

**JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE-CUNY
ECONOMICS OF LABOR**

ECO: 380:01

Spring 2023

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Office Hours: By appointment.

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**The best way to communicate with me is through the messaging function on Blackboard. Please only email me under extreme circumstances—my email gets full quickly and I don't want your questions/comments/advice or whatever lost somehow! My students are NUMBER 1 and this will help me continue this tradition.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Workers are The Economy. This course helps student develop the skills to work on behalf of labor and to be more aware of their own labor power. This course examines the issues confronting labor using multiple perspectives of analysis. This includes mainstream microeconomic analysis of labor markets and mainstream macroeconomic consequences of labor policy. The course also utilizes heterodox approaches to understand the inherent class conflict between workers and capital including consequences for marginalized groups such as racial minorities, women and the LGBTQ community.

SUMMARY: This course focuses on the major issues affecting US workers and their workplaces with particular emphasis on public policy. Unlike more traditional labor courses, this course investigates labor issues not only by reading but also through the medium of popular films, with the belief that movies unveil the human dimensions of labor in ways different from more traditional means. After a brief introduction to various labor theories, we will discuss and analyze various labor topics. Specific topics addressed in this course are unemployment, collective bargaining, discrimination, etc. through films such as *The Corporation*, *Wall Street*, *Antz*, and *The Full* among others. The prerequisite for the course is any previous economics course.

TEXTS:

1. Wolff, Richard. *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism*. Haymarket 2012.
2. Various Assigned Readings available on Blackboard.

Learning Objectives:

- Upon completion of this course student can be expected to analyze the role of labor in capitalism.
- Effectively communicate the findings and criticisms of mainstream analyses of labor markets.
- Have a good comprehension of the detailed labor issues and the research that discusses the issues.

MODULES: There are 12 modules in this class (and only 10 quizzes do not get them conflated). You can find the link in Blackboard under “Course Work,” however there is a separate button for you to access the modules quickly too. All the readings and video are listed in the modules. The due dates are posted below. Each module will have a quiz with a due date (See quizzes below). Some modules are longer than others and is taken into account. Many of the videos are available in the modules, however, all the videos if not available online, are available at the JJ library. Their call numbers are posted right next to the name of the video below. Please let me know in the “problems”

discussion board if something goes awry. **It is imperative that you know the difference between modules and quizzes, they are very different.**

EXAMS: There will be 2 exams. 1 midterm and a final. Exams submitted late will be penalized 10 points for each day they are tardy. To be clear, submit your exam at midnight or after on the following day, the highest possible grade will be 90%. If you submit your exam after midnight or after on the 2nd day, the highest possible grade will be 80%. If you submit your exam after midnight or after on the 3rd day, the highest possible grade will be 70%. No exams will be accepted after those dates. No make-ups for exams unless approved by me. All exams are **CLOSED BOOK and it will be considered cheating if you work with someone else.** Please see John Jay's policy on cheating. It's available online and with in the course.

QUIZZES: There are 12 Modules where you find the course materials for the quizzes. Be sure you are doing the work from the correct module for the quiz you are going to take. There are 10 True/False quizzes posted on Blackboard with their respective due dates which you are responsible for. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. The quizzes have their own section on Blackboard. Please let me know immediately if something is awry. If it would benefit/cost the entire class, post it on the "problems" discussion board. If it is private, message me through Blackboard. **Again, do not email me.**

SYLLABUS ASSIGNMENT: There is a special assignment just based on this syllabus. Given how important this document is, a special assignment in the form of a Quiz is assigned. It is worth 10% of your grade. So be sure to complete it by its due date. **NO LATE SYLLABUS ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

CURRENT EVENTS: Knowing what is currently happening in the "real world" is extremely important in this class, thus you are required to read the newspaper often. There is so much in the news about labor issues, for example, many discuss "labor shortages." There is a discussion board where you can post and discuss (politely) the various issues affecting our economy, workers, consumers and the like. Remember, without workers, nothing is produced and there would be no "economy." Thus, I look forward to your comments. Feel free to cite some of your readings in your comments. You may also use external sources, but please make sure they are accurate, reflective, and worthy of a university class. For example, do not cite the "New York Post"; it's a tabloid. However, feel free to cite the "NY Times." No wikipedia or other such non-academic sources please.

EVALUATION:

Midterm	30%
Final	35%
Quizzes	25%
Syllabus Assignment	10%

ECONOMICS OF LABOR

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AGENDA, REQUIRED READINGS & FILMS

SUBJECT TO REVISION(S)

(The numbers next to the films are how they are filed at the JJ library)

(If you see Attached on BB, that means it is located in the respective module)

Module 1 INTRODUCTION AND VIDEOS:

- Introductions: Please introduce yourselves to your classmates and me in the discussion board. (See directions there)
- Film: *Wall Street* (126 minutes) 73
- Film: *Wall Street: (133 minutes)* 989

Module 2 LABOR ECONOMIC THEORIES I:

- Marx, Karl, Wage-Labour and Capital, (the entire pamphlet)
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm>
- Cassidy, John, "The Return of Karl Marx,"
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1997/10/20/1997_10_20_248_TNY_CARDS_000379653
- Smith, Adam, "The Wealth of Nations" Book 1, Chapter X.
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN4.html#B.I,%20Ch.10,%20Of%20Wages%20and%20Profit%20in%20the%20Different%20Employments%20of%20Labour%20and%20Stock>
- Film: *The Corporation* (145 minutes) 323
- Film: *Fun with Dick and Jane* (90 minutes) 850.
- Video: *A Job at Ford's*

Module 3 LABOR ECONOMIC THEORIES II

- <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/marshall-principles-of-economics-8th-ed> Wolff, Richard D., "Marxian Class Analysis and Economics" <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006/0506wolff.html>
- Becker, Gary S., "Human Capital—A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis"
<https://www.nber.org/books-and-chapters/human-capital-theoretical-and-empirical-analysis-special-reference-education-first-edition> Chapters 1&2
- Mulder, Catherine P. "It's the Time of Your Life." (available in the module on BB)
- Films, Double Feature Week: *The Bee Movie* (91 minutes) 854 & *Antz* (83 minutes) 853
- Film: *New Deal New York* On BB

Module 4 HISTORY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

- AFL-CIO, "A Short History of American Labor" (attached in BB)
- Freeman, Richard & Medoff, James, "What Do Unions Do?" (attached in BB)
- Brecher, Jeremy, "May Day" (attached in BB)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, (All websites can be found in BB)
- Films: *Labor History: Parts I, II, & III* (attached in BB)

Module 5 LABOR ORGANIZING

- Macewan, Arthur, "Can the Decline in the Labor Movement Be Reversed?" (attached in BB)
- Nussbaum, Karen, "Bye-Bye to Pinkie Rings: Working Women Transform Unions" (attached in BB)
- Eisenscher, Michael, "Beyond Mobilization: How Labor Can Transform Itself" (attached in BB)
- Weiner, Stacy, "Thousands of Medical residents are unionizing." (attached in BB) (New Doctors organizing.
- Film: *Norma Rae* (114 minutes) 174

Module 6 STRIKES AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Donn, Clifford and Lipsky, David, "Collective Bargaining in American Industry: A Synthesis" (attached in BB)
- Shulman, Harry and Chamberlain, Neil W., "The Process of Bargaining" (attached in BB)
- "Union Facts: The Value of Collective Voice" <https://aflcio.org/formaunion/collective-voice#:~:text=Better%20Pay%20and%20Benefits,69%25%20of%20nonunion%20workers%20do.>
- Brecher, Jeremy, "Strikes: The Long View From Below," *Working USA*, Fall 2000. (attached in BB)
- Film: *American Dream (100 minutes)* 857
- Attached in this module is an old Broadway Musicians' Union Collective Bargaining Agreement. Please take a look at it so you are aware of what's included in a contract. Everything from reading in the orchestra pit to wages.

Module 7 & 8 DEMOCRACY AT WORK (ENTIRE BOOK)

- Wolff, Richard (See notes on BB)

Module 9 UNEMPLOYMENT

- Bluestone, Barry and Harrison, Bennett, "The Costs of Unemployment" (attached in BB)
- Miller, Joan and Jeannette Wicks-Lim. "Unemployment: A Jobs Deficit or a Skills Deficit?" (attached in BB)
- Paul, Mark, "Traditional Measures of Unemployment are Missing the Mark." <https://dollarsandsense.org/archives/2019/0519paul.html>
- Game Show: Are you really unemployed?
- Film: *The Full Monty (91 minutes)* 859

Modules 10 WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION: Gender, Race, and Sexual Orientation

Gender

- Discrimination in the Workplace: A Complete Overview (attached in BB)
- Feiner, Susan, "The Conservative/Free Market, the Liberal/Imperfectionist, and the Radical/Exploitation (attached in BB)
- Wicks-Lim, Jeanette. "How the Green Economy Can Promote Equal Opportunities for Women." <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2009/0709wicks-lim.html>.
- Coleman, Margaret S. "Undercounted and Underpaid Heroines" (attached in BB)
- *North Country (126 minutes)*

Race

- Williams, Michael Paul, "James Farmer" (attached in BB)
- Farmer, James, "Affirmative Action: Problems and Prospects" (attached in BB)
- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (attached in BB)
- Just "a few" Examples of WHITE PRIVILEGE (attached in BB)
- Film: *Trading Places 866*

Sexual Orientation

- Badgett, M.V. Lee, "The Wage Effects of Sexual Orientation Discrimination," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (attached in BB)
- *LGBT People's Experiences of Workplace Discrimination and Harassment.* (attached in BB)
- Film: *Philadelphia (119 minutes)* This is a moving starring Tom Hanks and it is available on Hulu with a Free Trial. Make sure you watch the right movie. This is just a site for you to use to make sure you're watching the right movie: <https://www.amazon.com/Philadelphia-Tom-Hanks/dp/B000I9YV12>.

Module 11 IMMIGRATION

- Deutsch, B. “Ampersand: Immigration History”
<http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2007/1107toon.html>
- Rachleff, Peter. “Immigrant Rights are Labor Rights”
<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2008/rachleff190808.html>
- Bacon, David. “The Real Political Purpose of the ICE Raids”
<http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2007/0507bacon.html>
- Bacon, David. “Migration and US Policy” <https://www.amazon.com/Philadelphia-Tom-Hanks/dp/B000I9YV12>
- Film: *Can the US Economy Survive Without Immigration* (attached in BB)
- Film: *History of the US Department of Labor, Part 3: WWII to the Korean War*

Module 12: LABOR’S FUTURE: Where do we go from here and what can be done? Alternative to Capitalism

- Henwood, Doug, "Work and Its Future" <http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Work.html>
- Alperovitz, Gar. *America Beyond Capitalism* . (attached in BB)
- Mulder, Catherine, *Transcending Capitalism Through Cooperative Practices.*” (Entire Book) (attached in BB)
- Film, *Are Co-Ops Really an Alternative To Capitalism? Featuring Richard Wolff*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVzLdRfvQWk>

FRIENDLY EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to have read and or watched the all the required assignments; this includes texts as well as. This is particularly important in this class given all the exogenous issues surrounding the Political Economy of the US

Class participation is strongly encouraged and may help to raise your grade under the discussion tab. Students should participate in the Discussion Section; I will post a comment or question for your response. However, if you have your own question or comment, please feel free to use that.

If you should have a documented learning disability, please get me the paperwork as soon as possible.

Cheating, Plagiarism and any other form of student misconduct are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Please see the college's policies in the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Undergraduate Bulletin. If caught cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment, summary, or test, you will fail that particular assignment. If there is a second violation, you will fail the course.

There will be NO MAKE-UPS FOR MISSED TESTS AND/OR ASSIGNMENTS unless there is prior approval by me. All exams are to be taken individually.

Students are expected to either contact me, seek help from the discussion boards and/or classmates if they do not understand the material, or feel free to message me. Message me immediately if you believe you are falling behind. Either I will help you or I will refer you to someone who can.

Please use the message function under the communications tab in BB to contact me; it is a much better process and is required. However, if you should have an emergency, my email address is: cmulder@jjay.cuny.edu.

Please let me know if you are having any problems with the class, work schedules, personal issues, whatever; I will try my best to accommodate most requests/issues. Any information you provide to me will be held with the utmost confidentiality. These issues should be messaged to me through Blackboard though, please try not to email me.

Please use proper net etiquette. Each person is expected to acknowledge, question, and respond to others in the course in a respectful and thoughtful manner. Additionally, using all CAPITALS is considered shouting on the internet and therefore should be avoided.

Always remember that this is a college class within a major university. As such, you are expected to behave in a collegial manner.

Given the pandemic and all the emotional issues that students, faculty, families, and friends might be suffering from, please, please just let me know that you're having difficulties. We will work it out and I will NOT expect you to share with me anything of a private concern. I will work with you as best as possible and I can also point you in the direction of professionals should you need one or more. We have a counseling and wellness centers, plus I believe the college and university will more than likely be making other specialists available to those who would like to see or talk to.

Good Luck and let's have a wonderful semester and come to me, whether electronically or whatever if you need anything.

Agenda Spring 2023

Agenda	Due Date	Time	Module
Syllabus Assignment	31-Jan	Noon	
Quiz 1*	3-Feb	11:59pm	Module 2
Quiz 2	10-Feb	11:59pm	Module 3
Quiz 3	17-Feb	11:59pm	Module 4
Quiz 4	24-Feb	11:59pm	Module 5
Quiz 5	3-Mar	11:59pm	Module 6
Midterm	6-Mar	11:59pm	Modules 1-6
Quiz 6	17-Mar	11:59pm	Modules 7&8
Quiz 7	24-Mar	11:59pm	Module 9
Quiz 8	21-Apr	11:59pm	Modules 10
Quiz 9	28-Apr	11:59pm	Module 11
Quiz 10	5-May	11:59pm	Module 12
Final Exam	16-May	11:59pm	Modules 7-12

*Note Modules and Quizzes are two very separate things.