

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Fall 2018, Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm
Labor Education Center 130-131
(38:578:612:01//15640)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers a historical-comparative-global perspective on work, worker movements, and employment relations in the United States. How and why have the rewards to work and the treatment of workers changed over time? What sustained coercive labor systems in the past and what strategies for creating more humane, democratic, and egalitarian workplaces were effective? What past actions to raise societal living standards and secure shared prosperity would be useful today?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to enable students to:

- Appreciate the power of the past to shape the present;
- Understand how and why work and employment policies change over time;
- Understand how U.S. labor and employment history compares with other regions;
- Understand how global forces shape U.S. labor and employment history;
- Assess how the state, employers, and worker organizations affected societal living standards and well-being;
- Analyze the strengths and weakness of different labor and employment systems;
- Apply insights from the past to solving contemporary labor problems;
- Identify and evaluate the main arguments in a text;
- Enhance written and public presentation skills;
- Develop group process and leadership skills;
- Develop an expanded sense of personal and political possibility.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Class Participation (15%)**
2. **Response Papers (60%)**
3. **In-Class Quizzes (10%)**
4. **Final Project (15%)**

PLEASE NOTE: Cell phones and other electronic devices, including laptop computers, must be turned off and closed during class. Do not sign up for this class if you are unable to comply with this policy.

COURSE READINGS

1. **Articles.** All required articles are available electronically through the SAKAI website at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>. You will not have access to electronic copies of the reading in class. In order to participate fully in class discussion, please bring a printed copy of the reading or substantial notes with you to class. For problems or questions with Sakai, email Dr. Merrill.

2. **Book.** The following book is **not** on sakai. You will need to secure your own copy. Please purchase: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written By Himself* (1845). There are multiple copies available online for a few dollars. I suggest the 1995 Dover Thrift edition.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Sept 4) INTRODUCTIONS

Week 2 (Sept 11) WHAT IS WORK? WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

Reading and Viewing:

*Marjorie L. DeVault, "Doing Housework: Feeding and Family Life," in Amy S. Wharton, *Working In America* (London: Mayfield, 1998), 21-31.

*Michael Merrill, "The Anti-Capitalist Origins of the United States," *Review* XII 4 (Fall 1990): 465-97.

*Lin-Manual Miranda's 2009 White House Rap on Alexander Hamilton.

Response Paper #1: How is housework like managerial work according to DeVault? Do you agree? Why or why not? How does Merrill define capitalism? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Week 3 (Sept 18) THE TRANSITION TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

Reading:

*David Brody, "Time and Work During Early American Industrialism," in *In Labor's Cause* (1993), 3-42.

*Jonathan Prude, "The Social System of Early New England Textile Mills: A Case Study, 1812-40," in *Working-Class America* (1983), 1-36.

*Christine Stansell, "The Origins of the Sweatshop," In *Working-Class America* (1983), 78-103.

Response Paper #2 Why did Americans work such long hours in the early industrial era according to Brody? How did the early New England textile workers improve their situation according to Prude? Why were women sweatshop workers not able to change their working conditions according to Stansell?

Week 4 (Sept 25) SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

Reading:

*Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Boston, 1845), 1-76.

*Eric Foner, "Emancipation and the Reconstruction of Southern Labor," excerpts from *A Short History of Reconstruction* (Harper & Row, 1990), reprinted in *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 112-123.

Response Paper #3. According to Douglass, what effects did slavery have on slaves and slave owners? How did slave owners sustain the system of slavery? Do you judge the new systems of labor that replaced slavery after the Civil War as described by Foner free labor systems? Why or why not?

Week 5 (Oct 2) MIGRATION AND CONTRACT LABOR

Reading:

*Gunther Peck, "Reinventing Free Labor: Immigrant Padrones and Contract Laborers in North America, 1885-1925," *Journal of American History* (December 1996): 848-871.

*Doug Massey, et. al. "System Assembly: A History of Mexico-U.S. Migration," in *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration In An Era of Economic Integration* (2002), ch. 3

*Arlie Hochschild, "Love and Gold," in *Global Woman* (2003), 15-30.

Response Paper #4. What problems did immigrant workers face from labor contractors in the past and what strategies were effective in changing their situation? What explains the flow of Mexican emigration to the United States according to Massey? What explains the rising number of female migrants to the United States according to Hochschild?

Week 6 (Oct 9) CORPORATE CAPITALISM AND ORGANIZED LABOR

Reading and viewing:

*Andrew Carnegie, "An Employer's View of the Labor Question," in *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (1886, reprinted 1962), pp. 92-105.

*View video, "The Homestead Strike of 1892," created by the Pennsylvania Labor History Society.

*Samuel Gompers, "What Does Labor Want? A Paper Read before the International Labor Congress, September 1893" in *Samuel Gompers Papers*, 388-396.

*Samuel Gompers, "Economics and Ethics of High Wages;" and "The Shorter Working Day," in *Labor and the Employer* (1920), 58-63; 81, 86-91.

Response Paper #5. Drawing on the video and the readings, compare and contrast the ideas of Carnegie and Gompers. Whose ideas do you find more persuasive and why?

Week 7 (Oct 16) THE SOCIAL QUESTION

Reading:

*James Weinstein, "The Scope of American Socialism, 1900-1912," in *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925*, 1-26.

*Annelise Orleck, "Coming of Age: The Shock of the Shops and the Dawning of Working Women's Political Consciousness," in *Women, Families, and Communities* (2008), 47-65.

*David Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," in *Workers in Industrial America* (1993), 48-78.

Response Paper #6. Choose one historical figure from each article and evaluate their ideas for social change. What did they advocate? Would their approaches be useful today?

OPTIONAL IN-CLASS QUIZ

Week 8 (Oct 23) NEW DEAL REVOLUTIONS

Reading:

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Fireside Chats" (**READ FIVE ONLY**: May 7, 1933; September 30, 1934; April 28, 1935; Nov 14, 1937; Jan 11, 1944), selected and formatted on Sakai or accessed Aug 31, 2018, at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/FIRESI90.HTML>.

*Cass Sunstein, "The Second Bill of Rights," (2004), 1-8.

*Dorothy Sue Cobble, "The Intellectual Origins of an Institutional Revolution," *Journal of Labor and Employment Law* (2011): 201-212.

Response Paper #7 What was the New Deal? What New Deal programs are newly relevant? Which should we discard, if any? What unrealized aspirations of the New Deal should we carry forward?

Week 9 (Oct 30) 'BIG LABOR': WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?

Reading:

*Walter Reuther, "The Guaranteed Annual Wage" and "Mike Wallace Interview" in *Selected Papers* (1961).

*Jack Metzgar, "Getting to Yes," and "When the Wolf Finally Came," in *Striking Steel*, 17-39, 118-148.

Response Paper #8. In Reuther's opinion, why is the guaranteed annual wage morally, socially, and economically sound? Do you agree? Was steel unionism good for the country? Why or why not?

Group 1 Presentations

Week 10 (Nov 6) OTHER LABOR MOVEMENTS

Reading:

*Michael Honey, "Martin Luther King and the Memphis Sanitation Strike," in Boris and Lichtenstein, *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 420-431.

*Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Feminism Transforms Women Service Workers," in Boris and Lichtenstein, *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 459-472.

*Ruth Milkman, "Immigrant Workers and the Future of Labor," 2011.

*Cobble and Merrill, "Labor Today," *Pennsylvania Legacies* (2014): 40-41.

Response Paper #9 Discuss and assess the main arguments in each of the readings.

Group 2 Presentations

Week 11 (Nov 13) REVERSING RUNAWAY INEQUALITY?

Reading:

Les Leopold, *Runaway Inequality*, chapters 1-3, 5-6.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger* (2009), 1-45.

Response Paper #10. What is runaway inequality? Why is inequality a problem for the American economy according to Leopold and Wilkinson/Pickett? What can be done to fix the problem of runaway inequality?

Group 3 Presentations

Week 12 (Nov 20) Thanksgiving Break

Week 13 (Nov 27) DEBATING GLOBAL STRATEGIES

Reading:

*Michael Merrill, "From a National to a Global Economy," Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia presentation, 2000

*Ron Blackwell, "Building a Member-Based International Program," in Greg Mantsios, ed. *A New Labor Movement for the New Century* (1998), 320-328.

*Jody Heymann and Alison Earle, *Raising the Global Floor* (2010), chapter 3.

Response Paper #11: According to Merrill, Blackwell, Heymann/Earle, which global strategies would do the most to enhance our nation's economic and social well-being? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Group 4 Presentations

Week 14 (Dec 4) CAPITALISM, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE FUTURE

Reading:

*US Global Change Research Program Climate Science Special Report (CSSR) (June 2017), Front Matter and Executive Summary ONLY, pp. 1-37.

*Yvon Chouinard, Jib Ellison, and Rick Ridgeway, “The Sustainable Economy,” *Harvard Business Review*, October 2011.

*Jeremy Brecher, “A Superfund for Workers: How to Promote a Just Transition and Break Out of the Jobs vs the Environment Trap,” *Dollars and Sense* Nov/Dec 2015.

*Cécilie Schildberg, “A Caring Sustainable Economy.” 2014.

Response Paper #12: Do you believe our current way of life is sustainable? Why or why not? What steps should be taken to respond to climate change? What are the barriers to moving toward a caring sustainable economy?

Group 5 Presentations

Week 15 (Dec 11) IN-CLASS QUIZ/WRAP-UP

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%)

ATTENDANCE. Students are expected to attend each class. You should plan to arrive on time and stay the full class session. If you anticipate a problem with attendance or timeliness, you should discuss the matter with us before signing up for the class. If work or other conflicts preclude your class attendance you should sign up for a class on a different night or for an on-line class.

CLASS DISCUSSION. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion. **You should read the assigned texts carefully prior to each class meeting and bring a copy of the readings with you to class.** Students will be asked to offer their own understanding of the main claims in each text and their opinion of these claims. You will not be judged on whether or not you agree with the claims of the authors or with the opinions of the instructors but on whether your ideas are informed by the week’s readings and/or substantiated by other evidence and examples. Students are also expected to help raise the level of class discussion by interacting with others to help clarify and extend their comments. Active, respectful listening is as important to class participation as talking.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES. Over the course of the semester, students will participate in small group activities and will be asked to serve as a small group discussion leader one or more times. Your goal as a discussion leader is to encourage participation from each member of the group; keep the group focused on the assignment; and help the group reach common or shared understandings of the material, if possible. Small group

leaders should be prepared to summarize the group's conclusions and present them to the class. Small group leaders are not expected to be experts or to have all the answers.

2. RESPONSES PAPERS (60%). Students should submit at least **SIX** short papers responding to the questions posed by the instructors on the syllabus. At least two papers should be submitted during the first half of the class (weeks 2-7) and at least two papers should be submitted during the last half of the class (weeks 8-14). Students may submit more than six papers, if they wish; all submitted papers will be counted toward the final point total.

Papers should be 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, and 12-point font. Please do not submit papers over 3 pages in length.

Papers should be posted on Sakai by 6 pm on Tuesday **BEFORE** the readings are discussed in class. **No papers will be accepted after the deadline.** If you miss the deadline, please do not ask if you can submit a late paper. Instead, focus on writing a paper for the next week.

Papers will receive a grade of 1 point, ½ point, or 0 points. Responses that 1) show evidence of engagement with the readings, 2) respond to the questions posed, and 3) do not have major writing problems will receive full credit or one point. Responses that are incomplete or poorly written (do not show engagement with the readings or do not respond to the questions) will receive partial credit or ½ point. Points translate to grades as follows:

6 (or more)=A
 5.5= B+
 4.5 & 5=B
 3.5 & 4=C+
 3= C
 2.5=D+
 2=D
 Below 2 =not a passing grade

3. IN-CLASS QUIZZES (10). There will be an optional in-class midterm quiz and a required final in-class quiz. The grade on the optional midterm quiz will only be counted if it is higher than the grade on the final. If it is higher, the two grades will be averaged together. Each quiz will be less than an hour and will ask you about significant concepts discussed in class. The quizzes are designed to help you retain, integrate, and deepen your understanding of the material. Make-up quizzes will only be scheduled for a documented medical or family emergency.

4. FINAL PROJECT (15) Each student is expected to make a short in-class presentation of 3-5 minutes related to one of the class topics in weeks 9-14. A one-page written summary of the main points of your presentation plus the scholarly or research-

based sources you used is due the day **BEFORE** the oral presentation is given in class. Late submissions will lower the grade.

Students should pick an issue important to them that is related to the topic for the week they are assigned. There will be a number of students assigned to the same week (your group) and students will need to coordinate with others in the group to avoid repetition. One easy way to avoid repetition is to divide up the readings for that day among the group members. Then each group member could choose a topic related to issues raised in one of the assigned articles. Groups might also decide to pursue a comparative perspective on the topic and each group member choose to investigate how the issue is handled in a country outside the United States. Groups are free to come up with other ways of coordinating their presentations for the evening.

In your presentation, you should explain to the class why the issue you chose is important to you, why it matters to others, and how what you learned deepens our understandings of the topic for the day. You are encouraged to draw on your own experiences but should supplement those experiences by drawing on the assigned reading for the week **PLUS** at least **TWO** additional scholarly or research-based sources. The idea is for you to use the assigned reading as a starting point and go beyond it to explore a related issue.

The grade for the presentations will be based on: 1)whether your topic is related to the readings for that week; 2)whether you go **beyond** the material in the readings to provide the class with new information or a new perspective on the topic; 3)whether you use effectively at least **TWO** scholarly or research-based sources; 4)whether the presentation itself is clear and well-organized.

You are free to use visuals but visuals are **NOT** required. The quality of *your ideas* is the most important part of your presentation. If PowerPoint slides are used, keep the amount of slides and text to a minimum. Please do not read word for word from a PowerPoint slide or a printed page.

Academic Integrity. Work submitted for other classes or work cut and pasted from the Internet is not acceptable. In addition, using phrases from another person's writing without quotation marks or paraphrasing another person's ideas without crediting the source of the idea is plagiarism. Plagiarism or any form of cheating can result in course failure and disciplinary action through University channels.

Special Needs: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations should contact us as soon as possible.

Final Grades: Final course grades are available through regular university channels. If you need your final grade earlier, contact Amy Marchitto at lobelo@smlr.rutgers.edu

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