work and occupations
SOC 495-1001 | Fall 2016
TBD

Instructor Information
cheryl maes, ma
Office: MSS 342
Office Hours: TBD
Email: cmaes@unr.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to give students a broad overview of work and occupations from a sociological perspective while emphasizing selected themes in greater depth. Topics will include: a look at work during and after the Industrial Revolution; major theorists who have contributed to the study of work; contemporary issues in 21st century work; the role of gender and ethnicity/race, and the impact of work on individuals and families.

In looking at these topics, this course will take both a micro view (e.g., demands of different workplaces and occupations on workers’ sense of self and identity; the influence of work on individuals and families) and a macro view (e.g., the occupational structure and it’s influence on the individual, the U.S. and global economies, changes in technology and demographics, including the impact of race, class and gender on how we understand work and occupations) using both quantitative and qualitative data.

While work occupies a central role in our lives, its social significance extends beyond our personal identities and daily activities. It is closely intertwined with other institutions in society as well as social processes, which produce social inequality. Work is perhaps the most important activity impacting our social experiences and life chances. As such, throughout this course, we will challenge the taken-for-granted notions of our society about what constitutes work and seek to compare and contrast the economic vs. the social value of work.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:
Prerequisites for Capstone courses are junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8. In addition, students are required to have completed SOC 101.

As a capstone course, this course is reading, writing, and speaking intensive. Critical reading of the material, well-argued and coherent writing, and full participation in class discussions are all mandatory (builds on CO1 and CO3). Full attendance is not
only encouraged but also expected. Class participation in the form of in-class exercises will measure your ability to grasp and apply the sociological perspectives from readings and information emerging from our class discussions. Writing assignments will include four projects throughout the semester.

**CORE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**CO10:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

*How will this be accomplished:* What one does in terms of work is central in structuring opportunity in any modern society. Readings, lectures, discussion, videos, and assignments will focus on the historical development of “work” moving from the Industrial Revolution to the current service economy focusing on the social relations between workers and owners and among different groups of workers. Students will learn to recognize how background characteristics, such as race, class and gender, shape one’s choices made in regards to employment and the impact this has on social mobility and equity.

**CO13:** Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge from various disciplines including history, psychology, and women’s studies enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

*How will this be accomplished:* Work is a multifaceted process that encompasses a wide range of influences ranging from early experiences in the home to broad national policies. Readings, lectures, discussions, videos, and assignments will focus on how different work relations and arrangements shape individuals’ and groups’ identity, achievement, their motivation and interests. Students will learn how to analyze and evaluate historical and contemporary work issues facing workers today based on sociological research and theory.

The course further develops (but does not satisfy) CO 1 (Effective composition and communication), CO 3 (Critical analysis and Use of information), CO 6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals), and CO 11 (Global Contexts). It will do so via the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

**SLO #1:** Students will be able to identify fundamental concepts and theories in studying work processes from a social science perspective, apply theories from previous courses in psychology and/or sociology, and demonstrate knowledge of social-scientific methods for studying human social relations in the domain of work and occupations (satisfies CO 13; integrates CO6).
SLO #2: Students will be able to recognize characteristic similarities and differences between diverse social and cultural groups, and identify the ways in which such differences shape occupational experiences (satisfies CO10; integrates CO6).

SLO #3: Students will be able to use insights from different academic disciplines, explain how institutional arrangements maintain, enhance, or reduce levels of occupational attainment and social mobility, and analyze the sociological processes involved (satisfies CO13, integrates CO3, CO6).

SLO #4: Students will be able to integrate research and theory from different academic disciplines, identify and analyze issues concerning workers and policy challenges, especially as they concern equity and the mobility of disadvantaged groups (satisfies CO10, CO13).

SLO #5: Students will be able to acquire scholarly knowledge about issues concerning workers and challenges, and effectively compose written texts, which systematically analyze the problems, critically evaluate different perspectives and approaches, and communicate possible conclusions (satisfies CO13; integrates CO1, CO3).

SLO #6: Students will be able to identify the similarities and differences of work and work issues as they confront workers and their families in different countries, evaluate their successes and challenges, analyze the social, economic and policy factors that shape these systems, and explain implications for creating a equitable society (satisfies CO13; integrates CO11).

We will apply the sociological perspective to articulating and analyzing:

- Everyday work in both service and professional occupations;
- Current forms of work and managerial trends;
- The relationship between work roles and organizational cultures;
- Gender and racial inequality in the workplace and the economy;
- The challenges and oppressions of humanity through the lens of class, race, and gender both nationally and internationally.
REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:


ADDITIONAL READINGS

There are a number of supplemental readings that will be available to students on our WebCampus page. These will be clearly marked on the course outline and available to you in PDF format.

COURSE FORMAT

This course will be oriented toward a lecture-discussion format which attempts to maximize your informed participation. Lectures will both clarify difficult readings and provide supplementary materials not included in the readings. I will follow the sequence of topics as listed in the Course Outline as closely as possible. If you don’t understand either the readings or the lectures, please ask questions.

I believe very strongly in education being an active interchange of ideas. In order to facilitate this exchange, it is essential that you keep up with the readings and to read actively. Active reading means taking notes as you read, making a list of questions you have as you read, and reading far enough ahead that you have a chance not only to read but to think about what you have read. I expect that you will have read each day's readings prior to our class discussions.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assessment of SLOs (development and reinforcement of CO1 and CO3):

Student learning outcomes will be assessed through weekly pre-discussion papers, an oral presentation of current research in the area of work and occupations, and a combination of research projects and book reviews (one of each must be completed – four (4) total requiring students to integrate, synthesize, and apply the terms, concepts, and theories they are learning to original monographs in sociology. Students will also be required to participate in weekly discussions applying the material to current events happening in our community, the larger society, and around the world.

Weekly Analytic Pre-Discussion Papers (5 points each)

Because full participation is necessary in a seminar-type classroom, once a week everyone will prepare a pre-discussion paper in which they address the following: 1) Essentialize: two main points from each reading and a brief discussion on how the readings are connected; 2) Apply: what are the implications for individuals, families, our society?; and 3) Improvise: what questions come out of the readings? Questions should be directed at helping us to further investigate the topic. (approximately 3/4-1 page, single-spaced.)

The weekly papers will be graded on a pass/redo basis. Those papers receiving a “pass” will receive 5 points. Papers receiving a “redo” will point out whether you’ve missed an important point or if there is a misunderstanding of the reading. If you receive a “redo,” you may correct the oversight or misunderstanding and resubmit the paper for credit within one class period. There will be no partial credit given.

Since the point of the papers is 1) to help students keep up with the readings, 2) to make sure you’ve engaged the material beyond a cursory glance, and 3) spark class discussions, you will not be graded on the quality of your writing (although I must be able to understand what you are trying to convey) nor whether or not you agree with the authors’ positions. All you have to do is show me that you’ve understood the main points and can apply them to our subject.

Papers will be due at the beginning of class on Thursdays (with the exception of the first week). Each paper should be single spaced, one inch margins, and typed in 12 pt font (TNR or equivalent).

You will be responsible for turning in 10 pre-discussion papers over the 15 weeks available for a total of 50 points.
Current Research Presentation (50 points)

We will be readings monographs throughout the semester. While these provide us with a good overview of our topic, there is a great deal of new research that is published every year. As such, you will be required to research and choose a current (2010-2015) research article and report its findings to the class in a 15-minute presentation that will briefly cover: the research question, the research methodology, the findings, and your overall assessment of the project. Your overall assessment should include:

- What theoretical perspective does the researcher take?
- What are the major strengths of the article?
- How does the article help and/or further our understanding of work and occupations?
- What are the major contributions to our understanding of work and occupations in regards to race, class, and/or gender?

Notice that there is no place here for criticism; that is because I want us to start-off on a positive note. We spend altogether too much time in this business proving how smart we are by focusing on the weaknesses of other people’s work. Remember published articles have been rigorously peer reviewed; therefore, the work has been judged worthy of our attention.

Following this positive introduction, we will then offer critical analysis and suggestions for further analysis. Critical analysis does more than point out weaknesses, but moves us in a direction for further research. In addition, it involves not only questioning the researcher’s underlying assumptions, but also our own (difficult to do).

You will turn in a one-page summary of your discussion points along with the article.

Project Papers:

With the exception of the current research presentation, the course has been designed so that you have control over your educational experience; as such, you will be given options from which to choose the remainder of your points (although you must choose at minimum one from each category): otherwise, how you combine those options, will be up to you. The reading, research, and writing requirements are fairly equivalent.

Mini-Projects (50 points each)

There are four mini-projects to choose from:

1. Movie Analysis
2. Observations of service work at McDonald’s (to be completed after the section on service work)
3. Occupational analysis research paper
4. Editorial
**Book Reviews (50 points each)**

We will be reading several monographs throughout the semester; as such you may write a critical review on any one of them. We will also be reading parts of other monographs, which you may find interesting and want to continue reading. Or there may be a topic regarding work and occupations that you would like to explore further; if so, you may choose a monograph, and with my approval, write a review on that.

**Class Points:**

Total points for the class will be **300 points**: 50 points for the weekly analyses; 50 for the current research presentation and 200 for the project papers:

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A = 300-270 \quad B = 269-240 \quad C = 239-210 \quad D = 209-180 \quad F = 179-0
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Please note that these are the general parameters: the plus/minus system will be utilized. While you will not lose any points earned, your attendance and participation will be taken into consideration in your final grade.

**SHOW AND TELL (Extra Credit):**

Extra credit may be earned by bringing an example of something related to work and occupations. **You must be able to tie your “show and tell” to the course material and/or the discussion.** Examples may be drawn from newspaper articles, television (news or shows), comic strips, cartoons, jokes, photos, films, sayings, a personal experience, etc. **To obtain the EC, you will need to write up a short, one paragraph analysis (5-6 sentences) along with your “finding.”** You may earn up to **10 extra credit points** by participating (2 points each – no more than one a week for a total of 7 – 14 points).

**WANT TO CHAT?**

I do! I want to talk with you throughout the semester. Although I may be available if you drop by the office, it is best to make an appointment. Email is the best method to make an appointment. Please see me if you are having a problem with some aspect of the course, but remember that office hours are not just for problems. I am eager to address any questions you may have, explore your ideas, brainstorm topics that interest you, or discuss future academic or professional goals.

For the quickest response, please email me at:

cmaes@unr.edu

**DO NOT** let too much time go by if you are having trouble with any part of the course: lectures, reading material, or writing assignments. I am here to help you and the quicker a problem is addressed the easier it will be to find a solution.
Lastly, the course outline is a tentative schedule that I hope to stick by, however, due to length of discussions and other factors beyond my control, this schedule will undoubtedly change. I'm comfortable with that, as you should be – the point in a course like this one (or any course, actually) should be the quality of the learning experience, not the quantity of material consumed. Remember that this is a capstone class which has substantive reading and writing requirements. Therefore, the course load is more than normal, but it is do-able with effort. You should plan on spending approximately one hour a day – outside of class – to keep up with the readings. Should you get behind, it will be incredibly difficult to catch up.

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IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY TO KEEP INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS.

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UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

Statement of Disability Services: Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Statement for Academic Success Services: Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and the University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning, but it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording: Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week of August 25th – History, Transformation & Theory of Work
Begin: The New Ruthless Society, Preface & Ch 1
Gender, Work, and Economy, Ch 2

Week of September 1st
The New Ruthless Society, Ch 2-3
The Overworked American, Ch 1-3

Week of September 8th
The New Ruthless Society, Ch 4-6
“Three Faces from the Hidden Abode”

Week of September 15th
The New Ruthless Society, Ch 7-10
Gender, Work, and Economy, Ch 3

*Week of September 22nd – Routinization and Service Work
Begin: Class Acts, Intro & Ch 1-2
Fast Food, Fast Talk, Excerpt + Ch 2 & 6

Week of September 29th
Class Acts, Ch 3-5
Gender, Work, and Economy, Ch 5

Week of October 6th
Class Acts, Ch 6-7
Gender, Work, and Economy, Ch 6

*Week of October 13th – Professionalism & Security?
Begin: Time Bind, Ch 1-3
Gender, Work, and Economy, Ch 7

Week of October 20th
Time Bind, Ch 4-6
Engineering Culture, Ch 3 & 5
**Week of October 27th**

*Time Bind*, Ch 7-9  
*Gurus, Hired Guns, and Warm Bodies*, Ch 2-3

*Week of November 3rd – The Future?*

Begin: *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Ch 1-3  
!Student Presentations!

**Week of November 10th**

*Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Ch 4-6  
!Student Presentations!

**Week of November 17th**

*Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Ch 7-9  
!Students Presentations!

*Week of November 24th – Inequalities: Work & Poverty*

*The Working Poor*, Ch 1-5  
*Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Ch 10

**Week of December 1st**

*The Working Poor*, Ch 5-9  
*Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, Ch 11

**Week of December 8th**

Wrap-Up

*Final Paper Due @ 5pm on December 12th*