

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

Fall, 2010  
Class Times: 3:30-4:45 Tuesday/Thursdays  
Peabody 203  
Instructional Assistant: Ms. Tiantian Yang

Professor Arne Kalleberg  
Hamilton Hall 261 (962-0630)

### **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 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, though we will also make cross-national and historical comparisons.

The course is divided into five main parts.

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

We next discuss various ways in which work is structured by means of employment relations, organizations, occupations and industries.

Third, we examine characteristics of the workers who perform these work activities. Labor force members differ in 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

Finally, we will consider various work-related problems and policy issues, such as: illegal immigration; low-wage jobs; and layoffs. We will also discuss various policies that might help to tackle these and other issues facing the labor force of the future.

### **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. Classes always go 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:

Arne L. Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

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

These books are available in the UNC bookstore and on Amazon.com.

Copies of the other readings are available for download from the course Blackboard website (under "Course Documents") or are available on-line at the URL given in the syllabus.

## GRADING

My teaching goals are for students to: become familiar with some very 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) 25% of your grade will be determined by your group work (joint written paper and class presentation) on two things:

--A policy brief (15%: presented in various classes until November 16).

--An "Op-Ed" dealing with a particular work-related problem (10%: presented in classes from November 18 through December 7).

(I will assign you to one of ten teams of 4-5 students each.)

(2) 35% of your grade will be based on two short individual papers:

--A research paper on occupations (20%: due on September 30).

--A book review of Roth, *Selling Women Short*/review of the movie "Anchorman"  
(15%: due on October 28).

(3) 20% of your grade will be based on 10 short quizzes to be given in class at various times throughout the semester

(4) 15% of your grade will be based on the final exam (scheduled for December 17 at 4:00 pm).

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

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

Please note that 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.

Assignment of final letter grades for the course will be guided by 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**

All exams and assignments in this course are covered by the UNC Student Honor Code (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 2:30-3:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Hamilton Hall 261.

## **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 (blunt 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.

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

## SOCIOLOGY 427: THE LABOR FORCE (Fall 2010)

### COURSE CALENDAR AND READING LIST

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

**August 24                    OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **I.        OVERVIEW OF THE LABOR FORCE**

**August 26                    CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS**

*Questions:* What do we mean by "work" and "labor force"? What are the main ways we classify workers and labor force members?

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 31                    NO CLASS**

Meet in Groups, Get Acquainted with Each Other, and Choose Topics for Policy Briefs.

**September 2                PATTERNS OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

*Questions:* How do patterns of labor force participation differ by gender, age, education and other characteristics?

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 33-44

Mitra Toossi. 2002. "A Century of Change: The U.S. Labor Force, 1950-2050." *Monthly Labor Review* (May): 15-28. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/05/art2full.pdf>

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

**September 7                    TRENDS IN 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? How does time at work relate to time spent with family and in other non-work activities?

Jerry A. Jacobs and Kathleen Gerson. 2001. “Overworked Individuals or Overworked Families? Explaining Trends in Work, Leisure, and Family Time.” *Work and Occupations* 28: 40-63.

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 148-172

**September 9                    UNEMPLOYMENT - I**

*Questions:* What are the types and causes of unemployment? How valid is the government’s unemployment measure as an indicator of joblessness? What are the consequences of prolonged unemployment?

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

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

How the U.S. government measures unemployment:

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

**September 14                    UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT – II**

*Questions:* What does it mean to be “underworked”? Why do people remain underemployed if they want to work more? What can be done to reduce unemployment?

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

*American Jobs Plan: A Five-Point Plan to Stem the Jobs Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 2009). Read pp. 4-9, 14-17, 22-23.

## II. EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

### September 16            **OLD DEAL, NEW DEAL AT WORK**

*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?

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

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

### September 21            **GROWTH IN PRECARIOUS WORK AND NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS**

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

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

Nonstandard employment relations and contingent work:  
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/conemp.pdf>

*Policy Brief:* Vizcaino vs. Microsoft

### September 23            **OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES**

*Questions:* What are occupations and industries? What are the main differences between them? How do occupations differ? How do industries differ? What are the major changes in occupations and industries in the twentieth century?

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

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

Information on occupations:

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

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

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

**September 28                    POWER AND BARGAINING: 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?

Arne Kalleberg, *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.

*Policy Brief:* Employee Free Choice Act

**III. LABOR FORCE DEMOGRAPHICS**

**September 30                    LABOR MARKETS AND (MIS) MATCHING PERSONS AND JOBS**

*Questions:* What are labor markets? 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, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 3-33, 53-68.

**-- Research Paper on Occupations due --**

**October 5                        EDUCATION AND WORK**

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

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

Alan C. Kerckhoff. 2002. "The Transition from School to Work." Pp. 52-87 in Jeylan T. Mortimer and Reed W. Larson (eds.), *The Changing Adolescent Experience: Societal Trends and the Transition to Adulthood* (Cambridge University Press).

Policy Brief: Griggs vs. Duke Power

**October 7                    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

Barbara F. Reskin. 1993. "Sex Segregation in the Workplace." *Annual Review of Sociology* 19:241-270.

**October 12                    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 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:* Lilly Ledbetter Act

**October 14                    MEN, WOMEN AND WORK: MANAGERS,  
CO-WORKERS & CLIENTS**

*Questions:* How do men's and women's experiences differ in dealing with their bosses? With their co-workers? With their clients? What conditions contribute to greater equality in men's and women's experiences with managers, co-workers and clients?

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

*Policy Brief:* Comparable Worth.

**October 19                    MEN, WOMEN AND WORK: FILM**

*Questions:* How does a popular film ("Anchorman") illustrate issues that we have discussed in connection with our reading of Louise Roth's book, *Selling Women Short*?

-- **Film: ANCHORMAN** --

**October 21** *Fall Break*

**October 26** **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? What does it mean to “opt out” and what social factors lead to women “opting out”?

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

Louise Marie Roth, *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street* (Princeton University Press 2006): Chapter 6.

Joan Williams, Jessica Manvell and Stephanie Bornstein. 2006. “‘Opt Out’ or Pushed Out? How the Press Covers Work/Family Conflict.” *The Center for WorkLife Law, University of California*. (Read ONLY pp. 4-9; 29-45)

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

*Policy Brief:* Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

**October 28** **RACE INEQUALITY**

*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.

*Policy Brief:* Unconscious Bias and Employment Discrimination

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

## IV. MATCHING PERSONS TO JOBS

### November 2                    **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.

Roberto Fernandez and Nancy Weinberg. 1997. "Personal Contacts and Hiring in a Retail Bank." *American Sociological Review* 62: Read pp. 883-889, 899-902.

Voluck, Philip. 1987. "Recruiting, Interviewing and Hiring: Staying Within the Boundaries." *The Personnel Administrator*, pp. 32: 45, 46, 48, 50, 52.

*Policy Brief:* Affirmative Action in Hiring

### November 4                    **CAREERS: SEQUENCES OF JOBS**

*Questions:* How are jobs related to other jobs to form "careers"? What factors help people to advance in their careers?

Robert J. Defillippi and Michael B. Arthur. 1994. "The Boundaryless Career: a Competency-Based Perspective." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 15: 307-324.

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

### November 9                    **SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS AND WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES**

*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"?

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 127-147

## November 11            GLOBAL DIVISION OF LABOR

*Questions:* 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?

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

*Policy Brief:* North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

## November 16            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.” Pp. 669-703 in Ivar Berg and Arne L. Kalleberg (eds.), *Sourcebook of Labor Markets: Evolving Structures and Processes*. New York: Kluwer Academic.

Abraham R. Moisa. 2002. “The Role of Foreign Born Workers in the U.S. Economy.” *Monthly Labor Review* (May): 3-14. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/05/art1full.pdf>

*Policy Brief:* H-1B visas.

## V.        SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WORK

### November 18            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.

Michael Hofer, Nancy Rytina, and Bryan C. Baker. 2009. “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2008.” Department of Homeland Security: Office of Immigration Statistics.

**November 23 & November 30      THE PROBLEM OF 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, *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.

**November 25              *No Class: Thanksgiving Recess***

**December 2              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?

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).

**December 7              CHALLENGES FOR 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, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 253-286

**December 17              FINAL EXAM (4:00 pm)**