

**Office Hours:** Mondays 3-5 PM or by appointment, 496 Barrows

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**Reader:** Jeffrey Weng

**Final Exam:** Group 5 | Tuesday, May 8, 2012 8:00-11:00AM

### Course Overview

Work in the U.S. is culturally and politically invisible in at least a couple of ways. First, the U.S. is culturally a *consumer* society: we think of products and services more in terms of purchasing them rather than making (products) or performing (services) them. Second, we think of getting and doing jobs as *individual* ordeals, where the rules governing the world of employment are fixed and all that matters is our individual ability, or lack thereof, to play the game.

We are all indeed necessarily consumers, and our individual actions and biographies are indeed relevant to what jobs we get. The purpose of this course however is to give us a broader understanding of work and, at the most fundamental level, how it is shaped in *social* ways rather than simply being an aggregate of individual ordeals.

We will take an implicitly and sometimes explicitly historical perspective, comparing the social organization of work in the U.S. today with the organization of work during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Our focus will be mostly confined to the U.S., but we will have occasion to compare the U.S. context with that of other countries—as well as touch upon the question of globalization.

Our consideration of the world of work today will revolve around three major trends that have unfolded over the past four decades: (1) the polarization of the occupational structure and the destabilization of employment relations; (2) the transformation from a manufacturing to a service economy; and (3) the decline of organized labor. We will look at both the labor *market* (what jobs there are and how job-seekers are matched to them) and the labor *process* (social relations on the job and the experience of work—including how much control we have over our work).

### Required Readings

There are five (5) required texts for the course. All are mandatory. They are, in the order that we will be encountering them on the syllabus:

- Arne Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker*
- David Shipler, *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*
- Rachel Sherman, *Class Acts: Service and Inequality in Luxury Hotels*
- Arlie Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*
- Rick Fantasia & Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*

These books will be available at the ASUC bookstore. There will also be a reader which will eventually be available at **University Copy Services** on **2425 Channing Way**, south of campus.

## Grading

There will be five components to your grade: pop quizzes, a reflective essay, a quasi-research paper, and two exams.

- **Quizzes (10%):** Throughout the semester I will give unannounced quizzes that will cover the readings that were to have been completed for that class. The quizzes will not take the entire class period. Cumulatively, they will account for 10% of the overall course grade.
- **Reflective Essay (15%):** Part of what C.Wright Mills calls the “sociological imagination” is to understand how your own personal experiences are connected to macro-structural forces and trends that shape society. Toward that end, you will write a **1,000-word essay** about your own experiences in the paid labor force. This essay should offer more *depth* than breadth—so if you have had multiple work experiences, it’s best to pick one. How did you get your job? What did you do? How were you compensated? How was your work evaluated? How did your employer evaluate your performance? Was your job “good” or “bad”? Your analysis of your own experiences should touch on themes explored in the first part of the course.

The reflective essay will be due on **Friday, February 17, 2012.**

- **Midterm Exam (20%):** This will be a **take-home** exam covering the first seven weeks of material in the course. It will be distributed on **Friday, March 9, 2012** and will be due at the beginning of class on **Friday, March 16, 2012.**
- **Analysis/Quasi-Research Paper (30%):** The purpose of this assignment is for you to engage more deeply a work-related issue of your choice. “Work-related issues” obviously may involve specific occupational/work settings—perhaps one you have worked before or one you are considering upon graduation. But as we will see, they may involve other types of issues, including the relationship between work and family, the meaning of work, the role of education, public policy (especially in an election year where unemployment is a major debate point), or even what gets to be counted as work at all (housework? the “labor” of college athletes?). And, needless to say, you are greatly encouraged to venture across U.S. borders to other national settings, or to tackle the question of globalization.

To encourage you to begin thinking early about both the topic of your paper and perhaps more importantly what specific question will guide your exploration of that topic, you must submit a **one-page proposal** for your paper by **Friday, March 9, 2012.** This proposal should indicate the issue you will explore, your general argument, and some general indication of how you will go about supporting/making your argument. Obviously you will likely not have everything worked out by this point. But this proposal will give you an opportunity to get early feedback and head off possible problems later.

The analysis paper itself should be about **1,500 words** and will be due on **Friday, April 20, 2012.**

- **Final Exam (25%):** The final exam will be a **multiple-choice** exam administered in-class during the course's officially scheduled exam period. We are in Exam Group 5, whose timeslot is Tuesday, May 8, 2012, from 8AM to 11AM, probably in our regular meeting room of 101 Morgan (if not, you'll be notified of any changes).

The grading scale is as follows. '[' means including, and ')' means excluding, so '[83-87)' for example means everything including 83 up to but **NOT** including 87.

A+	[97+	A	[93-97)	A-	[90-93)
B+	[87-90)	B	[83-87)	B-	[80-83)
C+	[77-80)	C	[73-77)	C-	[70-73)
D+	[67-70)	D	[63-67)	D-	[60-63)
		F	[0-60)		

### **Lecture, Reading, and Assignment/Exam Schedule**

The following schedule is based on the general plan of covering two readings per week. Since we're on a MWF schedule, the idea is to spend M and half of W on the first piece, and then the second half of W and all of F on the second.

Also note: when a reading is associated with a certain date, that means you will be expected to have completed that reading **prior** to class, and so be ready to discuss them in class. Any unannounced quizzes will cover the readings due that day.

Jan 18 Wed Introduction: The invisibility of work in the U.S.  
 20 Fri What is a "sociology of work"? | No readings.

### **Macro-Structural Changes**

23 Mon Composition of the labor force | No readings.  
 25 Wed Polarization of the occupational structure | No readings.  
 27 Fri From agriculture to manufacturing to service | No readings.

### **Labor Markets**

30 Mon Overview: matching people to jobs  
*Reading: Kalleberg, The Mismatched Worker ch. 2*  
 Feb 1 Wed The issue of skills  
*Reading: Kalleberg, The Mismatched Worker ch. 3, 4*  
 3 Fri The issue of skills (cont'd from Wed.)

## Occupational Polarization

- Feb 6 Mon The destabilization of employment  
*Reading: Kalleberg, The Mismatched Worker ch. 7*
- 8 Wed Income inequality  
*Reading: Kalleberg, The Mismatched Worker ch. 8*
- 10 Fri Income inequality (cont'd from Wed.)
- 13 Mon Explanations for polarization: Technology | No readings.
- 15 Wed Explanations for polarization: Globalization  
*Video in-class: "Is Wal-Mart Good for America?" PBS Frontline originally aired Nov. 16, 2004*
- 17 Fri Discussion of Globalization & Wal-Mart

➡ **REFLECTIVE ESSAY DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17.**

## The Shortcomings of "Workfare"

- 20 Mon **ACADEMIC & ADMINISTRATIVE HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**
- 22 Wed *Reading: Shipler, The Working Poor ch. 1, 2*
- 24 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)
- 27 Mon *Reading: Shipler, The Working Poor ch. 3, 4*
- 29 Wed *Reading: Shipler, The Working Poor ch. 5, 6*
- Mar 2 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)

## Social Relations in Production

- 5 Mon Workers and Managers  
*Reading: Bowe, Bowe & Streeter, Gig, "Welcome" + "Workers and Managers" (pp. 5-62)*
- 7 Wed Service work and routinization  
*Reading: Leidner, Fast Food, Fast Talk ch. 1, 2*
- 9 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)  
➡ **ANALYSIS PAPER PROPOSAL DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 9.**  
➡ **TAKE-HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED FRIDAY, MARCH 9.**

## The Service Economy

- Mar 12 Mon Service work and inequality  
*Reading:* Sherman, *Class Acts* introduction
- 14 Wed Emotional labor  
*Reading:* Sherman, *Class Acts* ch. 1
- 16 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)
- ☛ TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 16.**
- 19 Mon Constructing selfhood  
*Reading:* Sherman, *Class Acts* ch. 2
- 21 Wed Normalizing inequality  
*Reading:* Sherman, *Class Acts* ch. 3
- 23 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)
- Mar 26-30 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

## Work/Family Balance

- Apr 2 Mon Introduction  
*Reading:* Kalleberg, *The Mismatched Worker* ch. 9
- 4 Wed Cultural conceptions of work and home  
*Reading:* Hochschild, *The Time Bind* introduction + ch. 1-4
- 6 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)
- 9 Mon Displaced parenthood  
*Reading:* Hochschild, *The Time Bind* ch. 5, 6, 7
- 11 Wed The overextended family  
*Reading:* Hochschild, *The Time Bind* ch. 10, 12, 13
- 13 Fri (cont'd from Wed.)

## Organized Labor

- Apr 16 Mon Institutional context of organized labor  
*Reading: Fantasia & Voss, Hard Work ch. 2*
- 18 Wed The post-World War II period: “business unionism”  
*Reading: Fantasia & Voss, Hard Work ch. 3*
- 20 Fri (cont’d from Wed.)
- ➡ ANALYSIS PAPER DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 20.**
- 23 Mon Effective labor organization in a neoliberal world  
*Reading: Fantasia & Voss, Hard Work ch. 4*
- 25 Wed (cont’d from Mon.)
- 27 Fri Course wrap-up and evaluations
- Apr 30-  
May 4 *Reading, Review & Recitation (RRR) Week*
- May 8 Tue **➡ FINAL EXAM TUESDAY, MAY 8, 8:00-11:00AM**