PLAN 774 Planning for Jobs: Labor Market Transformations
and Employment Policy in the 21st Century

Fall 2015
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45
Room: New West 103
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines changing labor market conditions and their impact on workers, especially middle and low income earners. The course will start with an overview of recent writings that look at transformative forces related to international trade, corporate restructuring, new skill demands, and weakening labor bargaining power. We will consider how these forces are experienced differently across industries and across socio-economic groups, as well as some of the institutional factors that help to explain widening wage and income disparities in the United States. The second half of the course will focus on some of the policy and planning implications of these transformative forces and specifically the role that local practitioners and policy makers can play in addressing sources of socio-economic disparity. Four areas of policy will be considered, including: efforts to link competitiveness-enhancing retraining and industrial/sectoral upgrading initiatives; the creation of innovative new partnerships between employers and labor market intermediaries, such as staffing agencies, labor unions and non-profits; strategies that connect smart-growth and social equity goals; and finally, new forms of labor and community organizing designed to improve workplace justice (e.g., community benefits and living wage movements). This course is open to graduate students from all disciplines. Although required readings for this class draw primarily on the U.S. experience, international case comparisons will be incorporated into class discussions and select assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Transformative Trends and Debates ...................................................................................... (10 percent)
A small group of students (3-4) will pair up to facilitate discussion of one key debate or transformative trend that could shape labor market dynamics for years/decades to come (see list below). Each group will assign 2-4 readings related to this debate (post assigned readings to Sakai at least 1 week in advance of your session— I have suggested readings I can share in advance). Required readings should not total more than 45 pages. Plan to facilitate the full class session (up to a max. of 60 mins) allowing time at end or beginning for general announcements and updates. The last 15 minutes of your facilitated session should be dedicated to a group discussion that draws out this theme/debate in relation to planning practice: the goal is to develop 3-4 talking points that planning practitioners might use to help clients and stakeholders understand the nuances of this particular debate and how it relates to their own circumstances or professional practice. Be creative with the format: possibilities include, a mock debate; use of an introductory video, radio or podcast segment to set the stage (15 minutes at most); small-group breakout or activity; structured class discussion (two formats at most). Handouts or visual aids encouraged (PowerPoint if necessary).
Due date: Various class sessions in September

Career Journal .......................................................................................................................... (15 percent)
This is an opportunity to conduct independent research on your future career in planning, economic

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development or other post-graduation profession. Write 3 journal entries (2-3 double-spaced pages each). One journal entry should be based on an informational interview with a planning professional conducted this semester (a follow up interview with someone you previously spoke with is also acceptable). The other two entries can be on a topic of your choice and using data of your choice. Examples include a review of planning career opportunities within a city or town (including within a different country) of your choosing; a review of career pathways within your ideal field of planning; a reflection on future employment challenges or trends that might constrain opportunities for advancement or stable employment; a comparison of sources for identifying planning-related job openings; analysis of labor market data on the planning profession. Due date: MSWord double-spaced format, Tuesday, November 17th (review in class)

Workforce Development Presentation........................................................................................................ (25 percent)
2-3 students will be paired together to outline a course of action taken by an existing labor market intermediary, workforce development organization or community development organization for analyzing and attempting to resolve a labor market-related problem or challenge. Students that have recently worked with organizations of this type might consider this an opportunity to review and critically examine that organizations workforce development strategy or action plan.

Each student must present some material from the case as part of your grade will be based on individual performance. If three students are presenting one case, one might frame the labor market problem, another might provide an overview of the program and solution it offers and a third might reflect on what works well and why and provide some transferable lessons. Presentations should be approximately 20 minutes in length, followed by 10 minutes max. for Q&A. You will share a 60 minute presentation slot with another team—therefore, your final grade will also reflect good time management! Your team must prepare a two page detailed handout for the presentation (10 percent of your grade will be based on this handout). Sample copies of handouts are posted to Sakai.

Research or policy position paper ........................................................ (40 percent)
Prepare a research-based term paper or policy position paper that explores a topic of your choice that is related to the course. You are encouraged to propose a client-based research project that is employment or labor-market related (I can provide a list of suggested clients/topics). For those completing an MP or thesis-like project that addresses a workforce development challenge or problem, feel free to use this assignment to work through some of your analysis. Equally, for students in the MPA or social work programs, you can use this writing exercise to develop a policy position or white paper. As one example, you might reflect on the core features and transferable lessons of a workforce development program or strategy area and make a case for replication or diffusion.

Research topics, question and design must be pre-approved by mid-October. The final paper should be 12-15 pages, double-spaced (co-authored papers will be considered, 2 authors max. 18-22 pages). Due date: Tuesday, November 24th (please email me a copy in MS Word by the start of the class period).

Class Participation......................................................................................................................... (10 percent)
Each session is more effective as a dialogue rather than lecture format. Please complete all assigned readings before class and be prepared to contribute! In-class activities will be used to encourage participation.

POLICY FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Please note that I will downgrade assignments a half letter grade for each late day. Exceptions will be made in the case of a medical or family emergency.
PLAN 774 COURSE TOPICS AND REQUIRED READING

PART 1. WORK TRANSFORMED

1/2 Course Overview (Aug 20/21) [NOTE: FIRST CLASS IS THURSDAY 20th & FRIDAY CLASS]


3/4 Work, Transformed (Aug 25/27)

Activities: Class discussion of pre- and post-WWII labor market structure. Conduct an interview to capture pre-1980 work experience of a grandparent or more senior family member (be prepared to discuss August 25th)


(3) Weil, David. The Fissured Workplace. Chapter 2. Employment in a Pre-fissured World


PART 2. TRANSFORMATIVE TRENDS AND DEBATES (*STUDENT LED)

5 What is inequality and why does it matter? (Sept 1)*

6 The State of Work in North Carolina (Sept 3): John Quintero

http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/State%20of%20Working%20NC%202014.pdf

7 Is Education the Solution? (Sept 8/10)

Activity (7): Come prepared to talk about the skills of a worker you interviewed over the weekend. How did they develop their skill? Was it through the classroom? On-the-job? Through formal or informal training? Was there a social dimension to their learning process? Are these transferable skills? Are these hidden or tacit skills? If so, how do they demonstrate them?

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/24/magazine/24labor-t.html?pagewanted=all  

http://prospect.org/article/skills-myth  


http://online.wsj.com/article/SB100014240529702044422404576596630897409182.html

9  Will Technology Replace Work? (Sept 15)*

10  Do Workers Share in the Sharing Economy? (Sept 17)*

11  Will Reshoring Save the Middle Class? (Sept 22)*

12  Is Wal-Mart (now) good for America? (Sept 24)*

PART 3. LOCAL RESPONSES

Reminder: send in research or policy position paper topics for approval.  
If you have not yet turned in a reflection statement, you should start now as there are only 8 substantive classes remaining

13  High Performance Work Organizations (Sept 29)


Greenhouse, Steven. 2009. The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker. Chapter 9, “Taking the High Road”.  
Hitachi Pioneer Employers: case studies (ask Anne Claire to come in and speak about these)
14 **Guest Speaker: Anne Claire Broughton (Oct 1)**

Hitachi Pioneer Employers: various case studies (TBA)

15 **Workforce Intermediation (Oct 6)**


Conway, Maureen. 2014. “A Brief History of Sector Strategies”. In Connecting People to Work: Workforce Intermediaries and Sector Strategies, Maureen Conway and Robert Giloth (ed.)


16 **Factory Tour: FRIDAY 9th (REPLACES CLASSES ON OCTOBER 8th)**

17 **WI: The Case of Garments (Oct 13)**


**FALL BREAK: NO CLASS (Oct 15)**

18 **Student Presentations: Group 1/2 (Oct 20)**
REMINDER RESEARCH/POLICY POSITION PAPERS DUE NOVEMBER 24th

19 Guest Speaker (Oct 22): [Community College System?]

20 Living Wage Campaigns (Oct 27)


21 Community Benefits and Community Workforce Agreement (Oct 29):


22 Student Presentations: Groups 3/4 (Nov 3):

23 Term paper check in (Nov 5)

24 Next Generation Apprenticeship (Nov 10)


25  **Student Presentations: Groups 5/6 (Nov 12)**

**PART 4. FEDERAL/NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY**

26  **A New Union Model (Nov 17)**


27  **Career Journal debrief (Nov 19)**

28  **Federal Workforce Policy (Nov 24)**


30  **Class Wrap-Up (Dec 1)**