**Sociology of Work**

SOC 3800-001 (9390) | Spring 2022

T/Th 12:30 p.m. - 1:50 p.m.

Wooten Hall 316

Instructor: Katherine Sobering, Ph.D.

Email: katherine.sobering@unt.edu

Office: Sycamore Hall 288A

Office Phone: 940-565-2296

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1 p.m. and by appointment via Zoom

**Course Description and Goals**

How is work changing in the 21stcentury? Sensationalist accounts of the future of work abound in the popular media. Headlines announce “labor shortages” or predict a “jobless future” and the “end of work” as we know it. Indeed, social, economic and technological trends like crowdsourcing, on-demand work and automation—along with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic—are actively transforming work and workplaces around the globe. As a primer in the sociology of work, this course will: (1) provide students with a theoretical and historical understanding of work under capitalism; (2) introduce the key role of organizations in a changing economy; (3) investigate the problems of precarity, inequality and overwork; and (4) critically explore proposals for the future of work. In the context of rapid social and technological change, students will develop an understanding of not only how work was done in the past and how it is done today, but also what the future may hold as they prepare to enter the labor market.

**Readings**

There is no textbook for this class. All required readings are available from the UNT Library or will be posted on Canvas. Readings must be completed *before* class so that we can have lively and informed discussions. Please engage in active reading by taking notes and compiling questions you may have. I encourage you to either bring the reading (in whatever format you like) or your notes to class for reference.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

The final grade in the course is made up of a score for two exams (50%), a group project (30%), and your regular attendance and participation (20%). There is no final exam for this course.

Exams (40%): There will be two exams worth 20% each that will cover both the readings and material presented in class. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. More details will be distributed the week before the exam.Please mark your calendars for February 24 and April 7 as exam dates will not change.

Participation & Attendance (20%): Your engagement will be measured by weekly participation exercises and regular attendance. There are twelve short weekly exercisesthat will provide students the opportunity to reflect on the readings and lectures, practice multiple choice questions, and check comprehension of main concepts. The two lowest grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. Please familiarize yourself with the attendance policy. If a student misses class without approval, their grade will be reduced by 1 percentage point for each absence. This score can be negative.

Group project (40%): Students will work in teams to co-write a report that analyzes their work experiences using key concepts from this course. This final grade for project will include 1) the submission and approval of a proposal, 2) the submission of peer-edited drafts, 3) the production of a final written report, and 4) team reviews. There will be three project workdays throughout the semester: Tuesday, February 22, April 5, and May 3. A detailed assignment will be distributed during the first project workday.

**Face Coverings**

UNT requests that everyone wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. I strongly encourage all students to follow CDC guidelines regarding safety measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

I will provide extra disposable masks in all seminars so you can protect yourself and respect those around you. If a you would like to obtain a face covering before class, they are available at a number of campus locations, including Willis Library, the Union Information Desk and the VP Student Affairs office – Hurley Administration Building.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

**Mental and Physical Health and Safety**

Please self-monitor and do not come to campus or go out in public if you have any [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html). If you are ill or have extenuating circumstances that impact your attendance, please reach out to me as soon as possible and I will make accommodations.

If you are experiencing any symptoms, please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

If you are struggling in other ways that impact your academic performance, please reach out to the UNT CARE team (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>), which connects students with resources and services. You can reach out individually, or make a report for someone you are worried about at <https://report.unt.edu>.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class. Each student may miss up to two classes during the semester for a reason other than illness or quarantine (see above). It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so we can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your learning.

On the first day, we will establish a seating chart for our indoor classroom. You are expected to sit in your assigned seat for all indoor seminars. If you are unable to attend class in person, I will happily accommodate this by providing lecture notes, recording class sessions, and providing a Zoom alternative, if possible.

**Course Materials for Remote Instruction**

Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a webcam and microphone to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn>.

**Policy for Examinations and Graded Materials**

Under ordinary circumstances, no makeup exams will be given and no late work will be accepted. You are expected to be present for exams. Exams may be rescheduled only under exceptional circumstances (written verification of disability, illness, or emergency) or with *prior* instructor consent. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need to reschedule an exam. The dates for all exams listed here will not change. Students requiring accommodations for exams should speak with me after obtaining an accommodation form from the Office of Disability Access.

I do not curve or scale quizzes, assignments, or final grades. You earn the grade you receive in this class. If at any point in the course you become concerned about your grades, please meet with me immediately. Except in extreme circumstances, I do not give incompletes.

**Class Environment**

Whether in person or virtually, please do your part to facilitate a stimulating and rewarding learning environment. This involves being respectful of one another, having an open mind, and being willing to have your ideas challenged. Demonstrate respect by listening to others, refraining from interrupting, and giving your undivided attention. Harmful words and actions will not be tolerated: This includes racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, or ableist language.

Class time will include a combination of lectures, discussions, and individual and group exercises. I strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility in the classroom. I encourage students to participate by expressing your opinions, asking questions, and presenting outside information to deepen your engagement with course material.

Some research suggests that students retain information better by taking notes by hand. I encourage you all to do this. Please do not let technology distract you from our meetings. Do not use your cell phones or the Internet for personal communications during class. In the event of a distraction, I have the authority to request a student exit the classroom. One-day suspensions will be reported to appropriate departmental and collegiate personnel.

**Communication Policy**

I reply to emails within 24 hours and within the time frame of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please plan accordingly before exams and due dates. Before emailing, please 1) check the syllabus; 2) refer to your class notes; and/or 3) ask a classmate. Students are expected to regularly check Canvas. Please set your communication preferences so that you are notified of announcements and grade submissions.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

I invite suggestions and feedback on my courses. If students would like to share a suggestion or express a complaint, you should first visit the instructor and then the departmental chair. Complaints must be made within six months of an incident.

**Accommodations**

Students with Disabilities: It is my goal to foster an inclusive learning environment in this class. If you require accommodations, please notify me during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible, by presenting a letter from Office of Disability Access. If you need more information about accommodations, please review the UNT Policy 16.001 or contact Office of Disability Access at 940-565-4323 (voice) or http://disability.unt.edu.

Religious Holy Days: UNT policy states that you must notify the instructor to the date(s) you will be absent to observe a religious holiday with as much advanced notice as possible. If, with proper notice, you miss a class, exam, or quiz to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. For more information: https://edo.unt.edu/religious-observances

Student Athletes: Provide me with a game schedule for the semester, signed by the coach, in the first week of class in order to be eligible for an excused absence.

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UNT community have a responsibility to uphold this mission of the university and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. For more information, see the policy: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-005. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, please refer to the appropriate resources: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct

**Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to abide by the UNT Code of Student Conduct: “As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas has established standards of conduct to foster a safe environment conducive to learning and development. Students and university student groups are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect for the rights and property of others and upholds the integrity of the university community.” You are responsible for understanding the Code of Student Conduct: <http://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>.

All work you produce on assignments, papers. and exams must be your own work. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in different class), you must cite your sources otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. All written assignments will be evaluated with Turnitin (https://www.turnitin.com), which sends both the student and instructor an originality report.

You a responsible for understanding what constitutes such violation, according to UNT Policy 6.003, available here: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>. If you are not familiar with a citation method, seek assistance from the instructor or the free University writing lab: <http://www.unt.edu/writinglab/>.

Please maintain a high standard of individual honor and integrity. Collaboration of any kind on exams will result in a failing grade for the exam. Cheating of any kind of assignments will also result in a failing grade. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on an exam or assignment, and submitting a written assignment from a previous course without prior permission of both instructors. Scholastic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate administrators in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

**Course Schedule**

All readings will be posted on Canvas. The instructor reserves the right to make changes at any time to this course schedule during the semester. Any changes will be announced via Canvas and by email with advanced notice.

**Module 1: Work under capitalism**

* Week 1: Introductions and social change at work
* Week 2: Exploitation and the division of labor
* Week 3: Emotional and aesthetic labor
* Week 4-5: Status coercion, consent, and hegemony
* Week 6: Exam 1 and workshop 1

**Module 2: Organizations in the new economy**

* Week 7: Bureaucracy and the corporation
* Week 8: Alternatives to bureaucracy
* Week 9: Spring break
* Week 10: Post-Fordism, neoliberalism and globalization
* Week 11: Financialization and the new economy
* Week 12: Exam 2 and workshop 2

**Module 3: Workplace inequality and organizational alternatives**

* Week 13: Precarious work and the gig economy
* Week 14: Gender and racial inequalities at work
* Week 15: Organizational alternatives and workplace equality
* Week 16: Workshop 3 and conclusions