

# The Sociology of Work

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Silsby 104

## Intro

We often think of work as a part of the impersonal world of economic markets, and yet in reality work is deeply intertwined with the wider world and the social forces that rule it. Indeed, work plays a central role in our social identities and interactions. In this course we will examine work from a social perspective, focusing mainly on the nature and history of work in the United States. We will be examining questions such as: How has the experience of work evolved over time? Have the rules of work changed fundamentally in the last few decades? How does work affect our social relationships? How does work reflect and impact inequalities? How do we define and choose our occupations?

## Books

The required books for the course are:

Amy S. Wharton (2005) *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change*, 3rd edition. McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 0073528013

J. Bowe, M. Bowe & S. Streeter (editors) (2001). *Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs* by John Bowe (Editor), Marisa Bowe (Editor), Sabin Streeter (Editor). Three Rivers Press. Paperback: 688 pages ISBN: 0609807072

*Please note that Gig is comprised of short descriptions of people's jobs in their own words and these descriptions are not censored. A number of the chapters use profanity.*

## Components of the course

### *Occupational Analysis*

Your project for the class will be a two-part analysis of an occupation. You may choose any occupation you wish (except for illegal occupations). There are a variety of possible approaches for selecting your occupation. You might explore a future career possibility or cross social boundaries to explore a job you know little about. You may also choose to examine unemployment (looking for work), housework, or stay-at-home parenting.

An important point to note is that the second part of the assignment involves interviewing someone who holds your selected occupation (in person or over the phone). You should have at least some plan on how you are going to find an interviewee in your chosen occupation. I'm happy to help you think of some strategies for locating an interviewee. You will need to turn in a brief proposal describing your occupation and your interviewing plan on **October 15**

### Part I: Occupational demographics

For the first part of your project, you will examine statistics about the evolution your occupation since 1950. I will provide you with data about the size, wages, and demographic composition of occupations over time, as well as the tools to create a table summarizing these statistics for your selected occupation. This table for your occupation will be due on **October 31**. You will write a 1800-2500 word report (about 5-8 pages) interpreting the results of this analysis. The paper will be due on **November 12**.

### Part II: Interview report, due **December 11**

You will interview a person who holds your selected occupation about his/her experiences with this work. You will write a 10-12 page final paper discussing your insights from this interview. Your paper should tie into topics we have covered in class, citing appropriate sources.

### *Quizzes*

There will be three in-class quizzes over the course of the term. These quizzes are a chance to review the topics in one section before we move on to the next. They will consist of one or two essay questions that ask you to tie together the topics in a section and think about broader questions. The quizzes will *not* test you on nitty-gritty facts. The quizzes will be open-book, but given the short time frame (the class hour), don't count on being able to catch up on missed readings during the quiz. I will ask you to submit possible questions for the quizzes, so you may be lucky enough to end up answering one of your own questions.

### *Class Attendance & Participation*

Attendance and participation are important components of the class and therefore I will take attendance in each class. The class meets for 28 sessions, you are required to come to 24 of those sessions. *Note that this allowance includes classes missed due to illness, recruiting, athletics, switching into the class late, etc.* (they are not "free" absences that you get in addition to absences for legitimate reasons). Each absence below these four will reduce your class participation grade by 20 points each time, so that attending 19 or fewer classes will result in an automatic zero for class participation. In addition to attendance, this portion of your grade will reflect your contributions to class discussions.

I am notoriously bad at remembering people's names and faces, so I apologize ahead of time if I don't remember your name for a while or don't say hi to you outside of class. On a related note, if you come in late to class after I have taken attendance, don't count on me remembering to mark that down. Please check with me at the end of the class so that I don't mark you as absent for the whole class.

### *Extra Credit: Work in the Movies*

Watch one of the many movies from the list available on blackboard (it's at the bottom of the "documents" page). Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) analysis of the movie. The analysis should take one of two approaches:

- 1) Tie the movie to a topic we cover in class. Does the movie illustrate the concepts we discussed in class? How? Does the movie contradict/challenge ideas covered in class? How?
- 2) Discuss how the movie raises an issue that we don't cover in class. Discuss this issue and why it is important.

Since I haven't watched all of these movies myself, you should write your paper so that the reader can understand it without having seen the movie. Also, if the movie is fictional (i.e. not a documentary), you may want to consider whether the movie is an accurate portrayal of reality or whether it represents popular notions/stereotypes about work. Unfortunately, not all of the movies on the list are available in the library. If you have a particular interest in a movie I can try to help locate a copy. You may also use a movie not on this list with my permission. This extra credit paper will be graded out of 15 points and can add up to 1.5 points to your final grade. You may rewrite the paper for a higher grade.

### **Grading**

Grades for each part of the course will be weighted in the following manner:

Class Attendance & Participation: 10%

Quizzes (three): 15% each

Occupational demographics: 15%

Final report: 25%

Your choice: 5%

You get to choose which component (except class participation) gets the final 5% of your grade (quiz#1, quiz#2, quiz#3, first report, final report). You may, if you wish, allocate the five percentage points across different assignments. I will ask you to decide before the first quiz.

The final grade will follow this scale:

100-93: A

92.99-90: A-

89.99-87: B+

86.99-83: B

82.99-80: B-

79.99-77: C+

76.99-73: C

Etc.

### **Missed quizzes and late policy**

Please let me know at least 10 days in advance if you will be unable to be in class for a quiz. If you are sick that day or have some other emergency, you may be asked to provide documentation (from Dick's house, deans, etc). The various assignments due over the course of the term will lose one point (out of 100) for every 6 hours they are late. The final report has the latest possible deadline so I cannot accept late papers.

### **Electronic devices**

#### *Laptops*

I understand that students are increasingly using laptops to take notes, but the internet is also an irresistible distraction. I will allow laptops in class, but be warned that I have a pet peeve about students surfing the web in class. If I feel like you are spending most of your time on the internet, your class participation grade will suffer considerably. So, if you can't resist responding to blitzmail, you're probably best off leaving your laptop at home.

#### *Cell phones*

Please turn off your cell phones while in class. I reserve the right to answer any phone that rings in class.

### **Academic integrity**

I expect students in the class to conduct themselves in accordance with Dartmouth's honor code and with academic and personal integrity. Explanations of Dartmouth's integrity rules and principles can be found at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja>. Students are expected to take responsibility for doing their own work, providing proper citations whenever using words or ideas borrowed from others. Details on citing sources are available at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources>.

I also expect you to be considerate to other students while in class. This does not mean that you should censor your opinions, but you should present your ideas in a respectful manner.

### **Disabilities & religious observances**

Students with learning, physical, or psychiatric disabilities enrolled in this course that may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an office appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that fall during this academic term. Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please come speak with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

## Course Schedule

Class		Date	Topic	Project
1	Wednesday	26-Sep	Overview of course	
2	Friday	28-Sep	Work and the work ethic	
			<b><i>The Evolution of Work in the U.S.</i></b>	
3	Monday	1-Oct	Turn of the 20th century	
4	Wednesday	3-Oct	Scientific management & bureaucracy	
5	Friday	5-Oct	Welfare capitalism & human relations	
6	Monday	8-Oct	Labor unions	
7	Wednesday	10-Oct	Post WWII	
			<b><i>The New Economy</i></b>	
8	Friday	12-Oct	New Trends in the Economy	
9	Monday	15-Oct	Technology	Proposal due
10	Wednesday	17-Oct	Insecurity	
11	Friday	19-Oct	<b>Quiz</b>	
			<b><i>Inequality</i></b>	
12	Monday	22-Oct	Trends in Inequality	
13	Wednesday	24-Oct	Discrimination & race	
14	Friday	26-Oct	Immigration & networks	
15	Monday	29-Oct	Socialization & social class	
16	Wednesday	31-Oct	Gendered work & the workplace	Table due
17	Friday	2-Nov	Work, family & leisure time	
18	Monday	5-Nov	<b>Quiz</b>	
			<b><i>Worlds of Work</i></b>	
19	Wednesday	7-Nov	Socialization & identity within occupations	
20	Friday	9-Nov	Professionals	
21	Monday	12-Nov	Managers	Paper 1 due
22	Wednesday	14-Nov	Blue-collar jobs	
23	Friday	16-Nov	Service work	Post ideas for interview questions
24	Monday	19-Nov	Contingent work	
			<b>Thanksgiving</b>	
25	Monday	26-Nov	Outside the formal labor market	
26	Wednesday	28-Nov	<b>Quiz</b>	
27	Friday	30-Nov	Generation Y	
28	Monday	3-Dec	<b>Project discussions:</b> you must have your interview completed by this point. Note three interesting findings. Discussions in small groups.	
	Tuesday	11-Dec	<b>Final paper due</b>	

# Assigned Readings

## Introduction

### 1. Course overview

### 2. Work and the work ethic

- Hodson & Sullivan. "Studying the World of Work" Ch. 2, pp. 34-60 **PDF**
- Rodgers (1978) *The Work Ethic in Industrial America 1850-1920*. part of Ch 1, pp.1-17, 27-29. **PDF**

## The Historical evolution of work in the US

We start this course with an examination of the evolution of work over time in the US. We examine this history because many of the elements of work that we take for granted today are only recent inventions. Understanding the source of these practices will shed new light on work today. Most of the readings in this section focus on people, mostly men, working in large factories, obviously only a small portion of all employment during these periods. We will discuss in class the extent to which this perspective is useful or whether it provides an incomplete picture.

### 3. Industrial revolution to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Jacoby, *The way it was: factory labor before 1915*. Ch. 1 **Wharton**
- Karl Marx, *Alienated Labour*. Ch. 4 **Wharton**
- Thompson, "Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (December, 1967), 56-97. **PDF skim for basic ideas**, skip or just glance at section III, p.63-70

### 4. Scientific management & bureaucracy

- F. W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Ch 6. **Wharton**
- S. Meyer, *The Evolution of the New Industrial Technology*. Ch. 3. **Wharton**
- **Gig**: Ford Auto Worker, pp. 43-48
- Max Weber, *Bureaucracy*. Ch. 5 **Wharton**

### 5. Welfare capitalism & Human relations

- Gerald Zahavi (1983). "Negotiated Loyalty: Welfare Capitalism and the Shoeworkers of Endicott Johnson, 1920-1940" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 70, No. 3, pp. 602-620. **PDF**
- Mayo "The Hawthorne Experiment: western electric company" **PDF**
- Jacoby, Sanford. 2003. A century of human resource management. In B. Kaufman, R. Beaumont & R. Helfgott (eds.) *Industrial Relations to Human Resources and Beyond: The Evolving Process of Employee Relations Management*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 147-164 **PDF** (note these are selected pages, stopping in the 1970s, thus the abrupt ending)

### 6. Labor unions

- Freeman and Medoff, "The Two Faces of Unionism." *The Public Interest* 57 (Fall, 1979), 69-93. **PDF**
- Fantasia & Voxx (2004). *Hard Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Selected pages from Chapter 2, pp. 34-77 **PDF**

### 7. Post-WWII

- Richard Edwards (1979) *Contested Terrain*. Ch. 1, pp.3-22. **PDF**
- Milkman, Ruth, 1997: "Prisoners of Prosperity: Auto Workers in the Postwar Period" in *Farewell to the Factory: Auto Workers in the Late Twentieth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 22-50. **PDF**

## The New Economy

Most people are convinced that the nature of work has changed fundamentally in the last few decades. We will examine evidence on the extent of these changes and discuss competing explanations for why these changes may have occurred. This section of the course also ties in closely with the previous section. When we talk about

the New Economy, we are often comparing work today to work during the post-WWII period. How reasonable is this standard? Is it the current period or the post-WWII period that should be viewed as unusual?

## 8. New trends in the economy

- Walter Powell. The Capitalist Firm in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Emerging Patterns in Western Enterprise. Ch. 9 **Wharton**
- Vicki Smith. Employee Involvement, Involved Employees. Ch 14. **Wharton**

## 9. Technology

- Jeffrey K. Liker, Carol J. Haddad, Jennifer Karlin (1999) "Perspectives on Technology and Work Organization" *Annual Review of Sociology*. **selected pages (see PDF on blackboard)**
- Vallas & Beck. The Transformation of Work Revisited. Ch. 13 **Wharton**
- Sean O Riain. "Net-Working for a Living" Ch. 16 in Wharton 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. **PDF**

## 10. Insecurity

- Sennett, Richard B. 1998. Drift. The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 15-31 **PDF**
- Vicki Smith. Structural Unemployment and the Reconstruction of the Self in the Turbulent Economy. Ch 10 **Wharton**

## 11. Quiz

# Inequality at work

We can observe many different types of inequality in the labor market, and in fact work (and earnings related to work) is a major factor behind the creation and perpetuation of inequality. In this section, we will examine inequality within several different social groups: race, gender, class, and immigrant groups. In addition, we will examine several different mechanisms that may explain these inequalities: discrimination, networks, socialization, workplace interactions, and work/family considerations. For several of the class sessions, the readings will focus on one mechanism and one social group. In our class sessions, we will discuss the extent to which a given mechanism also plays a role with other social groups (e.g. how do networks affect inequality by race? gender? class?).

## 12. Trends in inequality

- Cotter, Hermsen & Vanneman. Gender Inequality at Work. Ch. 17 **Wharton**
- Levy. Occupational Change. Ch. 19 in Wharton 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. **PDF**

## 13. Discrimination & race

- Moss & Tilly. Stories Employers Tell. Ch. 20 **Wharton**
- W.A. Darity and P.L. Mason, 1998 "Evidence on Discrimination in Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12(2) 63-90. **selected pages PDF**

## 14. Immigration & networks

- LeDuff, Charlie (2000) "At a slaughterhouse, some things never die" *New York Times*, June 16. **PDF**
- Waldinger & Lichter. *How the Other Half Works*. Chapter 1, pp. 3-28 **PDF**
- Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo. Maid in L.A. ch. 23 **Wharton**

## 15. Socialization & social class

- Bowles & Gintis (1976). Excerpts from Chapter 5 of *Schooling in Capitalist America*. **PDF**
- Anyon, J. (1980) "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work" pp 424-437 (adaptation) in *Education and Society* Dougherty K, and Hammack, F. (Eds.), 1990, HBJ. **PDF**
- Paul Willis "Labor Power, Culture, Class and Institution," Ch. 4 of *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* **PDF**

## 16. Gendered work & the workplace

- Hochschild. The Managed Heart. Ch. 8 **Wharton**
- Henson and Rogers. Why Marcia You've Changed! Ch. 18. **Wharton**

## 17. Work, family & leisure time

- Budig & England (2001). "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood" *American Sociological Review*, vol. 66 **selected pages PDF (you don't have to read grey sections)**
- Jacobs, Gerson & Gornick. *The Time Divided*. Ch. 42 **Wharton**
- Hochschild. *The Third Shift*. Ch. 41 in Wharton 2<sup>nd</sup> edition **PDF**

## 18. Quiz

# Worlds of work

In the final section of the course, we will examine several broad groupings of occupations. We will explore the similarities and differences within and between these groups in the experience of work.

## 19. Socialization and identity within occupations

- Harper & Lawson (editors) (2003) "Socialization & Identity" in *The Cultural Study of Work*. pp. 53-64 **PDF**
- Trice "Occupational Cultures", chapter 2 in *Occupational Subcultures in the Workplace*. Pp. 21-45. **PDF, skim pages 21-26.**

## 20. Professions

- Hodson & Sullivan (2002) "Professions & Professionals" in *The Social Organization of Work* pp. 281-306 **PDF**
- **Gig:** Second-grade Teacher (p.480), Corporate Securities Lawyer (p.505), Orthopedic Surgeon (p. 623)

## 21. Managers

- Jackall "The Social Structure of Managerial Work" Ch. 31 **Wharton**
- **Gig:** Telemarketing Group Supervisor (p. 15), Construction Foreman (p.31), Chief Executive Officer (p.54)

## 22. Blue-collar occupations

- Buroway, "Thirty Years of Making Out" Ch. 24 in **Wharton**
- Juravich, "Women on the Line" Ch. 25 in **Wharton**
- **Gig:** Train Engineer (p. 188), Highway Flagger (p.169)

## 23. Service work

- Leidner "Over the Counter: McDonald's" Ch. 27 in **Wharton**
- Buchanan "Lives on the Line: Low-Wage Work in the Teleservice Industry" Ch. 28 in **Wharton**
- Sallaz "House Rules" Ch. 29 in **Wharton**

## 24. Contingent work

- Cohany, Hipple et al (1998) "Counting the Workers: Results of a First Survey" in *Contingent Work: American Employment Relations in Transition*. Ithaca: ILR Press. **PDF**
- Henson "Just a Temp" in 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Wharton **PDF**
- **Gig:** Temp p. 58-62

## 25. Outside the formal labor market

- Lisa Maher (1997) "Gender, Work and Informalization" in *Sexed Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-82 **PDF**
- Mitchell Duneier (1999) "Men Without Accounts" in *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Pp. 81-111 **PDF**

## 26. Quiz

# Wrap-Up

## 27. Generation Y

- *Defense AT&L* "Generation Y in the Workplace" Nov/Dec 2006. **PDF**
- *Business Week* "Welcome to the Gen Y Workplace" May 4, 2005 **PDF**
- *USA Today* "Generation Y: They've arrived at work with a new attitude" Nov 6, 2005 **PDF**

## 28. Project Discussions