

## **Sociology 116, The Sociology of Work**

UC Berkeley, Spring 2017

MWF, 277 Cory Hall

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Spring semester office hours: Monday, 12:15-1:15, Wed. 9:15-10:15 and by appointment

### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the sociology of work that will explore contemporary transformations in work and employment, and their impact on social relations. The course will focus primarily on working conditions and jobs in the United States, but will take account of how different types of work and workers are connected worldwide. During the first few weeks, we will consider the cultural meanings of work, theories about work and employment, and the history of the organization of work. The second part of the course focuses on trends in the current labor market—the types of jobs that are available, what those jobs are like and what that means for the lives of workers who hold them. The central theme for this part of the course is the polarization of the labor market into “good” and “bad” jobs. The third and final part of the course centers on exploring and explaining another dimension of labor market segmentation—how categorically distinct types of workers are associated with specific types of jobs, focusing on nativity, race, and gender and the processes that foster segmentation. We will conclude this section by considering how the gendered and segmented nature of work affects family life.

### **Evaluation:**

**Take-Home Exam: Feb. 22. (20% of grade)** This will be an essay exam. Questions and instructions will be posted one week before the exam is due.

**Response Paper (15% of grade):** Please see the document called “Soc. 116 Paper Assignments” on bCourses for the full prompt for this assignment, which will involve applying material from class to current events. Submit to bCourses. **Due Mar. 10**

**“Job” Interview, Analysis and Reflection (20% of grade):** Students will interview a worker, and answer a series of questions based on the responses. An interview guide will be provided. See “Soc. 116 Paper Assignments” for more details. **Due Apr. 7**

**Term Paper: (25% of grade):** For the term paper, students will research several dimensions of a career or job of their choice, developing an argument about where it fits into Kalleberg’s schemas of “good” and “bad” jobs and the context of labor

market polarization. Please see the document called “Soc. 116 Paper Assignments” on BCourses for the full prompt. **Due Apr. 28**

**Final Exam (20% of grade):** The final exam will concentrate on material after the first exam, but may incorporate material from the entire semester. I will supply a review sheet to aid your studying during RRR week. The final exam is scheduled for **May 9<sup>th</sup>, from 7-10 pm.**

### **Course Policies:**

**Grading:** There will be a graduate student reader(s) for this course who will be responsible for most of the grading. The process for grading is as follows: I develop a rubric for the exams and papers and discuss it with the readers. We then grade several papers/exams together to make sure the grading is consistent. We will try to return exams and papers to you within two weeks. Readers may decide to hold regular office hours, or will meet with students by appointment. If you have a problem with a grade, you should first discuss it with the reader who assigned the grade. If that does not resolve the problem, then I will discuss it with the reader and meet with you. Please know that if we agree to re-evaluate your work, it will be under closer scrutiny and your grade could possibly go down as a result. If you ask us to consider raising your score, *be prepared to make a specific argument as to why you think you deserve more points, making sure to reference the rubric for the assignment in question.* We will use the gradebook function on BCourses to post grades, but you should always check and make sure the grade on the hard-copy of your assignment matches the one online.

**Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements.** You will be expected to integrate materials from lecture and readings on exams and papers. Do not enroll in this class if you are unable to attend the lectures regularly.

If you need **accommodations** for a disability or have a conflict due to the observance of religious holidays, please speak with me early in the semester to discuss appropriate arrangements.

**Exams and assignments must be taken and turned in on time.** If you have a personal emergency, contact me at the earliest opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day they are late (including weekends). The final exam must be taken at the scheduled time.

**Academic honesty is expected of all students.** While I encourage students to discuss the readings and study together, everyone must do their own work. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the appropriate

administrative department and dealt with according to university policies. Be aware of plagiarism. Word for word use of even a single sentence from another author, publication or website without citation is plagiarism and is considered unethical. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam with no opportunity to rewrite. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, ask during office hours, and consult the writing guide “Writing for Sociology”, available on the Soc. department website.

**Email:** Email should not be used for questions about class materials—these questions should be asked in class or during office hours. I don’t check email more than once per day, and cannot always respond right away, so talk to me before or after class, or during office hours if you have an important issue.

**Office Hours:** I urge students to talk with me sometime during the semester, just to say “hi” and especially if you are having trouble with the course. I can’t help you if you don’t communicate with me! There is a sign up sheet outside my office door for regular office hour appointments. You are free to drop by, but I’ll give priority to people who have appointments. If you have another class or work during my scheduled office hours, we can schedule another time to meet.

**Laptops, etc.:** I strongly encourage you to take notes on paper. Studies have repeatedly shown that this promotes learning and retention of material over typewritten notes. If you use a laptop or tablet for note taking please sit in the back rows of the classroom so you don’t distract others.

**Notes and Circulation of Course Materials:** DO NOT reproduce course materials or post them on-line or anywhere else. This includes the syllabus, lecture slides, your notes, handouts, rubrics and exams. While you may share your notes with other students in this semester’s class, it is against university policy to share your notes broadly, or attempt to use them for commercial purposes. It is also a violation of the policy to record lectures without my consent, and/or try to use recordings for commercial purposes. Please see <http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu/policies/coursenotes.pdf> for a detailed version of the policy.

### **Course Materials:**

**Books:** There are two required books that can be purchased in the bookstore or via online sources. They will also be on 2-hour reserve at Moffitt Library.

1. Kalleberg, A. (2011) *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation
2. Zolniski, C. (2006) *Janitors, Street Vendors and Activists: The Lives of Mexican Immigrants in Silicon Valley*. Berkeley, CA: UC Press

### **Reader and articles:**

I strongly recommend that you purchase a reader. The reader is like a textbook I have specifically designed for this class. Purchase at the Copy Central store on

Bancroft St. A copy will also be on 2-hr. reserve at Moffitt library, and readings will be posted on bCourses as well. Assigned articles will also be available on bCourses.

## I. HISTORICAL and THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

**Week 1:** Jan. 18 & 20

### **Introduction**

Readings: Sweet, S. & Meiksins, P. (2013) *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Los Angeles: Sage. Ch. 1 "Mapping the Contours of Work" (Reader)

**Week 2:** Jan. 23, 25, 27

### **Theoretical perspectives on work**

Readings: Marx, K. "Alienated Labor", Weber, M. "Bureaucracy", Taylor, F. "Fundamentals of Scientific Management", Braverman, H. "The Division of Labor", Hochschild, A. "The Managed Heart". Pp. 44-78 in Wharton, A. (2006) *Working in America, Continuity, Conflict and Change, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. (Reader)

**Week 3:** Jan. 30, Feb. 1, 3

### **Historical foundations and current conditions**

Readings: Fischer, C. & Hout, M. (2006) Ch. 5 "How Americans Worked: New Workers, New Jobs and New Differences". *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (Reader)

Kalleberg, A. (2011). Ch. 1 "Job Quality in the United States", Ch. 2 "Economic Transformation and the Decline of Institutional Protection" {READ} & 3 "New Workers, New Differences" {SKIM}. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

## II. ON THE JOB IN TODAY'S LABOR MARKET

**Week 4:** Feb. 5, 8, 10

### **Good and bad jobs**

Readings: Kalleberg, A. (2011) Ch. 4 "Dimensions of Polarity", Ch. 5 "Precarious Employment Relations"

Skim, and read conclusions for following chapters of Kalleberg: Ch. 6-9

**Week 5:** Feb. 13, 15, 17

### **The role of organized labor**

Readings: Voss, K. & Fantasia, R. (2004). *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*. Berkeley, CA: UC Press. Ch. 4 “Practices and Possibilities of a Social Movement Unionism” (Reader)

Kalleberg, A. (2011) Ch. 11 “Implementing the New Social Contract”. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

**Week 6:** Feb. 22, 24

**Organized labor/Good/bad jobs and workers’ lives**  
**Take Home Exam due Feb. 22 at 12 pm. (No lecture)**

Readings: Conley, D. (2009) *Elsewhere, USA*. New York: Vintage. Preface, through Ch. 4, pp. ix-67 (Reader)

**Week 7:** Feb. 27, Mar. 1, 3

**Good/bad jobs and workers’ lives**

Readings: Shulman, B. (2003) *The Betrayal of Work*. New York: The New Press. Introduction- Ch. 3, pp., 1-68 (Reader)

Part III: SEGMENTATION PROCESSES

**Week 8:** Mar. 6, 8, 10  
**Getting a Job**

**Response Paper Due Mar. 10, 11 am**

Readings: Smith, S. (2005) “Don’t Put My Name On It’: Social Capital Activation and Job-Finding Assistance Among the Black Urban Poor”. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(1):1-57

DiTomaso, N. (2013) *The American Non-Dilemma: Racial Inequality Without Racism*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 2, 3  
Electronic Resource—access through Oski-Cat on UCB Library Website

**Week 9:** Mar. 13, 15, 17

**Industry transformation, ethnic segmentation and a changing workforce**

Ribas, V. (2016) *On The Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 2 (Reader)

**Week 10:** Mar. 20, 22, 24

**Segmentation Case Study: Immigration, globalization, ethnicity and nativity on the job**

Readings: Zolniski, C. (2006) *Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists: The Lives of Mexican Immigrants in Silicon Valley*. Berkeley, CA: UC Press. Ch. 1, 2 & 3

SPRING BREAK

**Week 11:** Apr. 3, 5, 7  
**Segmentation Case Study**

Readings: Zolniski, C. (2006) *Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists: The Lives of Mexican Immigrants in Silicon Valley*. Berkeley, CA: UC Press. Ch. 4 and Conclusion & Epilogue, p. 173- 209

**Interview Assignment Due Apr. 7, 11 am**

**Week 12:** Apr. 10, 12, 14  
**Segmentation by gender**

Readings: Reskin, B & Padavic, I. (2002) *Women and Men at Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Ch. 4, 5 and 7 (Reader)

**Week 13:** Apr. 17, 19, 21  
**Live to work or work to live? Time spent at work**

Readings: Jacobs, J. & Gerson, K. (2004) *The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 4 & 5 pp. 80-115 (Reader)

Sweet, S. & Meiksins, P. (2013) *Changing Contours of Work: Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Los Angeles: Sage Ch. 5 "A Fair Day's Work?" (Reader)

**Week 14:** April 24, 26, 28  
**Work and Families**

Readings: Cherlin, A. (2014) *Labor's Love Lost: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class Family in America*. Selection from Ch. 5, "The Fall of the Working-Class Family", pp. 134-147 (Reader)

Blair-Loy, M. (2003) *Competing Devotions: Career and Family Among Women Executives*. Ch. 1, 2 and 5 (Reader)

**Term Paper Due Apr. 28, 11 am.**

**Week 15:** May 1-5, RRR week.

**Final Exam May 9, 7-10 pm, room TBA**