

Sociology 054

GOOD JOBS, BAD JOBS, NO JOB:

WORK AND WORKERS IN 21st CENTURY AMERICA

Spring 2011, Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30-4:45

Classroom: 150 Hamilton Hall

Professor Arne Kalleberg

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-3:15

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Goals of the Seminar

Work is a core activity in society. It is a central life interest for many individuals, links persons to each other, and locates them within the stratification system. Work reveals much about the social order, how it is changing, and the kinds of problems and issues that people (and their governments) must address. Social, economic and political forces are transforming work in American society; these changes have produced major consequences for social institutions and individuals.

To understand better these changes, we will examine the nature and meaning of work in the contemporary United States. We will seek to answer questions such as: What are the main changes that are currently taking place in work and jobs in the United States? Why are some jobs "good" and others "bad"? Why are some people able to get jobs that "fit" their needs and expectations while others are mismatched to their jobs? What explains the growth of temporary work and why do so many people work as temps? Why are so many companies downsizing their workforces? What are the consequences for workers of being laid off and unemployed? Is having no job better than a bad job? We will address these and other questions by reading books and articles, by class discussions and debates, by collecting information using the internet, and by interviewing workers and studying different kinds of jobs.

Goals of First-Year Seminars

When the College of Arts and Sciences created these seminars, 7 goals were outlined. You can expect to work toward the following goals:

1. To formulate meaningful questions raised by the topic of the seminar.

2. To appreciate the views of others as well as understand the merits and limitations of one's own perspective.
3. To use written, oral, or other forms of communication as tools for exploring intellectual problems, synthesizing material from various sources, and formulating effective arguments.
4. To read a variety of texts with understanding and critical judgment.
5. To understand how to acquire and use appropriately different kinds of evidence.
6. To gain an appreciation for collaborative inquiry.
7. To integrate learning inside and outside the classroom.

Ultimately, this seminar will be judged by how well it achieves these 7 goals.

Rules of the Class

1. We start and end class on time.
2. Turn off cell phones, pagers, and beepers.
3. No surfing the web or checking email on your laptops.
4. Check your email account and the course Web page (Blackboard) in preparation for each class. Some parts of the assignment are ONLY listed on the Blackboard Web page for Daily Assignments.
5. Read the assigned materials before each class, and come prepared to discuss and answer questions (orally and in writing) about it.

Contacts

You can reach me by email at Arne_Kalleberg@unc.edu. For simple questions, that is the fastest and quickest way to reach me. For more difficult questions, please come see me during my office hours or see me after class. You can read more about my research interests on my Home Page (www.unc.edu/~arnekal).

Course information is available on the Blackboard Web Page (Blackboard.unc.edu; Sociology 054). A copy of the course syllabus and assignments is posted and updated frequently, and you should check the Blackboard Web Page in preparation for each class.

Office Hours

My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-3:15 in 261 Hamilton Hall. To make the best use of our time, you should come prepared with some fairly specific questions. For example, you might have a question about a reading you don't understand, a concept we've covered in class, or something you've seen on CNN News or the Web. Try to be specific about how I can help you. You don't have to have a problem to come to office hours—you may just want to chat about something, and that's OK, too.

Honor Code

The University Honor Code will be in effect through all assignments. Please read carefully the provisions of the Honor Code, make certain you understand and adhere to them, and ask me to clarify any questions you have regarding the Code. The Code is a long and valuable tradition at UNC—protect it!

Texts and Readings

We will read three paperback books, which are available in the Student Bookstore:

John Bove, Marisa Bove and Sabin Streeter (editors). 2000. *Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs*. (New York: Three Rivers Press.) (ISBN 0-609-80707-2)

Barbara Ehrenreich. 2002. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. (NY: Owl Books.) (ISBN 0805063897)

Arne L. Kalleberg. 2007. *The Mismatched Worker*. (NY: W.W. Norton)

In addition, I will ask you to read a number of articles, which can be accessed through the Blackboard Course Web Page.

Attendance

It is important that you come to class regularly. If you know you'll be out of town and have to miss a class, please let me know ahead of time if possible.

Evaluation

Your course grade is based upon: five in-class written assignments; three short papers; a longer research paper; group presentations; and contributions in the classroom. Due to the writing intensive nature of the course, there will be no final exam.

1. In-class written assignments: In five classes, you will be asked to write a short essay in answer to a question related to the day's assignment. The study question(s) listed for each day is a good guideline to use in preparing for the writing we will do.
2. Three short papers and a longer research/policy paper will be required. Details about these papers, and criteria for how I will evaluate them, will be given on the Blackboard Course Web Page.
3. Because this is a special first-year seminar, part of the focus of the course will be on how to make positive classroom contributions. A big part of this will be via

teamwork. I will assign each of you to a team, and the team will be asked to make several presentations to the class during the semester.

Components of your Grade

Short papers:		40 %
1. Collect information on and rank 2 occupations		15
2. Paper on Low-Wage work		15
3. Op-Ed/Policy Brief		10
Team work		20 %
1. Two Team presentations of class material		10
2. Team Research presentation		10
In-class writing assignments (5 x 2)		10
Class Contributions		10
Research Paper		<u>20</u>
Total		100%

Grading Scale

At the end of the term, you will receive a letter grade, based on the following performance levels:

A	=	90-100
B	=	80-89
C	=	70-79
D	=	60-69
F	=	BELOW 60

****Any changes to these dates/topics/readings/etc. will be posted as “announcements” on the Blackboard Course Web Page****

I. The Sociology of Work

January 11 (Tuesday)

Introduction to each other and the course

Question: What are the course goals and requirements?

January 13 (Thursday)

TOPIC: What is work? What is a job?

Questions: What do we mean by “work” and “jobs”? How do sociologists study work and jobs? In what sense can these examples from *GIG* be considered to be “work?”

Readings:

Keith Grint, “Problems of Definition: What is Work?” Pp. 8-12 in *The Sociology of Work* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991).

Ronald M. Pavalko, “An Introduction to the Study of Work,” Pp. 1-5 in *Sociology of Occupations and Professions*, Second Edition (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1988)

GIG: Drug Dealer (Pp. 134-138), Mother (Pp. 469-475), Palm Reader (Pp. 655-659), Prisoner (Pp. 552-557).

January 18 (Tuesday)

TOPIC: Types of Occupations and Industries

Questions: What are occupations? What are industries? What is the difference between occupations and industries? How do occupations in service industries differ from occupations in goods manufacturing industries?

Readings:

Curt Tausky, “Occupations,” Pp. 46-48 and “Service-Producing and Goods-Producing Industries,” Pp. 52-53 in *Work and Society: An Introduction to Industrial Sociology*, Second Edition (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc. 1996.

Arne Kalleberg. 2007. *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 44-51.

Ian D. Wyatt and Daniel E. Hecker. 2006. "Occupational Changes during the 20th Century." *Monthly Labor Review* (March): 35-57.

GIG: Tofu Manufacturer (Pp. 107-112), Poultry Factory Worker (Pp. 227-231), Waitress (Pp. 232-236), Comedian (Pp. 379-384).

Information on occupations:

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

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

January 20 (*Thursday*)

TOPIC: Social Division of Labor

Questions: What do we mean by the social division of labor? What is the function of the social division of labor?

Readings:

Keith Grint, "Durkheim and Industrial Society," Pp. 100-104 in *The Sociology of Work* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991).

Donald J. Treiman., "The Division of Labor and Occupational Specialization," Pp. 6-12 in *Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

January 25 (*Tuesday*)

TOPIC: Organizational Division of Labor

Questions: What do we mean by the organizational division of labor? How does it differ from the social division of labor? How does the detailed division of labor affect the amount of autonomy and control workers have over their jobs?

Readings:

Harry Braverman, "The Division of Labor," Pp. 70-84 in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

GIG: Ford Auto Worker (Pp. 43-48), Slaughterhouse Human Resources Director (Pp. 48-54)

January 27 (Thursday)

TOPIC: Employment Relations and Psychological Contracts

Questions: What do we mean by the “standard” employment relationship? What explains the growth of “nonstandard” employment relationships, such as temporary and part-time work?

Readings:

Peter Cappelli, “The Psychological Contract” and “The New Deal” (pp. 18-37) in *The New Deal at Work* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1999)

Arne Kalleberg. 2009. “Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition.” *American Sociological Review* 74:1-22

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

GIG: Temp (Pp. 58-62)

February 1 (Tuesday)

TOPIC: Gender and Work

Questions: What are the differences between “men’s” jobs and “women’s” jobs? Why do men and women have different kinds of jobs? Are gender differences in work inevitable?

Readings:

“Women and Work: Visual Essay,” *Monthly Labor Review*, October 2003: 46-50.

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.

GIG: Highway Flagger (Pp. 169-172), *Flight Attendant* (Pp. 193-199), *FBI Agent* (Pp. 517-523), *Nurse* (Pp. 613-617)

February 3

TOPIC: Unions and Worker Power

Questions: What are unions? What do unions do? Why have unions declined in the United States? What are the prospects for revitalizing the union movement? What are some possible alternatives to traditional unions? Why do some occupations have more power than others?

Readings:

Arne Kalleberg. 2007. *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 52-53

Weeden, Kim. 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. 55-72.

Ross Eisenbrey and David Kusnet. 2009. "The Employee Free Choice Act: Questions and Answers." Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief # 249.

February 8

TOPIC: Globalization and Work

Questions: What is Globalization and how does it affect work and workers? Does globalization help or harm American workers? 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?

Readings:

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

II. Good Jobs

February 10

TOPIC: “Good” and “Bad” Jobs

Questions: What are the characteristics of “good” and “bad” jobs? What job characteristics differentiate good and bad jobs?

Readings:

Joseph Grzywacz and David Dooley. 2003. “‘Good Jobs’ to ‘bad jobs’: Replicated evidence of an employment continuum from two large surveys.” *Social Science and Medicine* 56: 1749-1760.

Les Krantz, *Jobs Rated Almanac*, Sixth Edition (2002), pp. 15-16, 84-85, 130-131, 185-186, 231-232, 273-274, 322-323, 328-329

GIG: Kinko’s Co-Worker (Pp. 71-79), Merchandise Handler (Pp. 84-87), Minister (Pp. 652-655)

February 15 (Tuesday)

TOPIC: Ranking Jobs

Questions: How does Tilly rank jobs? How does the *Jobs Rated Almanac* rank jobs? How do these two ranking systems differ?

Readings:

Chris Tilly. 1997. “Arresting the decline of good jobs in the USA?” *Industrial Relations Journal* 28 (4): 269-274.

Les Krantz 2002. *Jobs Rated Almanac 2002* (Sixth Edition). (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books) (Pp. 1-2, Skim pp. 3-14).

February 17 (Thursday)

TOPIC: What is a Good Job?

Questions: What are the characteristics of a good job? To what extent do individuals differ in what they consider to be a “good” job?

Readings:

Arne Kalleberg. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Chapter 1.

Chris Tilly, 1997. “Arresting the decline of good jobs in the USA?” *Industrial Relations Journal* 28 (4): 269-274. (Pay most attention to pp. 269-271).

February 22 and 24 (Tuesday and Thursday)

TOPIC: Mismatching Persons and Jobs

Questions: What do we mean by saying 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?

Reading:

Arne Kalleberg. 2007. *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 3-44, 53-68.

**** Ranking Occupations Paper Due on February 24 ****

III. Bad Jobs

March 1 (Tuesday)

TOPIC: What is a Bad Job?

Questions: What makes a job “bad”? Are the jobs described by Barbara Ehrenreich bad? Are these jobs “unskilled?” How does management control workers in these jobs?

Reading:

Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. 51-191.

March 3 (Thursday)

TOPIC: Who has Bad Jobs?

Questions: What are the characteristics of workers in bad jobs?

Readings:

Barbara Ehrenreich. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, pp. 1-49.

GIG: UPS Driver (Pp. 5-9)

March 8 and March 10 (SPRING BREAK--NO CLASS)

March 15, 17 and 22 (Tuesday and Thursday)

TOPIC: Low-Wage Jobs

Questions: What kinds of jobs are low-paid? Why do the jobs described by Barbara Ehrenreich pay low wages? Which workers get low-paying jobs? What should the government do to eliminate “bad” jobs? What are the responsibilities of business in alleviating “bad” jobs?

Readings:

Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. 193-221

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 195-226

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

Paul Osterman. 2008. “Improving the Quality of Low-Wage Work: The Current American Experience.” *International Labour Review* 147: 115-134.

**** Low Wage Paper Due on March 22 ****

IV. No Job

March 24 (Thursday)

TOPIC: Unemployment

Questions: What is meant by "Unemployment"? How does the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calculate the Unemployment Rate? How does the Unemployment Rate differ for different groups of labor force participants?

Readings:

Arne Kalleberg. 2007. *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 120-122

How the U.S. government measures unemployment:

http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): *The Employment Situation, TBA*

March 29

TOPIC: No Jobs vs. Bad Jobs

Questions: Is a bad job worse than no job at all? What is workfare? What are the consequences of workfare? Is it a good idea? Readings:

Readings:

Richard Layard, "Good Jobs and Bad Jobs", Center for Economic Performance Occasional Paper No 19.

Robert Moffitt, "From Welfare to Work: What the Evidence Shows." *The Brookings Institution Policy Brief No. 13* (January 2002): p. 1-7.

GIG: Workfare Street Cleaner (Pp. 28-31)

March 31 (Thursday)

TOPIC: Layoffs

Questions: Why are layoffs a problem? How has the nature of layoffs changed over time? What are some ways in which people try to cope with layoffs?

Readings:

Thomas A. Kochan. 2006. "The American Worker: Disposable or Indispensable?" *Work and Occupations* 33: 377-381.

Jeffrey Pfeffer. 2010. "Layoffs are bad for Business." *Newsweek* (February 15).

April 5 (Tuesday)

TOPIC: Underemployment

Questions: What do we mean by "underemployment?" Why are some people underemployed?

Reading:

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 69-98; 173-194

April 7 (Thursday)

TOPIC: Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment

Questions: Why are some people unemployed for a long time? What are some of the consequences of long-term unemployment?

Readings:

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

**** Op-Ed Policy Brief Paper Due ****

V. Research and Policy Projects

April 12 (Tuesday) **CLASS DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH PROJECTS**

April 14 (Thursday) **TEAMS PRESENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

April 19 (Tuesday) **TEAMS PRESENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

April 21 (Thursday) **TEAMS PRESENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

April 26 (Tuesday) **LAST DAY OF CLASS**

**** *Research papers due* ****