

Labor and Employment History (1880-1945)
Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Rutgers University
100% Online Asynchronous

Instructor

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1-2:30pm (virtual), or by appointment.

Course Description

This is an especially exciting time to study labor history because there has been a rise in labor organizing across the country and social justice organizations have made recent concerted efforts to document largely unknown histories and labor leaders. In this course, we will take a multimedia, mixed material, and intersectional approach to exploring systemic racial, class, and gender inequalities that have impacted workers' lives in the United States (U.S.) from 1880-1945. We will also take a "bottom-up" approach to this rich historical period of worker organizing by focusing on labor histories and workers that have been left out of dominant narratives about U.S. labor movements. Specifically, we will explore the organizing strategies and working conditions of women and people of color who organized inside and outside of labor unions from private households, women's organizations, and sharecropping farms to commercial laundries and factory floors.

Course Rationale

Workers have and continue to engage in resistance in visual, media, and written forms. Every student must have access to the internet and streaming services such as YouTube to read and view the range of materials that we will examine in this course such as book chapters, documentaries, and a virtual museum tour. Students who take this course must also be prepared to deepen their writing, thinking, and reading of written and media source materials, while demonstrating effective writing skills. Everyone must approach the course with an openness to new ideas and a willingness to learn.

***This syllabus is subject to slight changes throughout the semester.**

Course Requirements:

Ice Breaker Assignment- 5%

Syllabus Quiz- 5%

Weekly Facilitations- 20%

Responses to Facilitations- 20%

Mid-Term Assignment -25%

Final Assignment – 25%

Goals and Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of how intersecting racial, class, and gender inequalities have shaped workers' lives historically.
- Analyze how systemic inequalities in U.S. labor movements have influenced organizing strategies against labor exploitation.
- Examine how policies and changes in the political and economic contexts have impacted workers' lives and organizing strategies.
- Trace how workers have organized within and outside of labor unions.

Course Materials

There are no required books for this course. All required materials are available on Canvas in the Modules section. Some of the required materials will require that you purchase a subscription to a streaming service. You can always cancel your subscription after viewing the required content for this course.

Required Assignments

1 & 2- Ice Breaker and Syllabus Quiz

We will begin the course by introducing ourselves to each other and to the syllabus. Guidelines for the ice breaker activity and syllabus quiz are posted on Canvas.

3 & 4- Class Discussions and Facilitations:

All students are expected to begin each week of class prepared to share their interpretation, analysis and synthesis of assigned readings and media materials. Each week, a group of students will be responsible for co-facilitating class discussion with their own discussion questions. The group is also expected to post their discussion questions and commentaries about the assigned readings in advance of class discussion. This assignment will rotate each week. When you are not co-facilitating the discussion, you are expected to respond to the discussion questions.

Everyone was randomly divided into 3 small groups to create spaces where you can engage in deeper discussions about the readings than you can in a large lecture size class. You are a member of one of these three groups. Within those discussion groups, you are either a member of writing group A or B. Each week, the writing groups will rotate between serving as facilitators or responding to the facilitators' questions within the respective discussion groups. Facilitation commentaries and questions are due by **Mondays at 11:59pm**. Responses are due by **Wednesdays at 11:59pm**. Reflections from facilitators are due by **Fridays at 11:59pm**.

Check the "Discussion and Writing Groups" file in Modules in Canvas to determine to which writing group you have been assigned.

Carefully read the guidelines and examples for facilitators and responses to facilitation questions in the Modules section on Canvas before writing your first facilitation commentary and response. The examples will provide you with the quality of work that is expected for each type of assignment and that adheres to the assignment rubrics.

The rubrics will be used to grade each weekly discussion board assignment. You can view the rubrics for all course assignments in the rubrics section in Canvas.

5- Mid-Term Assignment

Students will complete a mid-term assignment to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of the information covered during the first half of the course. Details will be announced.

6- Final Assignment

Students will complete a final assignment that builds upon the mid-term assignment to demonstrate and apply comprehensive knowledge of the information covered throughout the entire course. Details will be announced.

1& 2- Class Discussions and Facilitations:

All students are expected to begin each week of class prepared to share their interpretation, analysis and synthesis of assigned readings and media materials. Each week, a group of students will be responsible for co-facilitating class discussion with their own discussion questions. The group is also expected to post their discussion questions and commentaries about the assigned readings in advance of class discussion. This assignment will rotate each week. When you are not co-facilitating the discussion, you are expected to respond to the discussion questions.

Everyone was randomly divided into small groups named after labor leaders to create spaces where you can engage in deeper discussions about the readings than you can in a large lecture size class. Within those discussion groups, you are either a member of writing group A or B. Each week, the writing groups will rotate between serving as facilitators or responding to the facilitators' questions within the respective discussion groups. Facilitation commentaries and questions are due by **Mondays at 11:59pm**. Responses are due by **Wednesdays at 11:59pm**. Reflections from facilitators are due by **Fridays at 11:59pm**.

Check the "Discussion and Writing Groups" file in Modules in Canvas to determine to which writing group you have been assigned.

Carefully read the guidelines and examples for facilitators and responses to facilitation questions in the Modules section on Canvas before writing your first facilitation commentary and response. The examples will provide you with the quality of work that is expected for each type of assignment and that adheres to the assignment rubrics. The rubrics will be used to grade each weekly discussion board assignment. You can view the rubrics for all course assignments in the rubrics section in Canvas.

Technical Assistance

This course will be conducted asynchronously via Canvas (occurring at different times rather than at the same place and time). Canvas can be accessed through <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>. You can mark this URL as a bookmark in your computer system. Canvas is a course delivery system that provides private space on the web server that is used for members of this course. No one has access to the "space" except for those who are registered for the class. The space that is set aside for our course includes places to post comments and questions, access course grades, send email messages to your colleagues and me, view links to outside resources, and submit assignments.

To access the Canvas system, you'll need a Rutgers user ID and password. If you have any difficulty accessing Canvas or course materials, contact Rutgers Canvas Help.

Support Website: <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/>

Email: help@oit.rutgers.edu Call: 833-648-4357

Access to Internet and Word Processing Software

You will need regular internet access to participate in this course. Although you do not need extensive experience with computers or the Internet, you need to have a basic familiarity with web browsing, personal computers, and the internet. You will need to make sure that your internet service provider and web browser will work together with Canvas. If you wish to participate in Canvas courses from your place of employment, this may be difficult if there are firewalls at your workplace. You also will need to use Microsoft Word to prepare and submit your written assignments. I am not responsible for grading assignments that I cannot open.

Email

Make sure that the email address listed for you in Canvas is the email address that you use and check regularly. You are responsible for checking the announcements board and your Canvas email regularly to stay in tune with the latest course developments. All emails sent to me must be sent through Canvas.

Rules of Engagement

Internet-based courses have unique opportunities and challenges. Our interactions in Canvas will be text-based and will be asynchronous (occurring at different times rather than at the same place and time). Since our written contributions in Canvas will be posted electronically and accessible to all participants, each of us have the opportunity to contribute to this course and respond to each other's contributions in more thoughtful and carefully considered ways than we might in face-to-face classroom sessions. We will also have the opportunity to refer back to what we have written in earlier weeks to build on our ideas throughout the semester.

However, we will not be able to make use of body language and other cues to help us interpret each other's words in Canvas. Therefore, responses that we post must be carefully written, thoughtful, and respectful. We'll need to pay attention to both what we say and how we say it. Your postings should be well-written with few or no typographical or grammatical errors.

Language and symbols commonly used in texting should not be used when posting in the Discussion Board forums. Before making any postings to the Discussion Board, you should read and follow the guidelines about "netiquette" (rules of online communication) found here:

<https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/443>. This site also includes helpful tips for success in online courses.

Attendance Policy

Consistent and attentive participation online multiple times a week is vital to academic success and expected of everyone in the course. Grades are determined by academic performance and the level and quality of participation. If you cannot participate in class discussions for more than one week because of a personal emergency, it is your responsibility to inform me. Three or more weeks of non-participation will likely result in a failing grade.

An incomplete may be granted if you have already completed 80 percent of the course assignments.

Incompletes are not issued in this course unless you are unable to finish the course due to dire and extreme circumstances. Finally, you must provide strong evidence as to why you cannot register for the course when it is offered again. See Rutgers policy regarding incomplete grades here:

https://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/sph_current/pg34.html

Referrals

If you experience emotional distress during the semester, do not hesitate to contact medical and counseling services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Media Policy

The recording and transmission of classroom activities and discussions by students or faculty is prohibited without written permission from the class instructor and all students in the class. Class participants must have been informed that audio/video recording or reposting of forum contributions may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments without written permission. You may not share any part of any recording without express written permission by all parties potentially affected by the recording.

Recordings, course materials, forum content, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

Exception: It is not a violation of this policy for a student determined by the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (“LNEC”) to be entitled to educational accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study. Such recordings of lectures or class presentations are solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The restrictions on third party web and commercial distribution apply in such cases.

Disability Services: 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/getting-registered>.

Academic Integrity Policy: All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation, and to regulations promulgated by the University.

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academic freedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all students to pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please see <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> for details regarding the Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected to refrain from cheating, fabricating information, plagiarizing, inappropriately denying others access to material, and facilitating others in academic dishonesty. Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to “Turnitin.com” to ensure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from another student, from the web, or another source.

Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words. Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review via Turnitin in Canvas.

Week of September 4th:

1. Review syllabus and online course content carefully
2. Read texts for “Week of September 11th”
3. Complete Syllabus Quiz (Deadline: Friday, September 8th by 11:59pm)
4. Complete Ice Breaker Activity (Deadline: Friday, September 8th by 11:59pm)
5. View for Ice Breaker:

View: Kimberlé Crenshaw’s “On Intersectionality,” Keynote speech, <https://youtu.be/DW4HLgYPIA>

Week of September 11th: Intersectional Framework for Examining Labor History

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Issue 1, Article 8, 138-167.
- T. Lee & M. Tapia, “Confronting Race and other Social Identity Erasures: The Case for Critical Industrial Relations Theory,” T. Lee, S. Davis-Faulkner, N. Williams, M. Tapia, eds. *A Racial Reckoning in Industrial Relations: Storytelling As Revolution from Within*. Labor and Employment Research Association Series, 2022.
- What If Labor Were Not White and Male? Recentering Working-Class History and Reconstructing Debate on the Unions and Race Author(s): David Roediger Source: *International Labor and Working-Class History*, Spring, 1997, No. 51, *Workers in Racially-Stratified Societies* (Spring, 1997), pp. 72-95

September 18th: Coerced Labor and Post-Reconstruction

- **View:** Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Reconstruction: America After the Civil War” PBS Documentary, 2019, (Part 1, Hour 1 and Part 2, Hour 1)

After clicking on link below, click on red button that says “Watch Now.” Type Rutgers University Libraries into the box under “Log in via your academic institution.” Press enter. Lastly, log in using your Rutgers username and password to view the entire documentary.

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C5067716

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C5067720?account_id=13626&usage_group_id=98189

- Tera Hunter, *To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. (chapters 2 and 4)
- Calvin Schermerhorn, “The Thibodaux Massacre Left 60 African-Americans Dead and Spelled the End of Unionized Farm Labor in the South for Decades,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 21, 2017.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thibodaux-massacre-left-60-african-americans-dead-and-spelled-end-unionized-farm-labor-south-decades-180967289/>
- Eric Arnesen, “American Workers and the Labor Movement in the Late Nineteenth Century.” In Charles Calhoun, ed. *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

September 25th: Industrial Labor: Whiteness, Migrations, & The Working-Class

- David Roediger, “Irish-American Workers and White Racial Formation in the Antebellum United States.” In *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2007.
- Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, “Slaving” Irish Ladies and Black “Towers of Strength in the Labor World”: Race and Women’s Resistance in Domestic Service,” *Women’s History Review*, Special Issue: “Women, Work, and The State,” (2020): 190-207.
- **View:** Visual History of Indigenous Domestic Workers, *National Domestic Workers Alliance Project*.

*Begin reading from the link below. The section is entitled “The Outing System.”

Continue reading by clicking the right arrow and reading the following sections: “Menial Labor as Civilization,” “Colonial Maternalism,” “Inventing the Crime of Dancing,” “Working in the City,” “Motherhood Denied,” and “Rebellion in the Outing Program.”

<https://www.dwherstories.com/timeline/the-outing-system?prev=/timeline>

*Of course, you are welcome and encouraged to explore the entire site. We will discuss the above-mentioned sections in our class discussion.

Week of October 2nd: Forced Industrial Labor During Jim Crow and Progressive Eras

- View: “Workplace Safety: Progressive Era” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SILpcE7wffo>)
- View: “Progressive Era: Early Movement Towards Societal Equality” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNQAvDD6tWI>)
- Mary Church Terrell, “Peonage in the United States: The Convict Lease System and the Chain Gangs,” *The Nineteenth Century And After: A Monthly Review*. London: New Street Square Publishing (August 1907): 306-322.
- “Like I Was a Man”: Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia
Author(s): Sarah Haley Source: *Signs*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Women, Gender, and Prison: National and Global Perspectives (Autumn 2013), pp. 53-77.
- Read article and listen to entire interview: “Bodies of 95 Black-forced labor prisoners from Jim Crow era unearthed in Sugar Land after one man’s quest,” *Texas Public Radio*. June 21, 2023.

<https://www.tpr.org/podcast/the-source/2023-06-21/bodies-of-95-black-forced-labor-prisoners-from-jim-crow-era-unearthed-in-sugar-land-after-one-mans-quest>

- Lee, Erika. “The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*. 21, 3 (Spring 2002): 36-62.

Week of October 9th : Racial and Gender Politics of Transnational Organizing During Jim Crow and Progressive Eras

- “Preamble to the Constitution of the International Workers of the World.”
- Joe Richard, “The Legacy of the IWW: To Break Their Haughty Power,” *The International Socialist Review*. 86 (Winter 2016-2017).
- Lara Vapnek, “The 1919 International Congress of Working Women: Transnational Debates on the ‘Woman Worker,’” *Journal of Women’s History*. 25, 4 (2013): 160-184.

- Black Women’s Petition Response to Congress Meeting: “First Convention of International Conference of Working Women,” November 4, 1919, International Federation of Working Women Records, Folder 3, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University
- Sheilena M. Downey, “Precursor to Women of Color Feminism: International Council of the Women of the Darker Races of the World and Their Internationalist Orientation,” *Meridians: Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism*. 19, 2 (October 2020): 271-277.
- Read entire constitution of the International Council of the Women of the Darker Races of the World.

Source: Mary Church Terrell Papers, Library of Congress

https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss42549.mss42549-014_00689_00697/?sp=1&r=0.342,0.144,1.433,0.694,0

Week of October 16th: Mid Term Assignment (TBA)

Connecting The Dots: Depression Era through World War II

Week of October 23rd: Organizing During Jim Crow and Great Depression

- ***Only read pp. 313-320:** Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis, eds. “The American Federation of Labor and the Black Worker.” In *The Black Worker, Volume 6, The Era of Post-War Prosperity and the Great Depression, 1920-1936*.
- Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, “The Servants Campaigns: African American Women and the Politics of Economic Justice in Washington, D.C., in the 1930s,” *Journal of Urban History*. 44, 2 (2018): 187-202.
- Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, “Nannie Helen Burroughs, trailblazing Black teacher and labor organizer,” *The Washington Post*, September 5, 2022.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/09/05/labor-day-black-women/>
- Sonia Hernández, “Revisiting Mexican(a) Labor History through Feminismo Transfronterista: From Tampico to Texas and Beyond, 1910–1940,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 36, 3 (2015): 107-136.

Week of October 30th: The Wagner Act & Agricultural Worker Organizing

- Alexis N. Walker, “The Wagner Act: A Critical Exclusion,” 17-30. In *Divided Unions: The Wagner Act, Federalism, and Organized Labor*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.
- John Beecher, “The Sharecroppers’ Union in Alabama,” *Social Forces*, 13, 1 (October 1934 - May, 1935): 124-132.
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990. (Read “In Egyptland: The Sharecroppers’ Union” and “In the Heart of the Trouble: Race, Sex, and the ILD”)
- **View:** “Emma Tenayuca and the 1938 Pecan Shellers Strike,” Documentary, 2020.
<https://vimeo.com/480621468>

Week of November 2nd: Company Labor & Immigrant Organizing

- **View:** “Discovering My Grandfather through Mao,” History of the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York (CHLA)
<https://vimeo.com/27365808>
- Glenn Omatsu, “Racism or Solidarity? Unions and Asian Immigrant Workers,” *The Radical Teacher* (Spring 95): 33-37.
- Lilila Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants: Mexican and Puerto Rican Labor Migration in Comparative Perspective, 1942-1964. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 29, 3 (Spring 2010): 6-39.

Week of November 13th: Combined Civil Rights and Labor Rights Organizing During the 1940s

- Manning Marable, “A. Philip Randolph and the Foundations of Black American Socialism.” In *Workers’ Struggles, Past and Present*. James Green, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.
- **View:** “The March on Washington that Never Happened,” A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu2QqVSoKrs>

Take Virtual Tour of Pullman Porters Museum (Cost of admission is \$7.00)

Register for and take the tour here: <https://aprpullmanportermuseum.org/full-virtual-tour-registration-form/>

- Boris, Eileen Boris. “Fair Employment and the Origins of Affirmative Action in the 1940s,” *National Women’s Studies Journal*. 10, 3 (Autumn 1998): 142-151

Week of November 20th: No Class/Holiday Break

Week of November 27th: Focus on Final Assignment

Week of December 4th: Submit Final Assignment