Course Description: This course examines issues related to women’s paid and unpaid work during a time of rapid integration of world markets. Students will analyze the role of government policy, unions, and women’s movements in raising women's wages, promoting equal opportunity, fighting discrimination in the workplace, and securing greater control over working hours. We will integrate current policy and academic discourse on corporate responsibility and codes of conduct to uphold labor rights and other protections for female workers. We will also examine issues of intergenerational equity as women continue to perform most of the unpaid work caring for children and the elderly. By the end of the course you will be a more informed and critical reader of academic work, news accounts, and policy materials that present evidence and policy arguments about women and work.

Evaluation: Grades are determined by one in-class presentation (10%), three written assignments (25%), a mid-term exam (30%), and a final exam (35%). Details for the assignments will be distributed separately.

In-Class Presentation: In groups of two, you will each make a 20-minute presentation during the semester. You and your team member will prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the class that presents the arguments and evidence from a chapter or article on the syllabus.

Written Assignments: Through these assignments you will learn how to download descriptive statistics from the internet (from sources such as the World Bank and the International Labour Organization) and learn how to analyze data using the spreadsheet package Excel. You will be asked to write short summaries and interpretations of findings you have obtained.

Class Format and Special Events: The class format is a combination of lecture by the professor, class discussion, student presentations, and in-class small group work. Each class meeting will have at least one short break. Some classes may also be comprised of guest lectures and video clips.

Required Books: The course has three required books that are available at the student co-op.


Class Schedule, Topics, and Reading Assignments: Unless noted otherwise, all journal articles are available electronically through the Rutgers Libraries. Instructions for linking to articles will be given in class.
Part 1. Introduction.

A. Overview of Course and Introduction of Issues


Barker and Feiner book, Chapter 1. “‘Economics,’ She Wrote.”


Part 2. Women’s Well-Being in the World Economy

A. Valuing Women’s Work


B. Intergenerational Equity


C. Global Integration and Female Workers


D. Case Study for Africa


E. Case Study for Asia


Part 3. Gender, Trade, and Labor Markets

A. Links between Globalization and Gender Issues in the Labor Market

Barker and Feiner book, Chapter 6. “Globalization is a Feminist Issue.”

B. Trade Liberalization and Gender

C. Case Study for Latin America


Part 4. Institutional Perspective:

A. Role of the International Labour Organization


B. The Basis for Codes of Conduct


Jenkins book, Chapter 5. “Mapping Codes Through the Value Chain: From Researcher to Detective.”

C. Relationship Between Codes of Conduct and Women’s Rights.

Jenkins book, Chapter 4. “‘I’ll Tell You What I Want’: Women Workers and Codes of Conduct.”

D. Government Enforcement of Labor Standards


Part 5. Women and the Informalization of Work

A. The Informal Sector


B. Home-Based Female Workers

Jenkins Book, Chapter 9. “Can Codes of Conduct Help Home-Based Workers?”

C. Valuing Women’s Work


Part 6. Evaluating Policies that Support and Value Female Workers
A. Policy Assessments


B. Using Policy to Value Caring Labor


C. Labor Standards and Women’s Rights


Part 7. A New Paradigm for Globalization that Values Women’s Work

A. Trade Incentives and Monitoring.


B. Valuing Women’s Work in the Global Economy


Folbre, Chapter 10. “Who Should Pay for the Kids?”