

SOCIOLOGY 861: WORK AND OCCUPATIONS

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Monday, 11:00-1:30
151 Hamilton Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course combines aspects of a survey course (an overview and synthesis of material on topics related to work and occupations in industrial societies) with those of a seminar (identification and intensive discussions of research questions). We will cover topics such as: concepts and theories of work and work organization; the relations between markets and work structures such as occupations, industries, classes, unions, and jobs; employment relations and labor market segmentation; professions and occupational control; occupational differentiation; gender differences in work and occupations; control over work activities and work time; and individuals' assessments of their job satisfaction and quality of their jobs.

Each class will be framed around a set of questions that address particular topics, and that are based on the readings for that day. Class members will be assigned to teams that will be responsible for stimulating debate and critical thinking about the issues that are raised in the readings.

READINGS

Students are expected to participate in discussions of readings, so please complete them by the assigned date. These readings can be downloaded from the course's "Blackboard" website (blackboard.unc.edu) or are available from the URL given in the syllabus. Books are available in the textbook department of the UNC bookstore as well as from Amazon.com and other on-line sources.

Books

Andrew Abbott. *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). (Paperback, ISBN 0-226-00069-9).

Dan Clawson. *The Next Upsurge: Labor and the New Social Movements*. (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2003). (ISBN 0-8014-8870-2, paperback)

Richard Edwards. *Contested Terrain* (New York: Basic, 1979). (Paperback, ISBN 0-465-01413-5).

Francis Green. *Demanding Work: The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy*. (Princeton University Press, 2006)(ISBN: 0-691-11712-8, paperback).

Arne L. Kalleberg. *The Mismatched Worker*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007) (ISBN 10: 0-393-97643-2, paperback)

Arne L. Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Precarity and Polarity in the U.S. Labor Market, 1970s-2000s*. Draft of book to be published in ASA Rose Series in Sociology by the Russell Sage Foundation ([PDF of this book is available on course Blackboard website](#)).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

My teaching goals for this class are for students to: become familiar with a variety of research questions and empirical studies of these issues; think about how these research questions are related to more general theories of work, social organization and institutions, and other sociological topics; consider various social and economic policies by which problems related to work might be addressed; and use the information from the course to advance their own research objectives.

Given these goals, I will require three things from you:

1) **A Research Proposal-type Paper** (40%). This paper should address a research problem that is related to any topic that we will cover in this course and it should use course material to shed light on the research question. The paper could represent a master's paper proposal for some, or could be the beginnings of an empirical research article or dissertation for others. A one-page abstract describing your paper is due on **September 28**. (Please post your abstract on the Blackboard website, under "Assignments," so all class members have access to it.) The first part of the paper (less than ten pages) that describes your research question is due on **November 2** (please also post this on the course Blackboard website). This document should briefly: (a) define a research question that deals with an important issue(s) in the sociology of work, organizations, and occupations; and (b) discuss some of the theoretical issues raised by the research problem. The complete paper is due on **December 14**. The completed paper should build on the first assignment, and should additionally: (a) describe the kinds of data that would be most appropriate for investigating this problem; and (b) indicate and justify the types of analyses of these data that are needed to study this problem. Papers should be written individually, though I encourage you to discuss your topic with members of your team and other class members, get their feedback on drafts, etc.

2) **Class Participation and Teamwork** (40%). This includes: (a) discussing assigned readings and ideas in class; and (b) serving as discussion leaders for four classes during the semester (assuming there will be three teams of about four students each). The team should briefly summarize the main ideas in the readings, identify controversial issues related to the question(s) that are found in the readings, and (most importantly) stimulate class discussion on the issues. Please use a *few* visuals (e.g., overheads, graphics) and/or handouts (a table or figure) for these presentations to get your points across (these visuals should be "discussion starters," not long summaries of the materials). The team should also post a summary of the day's discussion on the course Blackboard website by noon on the Tuesday following the class (i.e., within 24 hours).

3) A **Critical Review Essay** based on the draft of my book, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Precarity and Polarity in the U.S. Labor Market, 1970s-2000s*. This book covers much of the material we will discuss in the course (and we will be reading selected chapters during various classes) and so a critical essay focused on it provides you with an opportunity to synthesize and evaluate course material. This review should: (a) very briefly summarize the book's main argument(s); (b) (most importantly) *critically evaluate* the evidence presented to support the argument(s); and (c) raise questions regarding the book that would be useful to discuss in class. This essay is due in class on **November 30**.

HOURS

I encourage you to talk to me about your papers, the course, and your research interests more generally. My office hours are Mondays, 2:00-3:00, Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30, and by appointment.

COURSE CALENDAR AND READING LIST

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

August 31 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS

Arne Kalleberg and Ivar Berg, *Work and Industry: Structures, Markets and Processes* (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), Pp. 1-47.

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 44-61.

Questions:

1. What are “work structures?”
2. What do we mean by the concepts of jobs, occupations, organizations, industries and classes? How are these concepts related to each other?

September 7 NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 14 WORK STRUCTURES AND MARKETS: THEORIES

A. David A. Whetten, “What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution?” *Academy of Management Review* 14 (1989): 490-495.

Samuel B. Bacharach, “Organizational Theories: Some Criteria for Evaluation.” *Academy of Management Review* 14 (1989): 496-515.

Questions:

1. What is a theory?
 2. How do we evaluate alternative theories of a particular phenomenon? What are the most important criteria for evaluation?
- B. Neal Fligstein, *The Architecture of Markets* (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 3-23.

Paul Hirsch, Stuart Michaels, and Ray Friedman. "'Dirty Hands' versus 'Clean Models': Is Sociology in Danger of Being Seduced by Economics?" *Theory and Society* 16 (1987):317-336.

Nicole Biggart, "Explaining Asian Economic Organization: Toward a Weberian Institutional Perspective." *Theory and Society* 20 (1991): 199-232.

Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*, pp. 31-33, 61-68.

Questions:

1. What are some of the main theories of work, organizations and occupations?
2. How do these theories differ in their assumptions and in their dependent variables? How do sociological and economic theories differ?
3. How can we decide which of these theories are correct? Is deciding about "correctness" the right question to ask when comparing theories?

September 21 **ORGANIZATIONS AND WORK** (Guest speaker: Professor Howard Aldrich)

September 28 **THE LABOR PROCESS**

Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain* (New York: Basic, 1979): pp. 3-183.

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*: Chapter 2.

Questions:

1. What is Edwards' argument about how and why work was organized the way it is in the United States from the 19th century until the mid-1970s?
2. What are the social and economic forces that led to changes in work organization from one period to the next?
3. In what ways might Edwards' account be updated (based on Kalleberg's Chapter 2, for example) to take into account the changes in the organization of work that have occurred in the United States since the mid-1970s?

October 5 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Peter Cappelli. *The New Deal at Work: Managing the Market-Driven Workplace*. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999): pp. 18-37.

Francis Green. *Demanding Work: The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006): pp. 126-149.

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

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*: Chapter 4.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the "New Deal at Work"? How does it differ from the "Old Deal"?
2. How has the employment relationship changed in the United States and other countries since the mid-1970s?
3. What accounts for these changes in the employment relationship?
4. What are some of the major consequences of these changes in the nature of the employment relationship?

-- Paper Abstract Due --

October 12 NO CLASS (University Day)

October 19 LABOR MARKET SEGMENTATION

A. Jamie Peck, *Work-place: The Social Regulation of Labor Markets*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), Chapter 3, pp. 46-82 ("Structuring the Labor Market: A Segmentation Approach.").

Damian Grimshaw, Kevin Ward, Jill Rubery and Huw Beynon (2001) "Organisations and the Transformation of the Internal Labour Market," *Work, Employment and Society*, 15 (1), pp 25-54.

Arne Kalleberg. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*: Chapter 5.

