# SOCIOLOGY OF WORK SYO 4372

**Spring 2019**

**LOCATION:**

**Classroom:** Social Science Building 170

**Time:** TR 5:30 – 6:50 pm

# CONTACT:

**Instructor:** Philip Lewin, Ph.D

**Office:** Culture and Society Building, Rm. 260

**Email:** [lewinp@fau.edu](mailto:lewinp@fau.edu) (this is the preferred method of contact)

**Phone:** 678-770-8425

**Website:**

**Office Hours:** TR 2:00 – 4:00pm and by appointment

Pre-requisites: 3 sociology classes at the 1000, 2000, or 3000 levels or permission of instructor.

Requirements fulfilled: This class counts towards the sociology major and minor.

# COURSE OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES:

In his early writings, Marx argued that work was the most fundamental of all human activity, foregrounding all that we do and providing us with the qualities that constitute us as distinctly human. While he may not have conceived of its character perfectly, he certainly was not far off either. Work, for many of us, rests at the center of our being, molding our self‐concepts, structuring our life chances, and consuming the better lot of our time.

This course explores work’s various dimensions, investigating the forms that it takes and the struggles to which it gives rise. It places emphasis on how the organization of work shapes the societies that we live in and colors the types of people that we become. By the course’s end, you will be acquainted with a range of key theories, issues and arguments in the sociology of work. It is my hope that the course will have both intellectual and practical value for you.

In terms of organization, the course will serve as something in between a survey and seminar. It will resemble a survey in its attempt to familiarize you with a range of issues in the area, while it will resemble a seminar in that you will not be expected to master any of those areas. The goal will be to provide you with a base so that you can pursue topics of interest on your own at a later time. Rather than exhausting the gamut of the literature, we will cover areas of paramount importance and give sustained attention to a select few in order to provide our survey with some depth. Areas of focus will include: Labor alienation; the problem of worker control; and the North American labor movement.

Though I will periodically lecture in order to introduce and contextualize course material, I will not do so often. We will devote the bulk of our time to discussion and reflection. You should come to class prepared to engage with the readings via critical discussion, not to absorb information that I will pour into you. In other words, do not expect for me to tell you what to think or what the readings mean. Expect instead for me to supply you with questions and to

help you inform them through your own thought process. We will struggle through the material collectively—all of us teaching and learning from one another.

# REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

All readings will be available to download on our course Blackboard page.

**Course Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

# CLASSROOM POLICIES and ETIQUETTE:

1. You should arrive to class on time and remain focused until it ends (i.e. you should not disrupt instruction by packing up your belongings early).
2. You may not use a laptop computer in this class.
3. You may not use your cellphone, sleep, work on crossword puzzles, or engage in anything unrelated to the course during class time.
4. You must be respectful to both me and your peers during class discussions.
5. If you violate any of the above policies, I will ask you to leave the classroom. Repeated violations will result in administrative withdrawal.
6. Please allow 24 hours for a response to emails. If you have a serious concern regarding your progress in the course, please plan to meet with me in person.

# ASSESSMENT and GRADING:

1. **READING QUIZZES:** I will distribute ten unannounced reading quizzes during the semester. The quizzes will test whether or not you have carried out the assigned reading for the session. They will be administered during the beginning of class and will only require a few minutes to complete. Each quiz will be worth 10 points and will be graded pass/fail. I will drop your two lowest quiz grades at the end of the semester. **If you are absent or arrive late to class, you will not be given the opportunity to make up the quiz.** If you anticipate missing class due to illness, family emergency, or athletic obligations, you should contact me ASAP (i.e. before, not after, you have missed a quiz).
2. **FILM ANALYSIS:** During the semester, we will watch several films. Before the semester ends, you must write an analysis one of them. Your paper should be 5 – 6 pages in length, and it should draw from course materials in order to analyze the film’s themes as they pertain to work and labor. I will provide further details about the nature of and requirements for the paper in class. The film analysis is **DUE IN CLASS ON April 7th.** The assignment will count 100 points toward your final grade.
3. **EXAMS:** I will administer three exams during the semester. The exams will cover assigned readings, lectures, and the films that we view. The exams will consist of an objective (i.e. multiple choice) component that will be taken in class and a set of take home essays. **You must bring a blue scantron sheet** on exam days. While the final exam will emphasize material from the last unit of the course, it will also probe your knowledge of material that recurs throughout the semester. The first two exams will count 100 points each toward your final grade. The final exam will count 120 points. The date of each exam is listed on the timetable.

# SUMMARY of GRADING and ASSESSMENT:

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessment Component** | **Point Value** |
| Eight reading quizzes | 80 points |
| Film analysis | 100 points |
| Exam one | 100 points |
| Exam two | 100 points |
| Final exam | 120 points |
| **Total** | **500 points** |

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| --- | --- |
| Letter Grade | Points |
| A A- B+ B B- C+ C | 93 - 100  90 - 92  87 - 89  83 - 86  80 - 82  77 - 79  73 - 76 |
| C- D F | 70 - 72  60 - 69  0 – 59 |

**ABSENCES, LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, and MAKE-UP EXAMS:**

* 1. I do not post powerpoint notes to Blackboard nor distribute them via email. If you have missed class, you should plan to see me during office hours in order to get caught up.
  2. I will not administer make-up reading quizzes under any circumstance. If you arrive to class after I have distributed a quiz, you will forfeit your opportunity to take it.
  3. Your film analysis is due in class on the dates listed. I will not accept them by email or after the class period ends. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day late, beginning when the relevant class period ends.
  4. Make-up exams will be administered at my discretion and only in the case of emergencies. In order to be eligible for a make-up exam, you must notify me of your absence before the exam begins. You must also possess a verifiable excuse (e.g. hospitable records, a police report, etc.) with formal documentation. If granted, I reserve the right to administer make-up exams in an alternative format relative to the original test.

**Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student’s final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I will not tolerate cheating or dishonesty in any form. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, looking at other students’ papers during quizzes and exams, submitting plagiarized assignments, using unauthorized notes during exams, and fabricating the attendance of absent classmates. All students should understand University policies regarding dishonesty and its consequences, and all academic work must meet the standards contained within FAU’s Code of Academic Integrity:

<http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>.

Please note that ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for dishonesty.

**Students with Disabilities**

     “*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures.” See http://www.fau.edu/sas/*

# TIMETABLE

Depending on how the course develops, modifications to the syllabus may be needed. I will announce any deviations in class and/or through email. You should complete the reading listed in each box before the class session for which it is listed.

# Work and Labor Arrangements under Capitalism – How Capitalism Shapes the Meaning of Work and the Nature of Working

1/6: Orientation: What is Work? No reading.

1/8: Labor arrangements in the capitalist economy. Read Marx, “Bourgeois and Proletarian.” 1/13: Labor Alienation. Read Marx, “Estranged Labor,” and Erikson, “On Work and Alienation” 1/15: Social and historical meanings of work. Read Mills, “White Collar.”

# Case Study: Modernization and Unionization in Appalachia – The Making of the Worker and the Capitalist

1/20: What are Unions? No reading.

1/22: Primitive accumulation. Read, Marx, pp.431-36 & Gaventa, “Impact of Industrial Power.” 1/27: Film: “Harlan County, U.S.A.” No reading.

1/29: Mining in Appalachia. Read Gaventa, “The Impact of Unionism.”

2/3: Business vs. new unionism. Read Gaventa, “Power within the Organization” 2/5: **EXAM #1**

# The Industrial Labor Process

2/10: Worker Control. Read Jacoby, “The Way It Was.”

2/12: Scientific Management. Read Braverman, “Scientific Management.”

2/17: Film: “Modern Times.” Technical control and assembly lines. Read Chinoy, “On the Line.” 2/19: Modern forms of workplace control. Read Rihehardt et. al, “The Kaizen Agenda.”

2/24: Industrial food production. Film: “Food Inc.” Read Pollan, “Power Steer.” 2/26: Farming and labor. Read Schlosser, “In the Strawberry Fields.”

# 3/3: NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

3/5: **NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

**Work, Morality and the Work Ethic**

3/10: The work ethic. Read Eisenberger, “Americans Used to Try Harder.” 3/12: Coping with demeaning work. Read Newman, “No Shame in This Game.” 3/17: Work and dignity. Read Lamont, “The World in Moral Order.”

3/19: **EXAM #2**

# Unemployment and Informal Labor

3/24: Unemployment and self-identity. Read Rubin, “Families on the Fault Line.” 3/26: Economic survival strategies. Read Bourgois, “Making Money.”

3/31: Film, “Junkie Junior.” Read Bourgeois, “Going Legit,” pp. 114 -146.

# Workplace Discrimination

4/2: Barriers to the legal labor market. Read Bourgeois, “Going Legit,” pp. 146 – 173. 4/7: **FILM ANALYSIS DUE.** Read Finlay & Coverdill, “Finding the Right Person for the Job.” 4/9: Minimizing bias in the workplace. Read Greenhouse, “Going for the Look but Risking

Discrimination” and Dobbin, “Diversity Management in Corporate America.”

# Work in the New Millennium

4/14: Neoliberalism and precariousness. Read Standing, “The Precariat.”

4/16: New work arrangements. Read Standing, “Labor, Work and the Time Squeeze.” 4/21: **READING DAY: NO CLASS**

# FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, April 23rd – 4:00 – 6:30pm