

**Course No. 37:575:207:90**

**New Jersey Labor History (online)**

**Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations**

**Fall 2020**

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Important Points:

- ✓ This is an asynchronous online course, with all assignments and discussion taking place in Canvas; you can complete the work at your own convenience, as long as you meet the deadlines.
- ✓ There will be an assignment every week; late assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the due date.
- ✓ Normally, two visits to historical labor history locations in New Jersey are required. However, because of COVID, optional alternative assignments will be provided.
- ✓ You will need to log in to the course Canvas website several times a week, and respond promptly to any Canvas or email messages from the instructor.

Course Overview

History can sometimes seem remote. But in this course on New Jersey's workers and labor unions, the history of the state's workers will be as close as our backyards. We will learn how America's workers and their allies fought hard to win the rights and improvements we take for granted today, like minimum wage, weekends, and Social Security.

But we'll learn that by studying people and events in our own state, like the child workers in Paterson who went on strike in 1835 to win an 11-hour day, and the unemployed families of the "Army of Unoccupation" who took over the State House in Trenton in 1936 to press for relief during the Great Depression. We'll learn about surprising events like the battle of black and white workers at Seabrook Farms against vigilantes and the Ku Klux Klan (in 1934), and the war between striking workers in Elizabeth and mobsters from Murder, Inc. (in 1946).

We will also visit some of the sites where this history took place (though this semester we may do so virtually), walking the streets of Paterson where thousands of immigrant strikers marched in 1913, and standing on the balcony of Pietro and Maria Botto's house where Big Bill Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn rallied the strikers. The history of America's working class really is exciting, and there's no better way to find that out than by learning about the labor movement in New Jersey.

Among other topics, we will explore the history of trade unions and other worker movements in New Jersey from the first demands voiced by the Hibernia iron workers in the 1770s to the changing political role of the New Jersey AFL-CIO, the growth of public sector unions, and the challenges faced by working people and the union movement in New Jersey today.

We'll examine the craft unionism of the New Jersey Federation of Labor and its dominant building trades unions, the "one big union" philosophies of the Knights of Labor and the IWW, the revolutionary goals of Paterson's Italian anarchists and the Passaic textile strike's Communists, the industrial unionism of the CIO, the rise of public sector unionism, and new methods of organizing in the twenty-first century.

We place New Jersey worker movements in historic context with contemporaneous labor movements elsewhere in the United States and in other countries, and we examine the impact of political ideology, culture, ethnicity, race and gender issues on the development of New Jersey worker movements.

An important goal of the course is for students to learn to think logically and critically about ideas and events in history and to evaluate arguments from a variety of perspectives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via the Canvas Inbox if you have any questions about the course.

*Statement on Disability:* Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

*Statement on Academic Honesty:* All work in this course must be your own. Be careful to always cite your sources. For direct quotes, include them within quotation marks and cite appropriately. Since none of us lived during the times we are studying, we must, of course, rely on the words and writings of others, but these must always be cited -- otherwise the use of those words is considered plagiarism. Any assignments containing the work of others and not cited properly will receive a grade of zero. *Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this point.*

## Class Structure

The course is organized into 7 modules, each lasting 1 to 3 weeks and covering a chronological period and theme. There will be an assignment for each week ranging from 2-page reading responses to 3-page site visit reports, forum discussions, and a final 4-page paper. There will also be two quizzes. All late assignments will be downgraded one letter grade (e.g. A to B) and will not be accepted more than one week after due date.

This online course also requires you to visit at least two labor-history-related sites in New Jersey, but this semester virtual alternative site visits will be an option. The site visits are organized around the periods we will be studying: one for the earlier period (Modules 1-2), one at Paterson (Module 3), and one for Modules 4-7 (two of these three are required).

*Students are responsible for checking their Canvas inbox and the course website frequently, and completing all readings, videos, and assignments on time.*

## Required Text

*Workers in New Jersey History* by Joseph Gowaskie. This will be our basic outline text. It is available in pdf format in the course website or at <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/3744> (click on PDF-1). It is also available in hardcopy if you prefer from the Rutgers University Bookstore or online bookstores.

All other readings listed below will be available in the course website or via the Web.

### Class Schedule

Changes may be made in the schedule and readings. Assignments are discussed in more detail on each week's web page in the Canvas course website.

#### **Module 1: Work in Early New Jersey**

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| Week 1:<br><i>Tuesday, Sep 1 -<br/>Sunday, Sep 6</i> | Introduction and overview. Become familiar with the Canvas website that has the online course.                      |
|  | Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 1.   |
|  | Assignment: Introduce yourself in Meet the Other Students, post Account Profile, and respond to instructor message. |

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| Week 2:<br><i>Monday, Sep 7 -<br/>Sunday, Sep 13</i> | Iron, Slavery, and Indenture   |
|  | Readings: Green, "Child Labor" and "Oxford Furnace" (very short)<br>Kury, "Labor and the Charcoal Iron Industry: The New Jersey-New York Experience"<br>Bezís-Selfa, "Slavery and Free Labor in the Iron Industry" |
|  | Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)   |

#### **Module 2: Artisans and Early Trade Unions**

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| Week 3:<br><i>Monday, Sep 14 -<br/>Sunday, Sep 20</i> | Artisans and Laborers  |
|   | Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 2;<br>Bensman, <i>The Practice of Solidarity</i> , chapters 4 and 11. |
|   | Assignment: Forum Discussion (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)  |

#### **Module 3: Industrial NJ: Paterson**

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| Week 4:<br><i>Monday, Sep 21 -<br/>Sunday, Sep 27</i> | The Factory System and the Significance of Paterson   |
|   | Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 3;<br>and four very short articles:<br>"The Situation in New Jersey" and "The Strike on the Jersey Central," 1877 NYT;<br>"March of the Mill Children"; Leonora Barry's Report to the Knights of Labor, 1887 |
|   | Assignment: Site Visit 1 Report (3 pp.)   |

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| Week 5:<br><i>Monday, Sep 28</i><br><i>Sunday, Oct 4</i> | The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913   |
|  | Readings: The Paterson Strike Pageant Program at Paterson Strike Pageant; Golin, <i>The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike 1913</i> , chapters 1-2 |
|  | Assignment: Listen to Library of Congress "Working in Paterson" oral history, post response to Forum (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)  |

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| Week 6:<br><i>Monday, Oct 5</i><br><i>Sunday, Oct 11</i> | The Red Scare and the Roaring 20s   |
|  | Readings: DeBrizzi, "The Standard Oil Strikes In Bayonne, New Jersey, 1915-16"; Howard Green, "The Red Scare" (1919) (New Jersey Heritage magazine) |
|  | Assignment: Quiz 1  |

#### Module 4: The Great Depression

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| Week 7:<br><i>Monday, Oct 12</i><br><i>Sunday, Oct 18</i> | The Great Depression in New Jersey   |
|   | Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 4; Sidorick, <i>Condensed Capitalism</i> , chapters 1 and 2 (excerpts). |
|   | Assignment: Site Visit 2 Report (3 pp.)  |

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| Week 8:<br><i>Monday, Oct 19</i><br><i>Sunday, Oct 25</i> | New Jersey Workers Fighting Back in the 1930s   |
|   | Readings: <i>The Army of Unoccupation</i> (Trenton 1936); "The Negro Joins the Picket Line" and "Them Women Sure Are Scrappers" (Seabrook 1934); Cowie, <i>Capital Moves</i> , chapter 1 (part) |
|   | Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)  |

#### Module 5: World War II and Aftermath

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| Week 9:<br><i>Monday, Oct 26</i><br><i>Sunday, Nov 1</i> | The New Jersey Homefront in World War II  |
|  | Readings: Sidorick, <i>Condensed Capitalism</i> , chapter 3   |
|  | Assignment: Listen to Rutgers NJ Homefront oral histories, post response to Forum (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200). |

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| Week 10:<br><i>Monday, Nov 2 -<br/>Sunday, Nov 8</i> | Postwar Strikes and Repression  |
|  | Readings: Bruno, "1946 UE strike against Phelps-Dodge Copper Co."; Schrecker, "McCarthyism and Organized Labor" |
|  | Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)  |

### Module 6: 1950s-1970s; Public Sector Unionism

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| Week 11:<br><i>Monday, Nov 9 -<br/>Sunday, Nov 15</i> | Public Sector Unions in New Jersey  |
|   | Readings: Golin, The Newark Teacher Strikes, chapter 1; Steve Early articles on NJ Public Worker Organizing; McCartin. "Public Sector Unions under Assault" |
|   | Assignment: Forum Discussion (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)   |

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| Week 12:<br><i>Monday, Nov 16<br/>Sunday, Nov 22</i> | Industrial Decline and Deindustrialization   |
|  | Readings: Gowaskie, Workers in New Jersey History, chapter 5; Sidorick, Condensed Capitalism, chapter 8; "Singer Plant Closes" |
|  | Assignment: Site Visit 3 Report (3 pp.)  |

### Module 7: New Jersey Workers in the Recent Past

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| Week 13:<br><i>Monday, Nov 23<br/>Sunday, Dec 6</i> | NJ Workers in the Period of Neoliberalism   |
|   | Readings: New Jersey Adjunct Professors Organize; Farmworker Support Committee newsletter (skim); Laborers Join with NJ Worker Centers; Debate on union political activity. |
|   | Assignment: Quiz 2  |

### Final Assignment

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| Week 14:<br><i>Monday, Dec 7 -<br/>Sunday, Dec 13</i> | Final Paper                     |
|   | Assignment: Final Paper (4 pp.) |

## Grading Criteria and Components

### Grading Criteria:

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|----|---------------|--------------------|
| A  | 90-100%       | 900 to 1000 points |
| B+ | 85-90%        | 850 to 899 points  |
| B  | 80-85%        | 800 to 849 points  |
| C+ | 75-80%        | 750 to 799 points  |
| C  | 70-75%        | 700 to 749 points  |
| D  | 60-69%        | 600 to 699 points  |
| F  | 59% and below | 0 to 599 points    |

### Grading Components:

Grades are based on the following components:

Meet the Other Students, Profile Posting, and Response to Instructor Message: Week 1  
3% of the grade (30 points)

Reading Responses: Weeks 2, 8 & 10  
21% of the grade (Each reading response = 70 points)

Site Visit Reports: Weeks 4, 7 & 12 -- Any two of these three are required  
20% of the grade (Each of two site visit reports = 100 points)  
Optional extra credit for third site visit and report: 2.5% extra (25 points)

Quizzes: Units 6 & 13  
(Quizzes are True/False, Multiple Choice, and Essay Questions)  
20% of the grade (Each quiz = 100 points)

Forum Discussions: Weeks 3, 5, 9 & 11  
28% of the grade (Each forum = 70 points)

Final Paper: Week 14  
8% of the grade (80 points)

Please note: All late assignments will be downgraded one letter grade (e.g. A to B) and will not be accepted more than one week after due date.