THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND PROFESSIONS

Sociology 326                        Professor Jeff Sallaz
Spring 2007                           Office: Social sci 406
Tues/Thur 2:00 – 3:15                  jsallaz@email.arizona.edu
Building/Room: Chavez 405             Office hours: Thursday 3:30 – 5:30

COURSE OVERVIEW
Why should we study work? Well, assuming that we average 8 hours of sleep each night and work a full-time job, we will spend around half of our life’s waking hours “at work.” While it would be a slight exaggeration to suggest that half of all social scientific research should be devoted to work, the topic is undoubtedly of great relevance for any attempt to understand the human condition. Most of us, much of the time, will find our activities, thoughts and even emotions under someone else’s control, exchanged for a wage.

Why should we study work though a sociological lens? The fact that we all do or will work for a living is both a help and a hindrance to studying work. It is an advantage because unlike molecular biology or 17th century French history (2 important subjects, no doubt), work is a subject with which we all have a pre-existing familiarity. Yet this is also a potential problem because personal familiarity translates into taken-for-granted assumptions (common sense or what can be called folk theories) about work. I am not saying that common sense is wrong and sociology is right—my goal is simply to have you leave this course bilingual: able to leave the office at the end of a long day muttering not just “this job stinks and the pay is lousy” but “this company really alienates my species-being and the boss expropriates my surplus labor.”

But in order to get there we have to first break with common-sense, to make the familiar world of work unfamiliar. One way to do this is to learn new terms, concepts and theories. We can also look at how work has changed historically and how it differs across societies and cultures. Thus, while the main focus of this class is on work in 20th century capitalist America, we will also read and discuss the organization of work in other times and places.

It should be a fun journey!
REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
You are expected to attend all meetings of the course, do the assigned readings in advance, and come to class prepared to discuss them. Your grade will be determined in the following manner:

40% - Two midterm quizzes, counting 20% each. Tests may cover not just the course readings but material discussed in lectures and films as well.
25% - Final exam.
5% - Paper 1 (due Jan 18)
20% - Paper 2 (due Apr 17)
10% - “Good citizenship” points. I intend to not just lecture but to encourage dialogue with and among students. It is imperative that we treat each other with respect. This includes but is not limited to: listening (NOT talking) when someone is speaking; turning off cell phones; using courteous and respectful language when speaking. All students begin with these ten points and only lose them if they violate these codes of good citizenship.

100% TOTAL

READINGS
One book is required for this class and is available at the book store. All other readings will be available online through the Polis system (password: WORK)

Readings from this book are referenced on the syllabus with a (W)

Please be sure to do the entire week’s required readings before the first (Tuesday) class of that week, and to bring the readings to class as we will frequently refer to them during class.

Academic Integrity, Absences, and Disability Issues
See attached sheet.
CALENDAR

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE
Week 1, Jan 11
TOPICS- What does it mean to do a sociology of work? Key terms and concepts.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
Week 2, Jan 16/18
TOPICS- The industrial revolution; the Marxist perspective.
READ: Marx, “Alienated Labour” (W).
SHORT PAPER DUE THURSDAY

Week 3, Jan 23/25
TOPICS- Rationalization; Max Weber and bureaucracy.
READ: Jacoby “The Way it Was” (W); Weber, “Bureaucracy” (W).

MANUFACTURING WORK
Week 4, Jan 30/Feb 1
TOPICS- Scientific Management and deskillling.
READ: Braverman, “The Division of Labor” (W); Taylor, “Principles of Scientific Management” (W).

Week 5, Feb 6/8
TOPICS- Manufacturing Consent
READ: Burawoy (Polis Selections)

Week 6, Feb 13/15
TOPICS- More Games of Work.
Roy: “Banana Time” (Polis)
*MIDTERM I ON THURSDAY*

SERVICE WORK
Week 7, Feb 20/22
TOPICS- Emotional labor.
READ: Hochschild, “The Managed Heart” (W + POLIS).

Week 8, Feb 27/Mar 1
TOPICS- Routinizing Service Work
READ: Leidner, “Over the Counter” (W + POLIS).

Week 9, Mar 6/8
TOPICS- Gender and Work
READ: Cotter et al “Gender Inequality at Work” (W); Pierce, “Rambo Litigators” (W).
Week 10, NO CLASSES, SPRING BREAK

Week 11, Mar 20/22
TOPICS- Professions
READ: Abbott, The System of Professions (Polis); Jackall, “Social Structure of Managerial Work” (W)

Week 12, Mar 27/29
*MIDTERM II* TUESDAY
FILM THURSDAY

THE NEW ECONOMY
Week 13, Apr 3/5
TOPICS- When Work Disappears: Deindustrialization
READ: Bluestone and Harris, The Deindustrialization of America (Polis); Pappas, The Magic City, ch. 4 (Polis)

Week 14, Apr 10/12
TOPICS: Flexible Work Arrangements.
READ- Henson, “Just a Temp” (W); Gottfried, “Mechanisms of Control in the Temporary Help Industry” (Polis).

Week 15, Apr 17/19
TOPICS- Immigration; Diversity, Discrimination
READ-Hochschild “Love & Gold” (W); Bonacich & Appelbaum “Behind the Label” (W) 
PAPER 2 DUE TUESDAY.

Week 16, Apr 24/26
TOPICS- Immigration; Diversity, Discrimination (continued)
READ: Wilson, “Jobless Poverty” (W); Moss and Tilly, “Stories Employers Tell,” (W)

Week 17, May 1
Course Summary and Catch-Up

FINAL EXAMINATION: Date and Time TBA.
University and Departmental Policies

Academic Integrity
Students are expected to observe the University’s Code of Academic Integrity. The Code can be found at: http://web.arizona.edu/uapolicies.

Behavior in the Classroom
Students are expected to observe the University’s Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to classroom behavior (see http://web.arizona.edu/uapolicies), and should be familiar with University policies against threatening behavior by students (see http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml).

Students with Disabilities
If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may affect your ability to fully participate.

Officially Excused Absences
1. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.
2. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean’s designee) will be honored.
Sociology 326 Assignment:
Personal Essay on Work Experience
Due Thursday, Jan 18

In 3 pages (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins), you will write a personal narrative describing one job you have held. If you’ve worked more than one job, pick the one which stands out most in your mind and about which you have the most vivid memories. If you are currently working, this job might be a good one to write about, but you can write about a previous job instead.

Here are some questions I’d like to see addressed:

- Why did you decide to get a job. Why did you pursue this particular job?
- How concretely did you get the job?
- What did you do at work? What were your duties and how were you supposed to go about accomplishing them?
- Who were your co-workers? How would you describe relationships among workers? How would you describe the relationship between workers and supervisors? Between workers and customers (if relevant)?
- And any other issues you think are relevant to conveying the experience of this job.

Please make sure to save a copy of your paper to your hard drive or to a disk.