

IR 7550
SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

Winter 2006
Section 003, Call # 24622
[also, SOC 7010, 003, 25765]

Time: Thursdays, 5:30 – 8:15
Place: 201 State Hall

Professor David Fasenfest
Department of Sociology
3329 FAB
Phone: 313-993-4236
Email: david.fasenfest@wayne.edu

OFFICE HOURS:

Thursday, 3:30-4:30
or by appointment

Professor Heidi Gottfried
Department of Sociology
3341 FAB
Phone: 313-577-8828
Email: heidi.gottfried@wayne.edu

This course is an examination of work, its organization, and the way work and our understanding of work changed over time. The readings and class discussion will draw on Anthropology, History, Economics, Sociology and Political Science to explore the history and origins of work from agriculture through the emergence of the industrial age into the current knowledge-based workplace. We will look into how work gets organized, whose interests are served by this organization of work, what alternative organizational structures are available to society, and how individuals are impacted by decisions both under their control and not under their control concerning a range of social and human capital attributes.

CLASS READINGS: As noted below, you will have readings for each class meeting. It is critical that you come prepared and participate in the class discussion. The books will be available from the University Bookstore. PLEASE NOTE: the bookstore will return unsold books sometime after the 4th week of the semester and you may have a problem finding the books if you wait too long.

IN-CLASS PRESENTATION: The last two weeks of the Seminar will be allocated to student presentations of their seminar paper. You will have 20-30 minutes during which you will present the key elements of the paper (topic and findings) and engage in a discussion with the other members of the class on your topic. The final seminar paper should include whenever appropriate input received during this discussion.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: Your grade will be based in large part on a paper written on a topic of your choosing related to and incorporating the material presented in this seminar and the discussion of your paper during your presentation. There will be three parts to this seminar paper assignment (this will be discussed in class):

- I. Proposal Development: You are to submit, no later than Feb 2, a two-page outline that discusses the topic you choose about which to write your paper. This outline

should include a discussion of the question to be answered and a list of supplemental readings that will augment the class assignments. This is mandatory.

- II. Draft Paper: You are to submit a rough draft of your seminar paper by March 6th (you should email the draft as an attachment. This draft will only be a guide to how you are approaching the topic and an opportunity get feedback as you develop your topic. This is optional, but it is the only chance to get prior input before the final paper is due. Feedback will be provided no later than March 10th so you can revise or otherwise use the comments as you prepare for the presentation and seminar paper.
- III. Seminar Paper: This is a research paper up to 25 pages, due May 1st for a full grade. Late papers will be penalized one-half a final grade for 5 days it is late, with no papers accepted after May 11th. Papers should be submitted electronically, and there will be NO INCOMPLETES given for this course.

PLEASE NOTE: Plagiarism, which is using any source without proper documentation and citation, will not be tolerated in any form. It is the ultimate academic violation! It includes using direct quotes without quotation marks or attribution to the source and paraphrasing the words of another without citation to the source. One of the major sources of plagiarism is the Internet; it is also one of the major ways plagiarism is caught. Any student caught plagiarizing is subject to failing the class. The university allows expulsion in clear cases of plagiarism—I intend to follow those guidelines closely. In short, if you are not sure, cite your source. If you do not understand this directive please ask for clarification. Use of Internet sources is generally discouraged except as a source of background information. No paper will be accepted using more than one Internet source and then it must be properly documented and cited as to how the source was used in preparing the paper.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Part of the grade is based on class participation so you are expected to be at every class. However, it is unreasonable that you will not have some situation that prevents your attendance. Missing class regularly will impact negatively on your grade.

COURSE GRADING: The class grade is a combination of class participation (15 points), paper proposal (10 points), presentation (25 points), and seminar paper (50 points). The paper will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Is the paper well written? This is a graduate seminar and as a result the material should be presented coherently and logically.
- Is there a clearly stated problem or topic? The paper should be an examination of either a debate over or proposition about the nature of work.
- Does the paper accurately reflect the readings cited? You are expected to interpret the material used in writing the paper to augment and support your arguments.

- Has the author made a coherent statement? It is not about whether we agree with your argument, but rather how well you made your argument, if it is developed logically, and whether the materials cited in the paper support the argument.

GRADES: The grading scale is as follows:

A	95-100	C	71-74
A	91-94	C-	67-70
B+	87-90	D+	63-66
B	83-86	D	59-62
B-	79-82	D-	55-58
C+	75-78	F	Below 55

COMMUNICATION: All communication outside of the seminar meeting will be done over email. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly for this is where changes in readings, modifications in the class schedule, and in the unlikely event that one of us cannot make it to class you will be notified. If you have another email account other than the University email account provided **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN HOW TO FORWARD YOUR EMAIL TO THAT ACCOUNT FROM YOUR WAYNE STATE ACCOUNT.** You will not be excused from an assignment or other requirement broadcast via email simply because you did not get your email. All communication from us will be to that University assigned account.

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COURSE OUTLINE:

READINGS:

- 1) The following reading assignments come from Amy Wharton (ed), 2002, Working in America: Continuity, Conflict and Change, 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill.

Reading 1: History pp 7-36

- 1) Rybczynski--Keeping Saint Monday
- 2) Jacoby--The Way it Was
- 3) Cowan--Invention of Housework

Reading 2: Classical Thinking pp 37-68

- 1) Marx--Alienated Labour
- 2) Weber--Bureaucracy
- 3) Taylor--Scientific Management
- 4) Mayo--Hawthorne Experiment

Reading 3: Structure pp 103-146

- 1) Zuboff--Smart Machine
- 2) Milkman--Uncertain Times
- 3) Vallas and Beck--Flexibility

Reading 4: Inequality pp 199-239

- 1) Levy--Occupational Change
- 2) Wilson--Jobless Poverty

Reading 5: Non-standard Work pp 406-443

- 1) Henson--Temp
- 2) Newman--No Shame
- 3) Gowan--American Untouchables

- 2) These reading assignments come from Richard Kazis and Marc Miller (eds), 2001, Low-Wage Workers in the New Economy, The Urban Institute Press.

Reading 6: Who Are the Low-Wage Workers pp19-88

- 1) Acs, Phillips and McKenzie—Low income families
- 2) Carnevale and Rose—who are they
- 3) Osterman—Labor Markets

Reading 7: Overcoming Barriers pp 203-280

- 1) Lovell and Hartman—Increasing security for women
- 2) Holzer—Minority workers

- 3) Perez and Munoz—Latino immigrants
- 4) Foster-Bey, with Bednarz—Low-educational attainment

3) In addition, you will be responsible for reading the following books during the course:

Michael Burawoy, 1982, Manufacturing Consent, University of Chicago Press
Richard Edwards, 1980, Contested Terrain, Basic Books
Robin Leidner, 1993, Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of
Everyday Life, University of California Press
Richard Sennett, 1998, The Corrosion of Character, Norton

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1. January 12—Introduction

Week 2. January 19—Roots of work, **Reading 1**

Week 3. January 26—Classical views of labor, **Reading 2**

Week 4. Feb 2—Structure of work. **Reading 3**

Week 5. Feb 9—How do we do our jobs? **Burawoy**

Week 6. Feb 16— Organization of resistance **Edwards**

Week 7. Feb 23— Inequality, hard work / good pay? **Reading 4**

Week 8. Mar 2—How do we think about our jobs? **Sennett**

Week 9. Mar 9— Non-standard work! **Reading 5**

Week 10. Mar 16—WSU Semester Break—No Class

Week 11. Mar 23—Traditional organization, non-traditional work **Leidner**

Week 12. Mar 30—Low-wage work in a new economy **Reading 6**

Week 13. Apr 6—Effecting changes **Reading 7**

Week 14. Apr 13—The future of work

Week 15. Apr 20—Student Presentations

Week 16. Apr 27—Student Presentations