I. The Course

The centrality of work as a cultural institution is unquestionable. Work occupies the majority of our waking hours. The quality and organization of work may be the most important way in which society influences our lives. We define and identify ourselves by work; its income shapes our standard of living and status; and its demands frame our family and community lives. Moreover, organizations are created to perpetuate it, and broader ideologies and institutions of society reflect its influence. This course is a sociological examination of work and work experience in its technological, social and cultural context. In the course, we examine the quality and variety of work; work’s social and technical organization into projects, firms, unions, and professions; its regulation by the state, and its systemic role in segmenting and stratifying society. We place work in its dynamic historical context, with an eye to work’s future and its technological transformation. Throughout, we will explore the personal, economic, and cultural significance of work, with a special focus on the ways in which work is socially constructed and experienced by the workers themselves.

The approach to the study of work taken in this course has aspects which distinguish it from conventional treatments. (1) Temporally, the course will focus on relatively recent developments in work (since the industrial revolution), although broader historical perspective will be sought at the outset as background for subsequent discussion. (2) Geographically, the dominant focus will be on the situation in the U.S.; however, the course approach will also be comparative, in that experiences in different industrialized and industrializing societies will be compared and contrasted. (3) Methodologically, the approach will be primarily sociological, although materials, concerns, and perspectives from history, economics, anthropology, and psychology will also be explored. Furthermore, the course reading material is not organized by theoretical topic but rather by substantive issues, allowing the theory to emerge through reflective reading by students and the lectures. (4) Substantively, the course will consider a broad range of work topics, some of which will be subjected to influence and policy studies.
II. Required Readings

_Sociology 20147 Course Reader    James Evans (ed.)_

Some papers are on the World Wide Web and can be accessed from the links shown in this syllabus.

III. Course Requirements

The requirements for sociology 20147 and 30147 are identical for undergraduates and masters students. However, Ph.D. students enrolled in Sociology 30147 will be expected to write a research paper in addition to the requirements listed for undergraduates and masters students. Students must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

A. LECTURES, LECTURE READINGS, AND DISCUSSIONS

Students are expected to attend class and to read and reflect on the assigned readings before class to facilitate a seminar-like atmosphere. An explanation of why readings were chosen and questions that students should ask themselves as they study the readings will be posted on the course website to direct students’ attention to particular issues in the readings. Participation in class discussion is expected of all class members. Two short assignments will be made to help students prepare for the interviews described in the next section and will constitute a portion of class participation.

Students will also be asked to take part in an online class discussion board which can be accessed through the course website at http://chalk.uchicago.edu. Students will post three short (250-750 word) online pieces which thoughtfully discuss, explore, and take a position on issues raised in the readings. These should not be reading summaries. These issue-pieces are to be posted at least twelve hours before the class in which those readings are assigned. I will make a schedule of which days each student will post. If students have a preference regarding which readings they would like to discuss, students should email me their preferences after the first day of class. Students will also be asked to respond to other students’ issue pieces with at least 6 additional posts over the course of the quarter. Students can respond to any issue pieces which they find interesting or valuable, but only one response will be credited per week (if you respond three times in one week, that counts as one response).

B. 20TH CENTURY WORK PAPERS

Each student will be expected to write an analysis of a worker interviewed at length—ideally in person, but over the phone if necessary. The presenter’s interviewee must be currently working and must have worked, with or without pay, for the majority of their adult life (interviewees are recommended to be over 45, if possible.) Interviews must be at least one hour and should ideally be tape recorded and partially or totally transcribed to facilitate your analysis. The papers will analyze the occupations, careers, and work experience of the interviewee based on concepts explored in the first half of the class.

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Papers should be from 8 to 15 double-spaced pages, should have the interview transcript (or notes) attached, and will be due on February 10 in class.

C. FINAL EXAM

A final take-home examination will be posted to the course website by on Monday, March 14. This must be completed and turned in by 5pm on Friday, March 18. Take-home exams are open-book; therefore more sophisticated answers are expected than if the exam was written in class. No collaboration, including the discussion of questions and answers, is allowed on these exams. Exams are to be typed/word-processed.

D. [ONLY FOR PH.D. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SOCIOLOGY 30147] RESEARCH PAPER

Ph.D. students enrolled in Sociology 30147 will be expected to produce a 10-15 page research project examining an issue falling within the broad purview of the course. These projects can examine (1) the organization of a particular occupation in the U.S. or in a foreign country, (2) changes in a particular aspect of the legal or technical organization of work in the U.S. or in a foreign country, or (3) the interaction of a particular work institution and some other social institution (e.g., secondary education, family, employment law, criminal law, etc.) These papers are intended to link the course more tightly with the research interests of doctoral students. Students must approve the topics of their papers with the instructor by February 17. Completed papers are due on March 16 at 5pm. Any papers turned in by March 1 in class I will return with feedback for revision.

Final grades are constituted as follows:

For undergraduates and masters students:
- Class participation 15%
- Online participation 15%
- Interview papers 35%
- Final 35%

For Ph.D. students:
- Class participation 10%
- Online participation 10%
- Interview papers 25%
- Final 25%
- Research Paper 30%
IV. Calendar of Lecture and Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments

Part 1: The Substance and Experience of Work

Jan 4. Introduction: Course Outline and the Meaning of Work

Assignment: (1) Course syllabus

Jan 6. A Brief History of Work, Time and Leisure from the Pre-Industrial Eras to the Present


Jan 11. Occupations Communities: Identity, Socialization, and Experience


Jan 13. Industrial Work: Alienation and Satisfaction

Assignment: (1) Marx, Karl 1844. “Alienated Labor” from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.

Jan 18. Industrial Work: The Division of Labor and the Transformation of Skill

Assignment: (1) Taylor, Frederick 1911. Excerpts from *Scientific Management*.

Jan 20. Service Work: Interaction and Emotional labor

(2) Hochschild, Arlie 1983. “Gender, Status and Feeling” in *The Managed Heart*.

Jan 25. Professional Work: Expert labor, Professionalization, and Competing Systems of Work

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http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28196409%2970%3A2%3C137%3A%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1

Jan 27. Technicians, Assistants, Paraprofessionals and Worldviews / Ethnosemantics
Assignment: (1) Becker, Howard 1978. “Arts and Crafts”
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28197801%2983%3A4%3C862%3A%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T
(2) Barley, Stephen 1983. “Semiotics and the Study of Occupational and Organizational Cultures.”
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1001-8392%28198309%2938%3A3%3C393%3AATSOOO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P

Feb 1. Managerial Work: Coordination versus Control
(2) Mintzberg, Henry 1973. The Nature of Managerial Work, TBA.

Part 2: The Organization of Work
Feb 3. Organizational Structure: Economic and Historical Accounts

Feb 8. Organizational Structure and Culture, and the issue of Control [49]
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1001-8392%28199309%2938%3A3%3C408%3ATTTICC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H

Feb 10. The Changing Employment Relationship: ILMs and Unions
(2) Budrys, Grace 1993. When Doctors Join Unions, chapters 1 and 2.

Feb 15. Bureaucracy, its Replacements, and the Changing Locus of Identity

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**Feb 17. Labor Markets, Careers, and Contracting**


**Part 3: Work and Society**

**Feb 22. Work and Family: division of family labor [62]**


**Feb 24. Discrimination and our Compensations**


(3) Lamont, Michele 2000. The Dignity of Working Men, TBA.

**Mar 1. Illegitimate Work and the 2nd Economy: Social and Cultural Capital**

**Assignment:** (1) Bourgois, Pierre 1995. Chapters 3 and 4 in In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio.

**Mar 3. Segmentation, Stratification, and Inequality in Society**

**Assignment:** (1) Edwards, Richard 1979. Chapters 9 and 10 in Contested Terrain.

**Mar 8. The Work of Consumption and the Future of Work: Theoretical and Empirical Accounts**

**Assignment:** (1) Cappelli, Peter et al. 1997. “Conclusion” in Change at Work.


*James A. Evans*
V. Bibliographical Particulars for Course Readings:


*James A. Evans*