequalities between races? What policies might be effective in reducing racial inequality?

Steven Sweet and Peter Meiskins. 2017. “Race, Ethnicity and Work.” Pp. 263-266, 270-285, 290-299.

Amon Emeka. 2016. “Where Race Matters Most.” *Contexts*, pp. 72-74.

Pew Research. 2016. “On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart.”

Bruce Western and Becky Petit. 2010. “Incarceration and Social Inequality.” *Daedalus* (Summer): 8-19.

**November 20                    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 22**            **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING RECESS**

**November 27**            **MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION—OVERVIEW**

*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?

Steven Sweet and Peter Meiskins. 2017. "Race, Ethnicity and Work." Pp. 266-269; 299-306.

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

**November 29**            **MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION—LABOR MARKET IMPACTS**

*Questions:* How does illegal immigration affect work and earnings of 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

Eduardo Porter. 2017. "The Danger from Low-Skilled Immigrants: Not Having Enough of Them." *New York Times* (August 8)

**December 4**            **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.

-- *Short Paper # 4 Due* --

**December 11**            **FINAL EXAM (8:00 am)**