

# History of Labor and Work in the United States, 1880 to 1945

Rutgers University 37:575:202:95

Fall 2023



**Course schedule:** Saturdays, 5:40 to 8:40 pm, September 9 through December 16, 2023. Remote Synchronous using Zoom.

Knowledge Checks, paper assignments, exams, and other course activities on Canvas.

## Instructor:

Prof. Kenneth C. Wolensky, Ed.D.

Email: kw753@smlr.rutgers.edu

Phone: 717-526-8911 (cell)

Virtual office hours by appointment

**Course Description:** This course introduces the important development and themes in the U.S. labor movement from 1880 through World War II. We will take a close look at how American workers built labor unions, civil rights organizations, and social movements to defend their interests during wars, depressions, and periods of conflict with those who controlled wealth and capital. By focusing on these struggles, we will learn about some of the people, ideas, and institutions that shaped the labor movement, while also exploring the workplace and the economy in political, social, and cultural terms.

**Skills development:** This course meets the writing distribution requirement for the School of Arts and Sciences. In addition to developing writing skills through writing successive drafts, students will learn to provide constructive feedback to their peers. The course has additional writing instructors who will read and comment on drafts, meet with students for one-on-one conferences, and assess final papers. At the conclusion of the course, students will demonstrate an increase in their knowledge and skills in writing and revising academic essays. Specifically, students should be able to:

- Enter into a dialogue with specialists in a particular field of study,
- Read essays and extract and explain key points and terms,
- Organize a paper from thesis, to topic sentence, to conclusion,

- Interact with texts by using meaningful citations in their papers,
- Use a range of sentence structures, and
- Write meaningful, clear, and organized papers.

**Learning Objectives:** This course covers several School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR), and Labor Studies and Employment Relations (LSER) Department learning objectives.

**School of Arts and Sciences:**

*Students will learn to:*

**HST-I:** Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.

**SCL-I:** Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

**WCR:** Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.

**WCD:** Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

**School of Management and Labor Relations:**

*Students will learn to:*

**I:** Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry-level professional.

**IV:** Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

**Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:**

*Students will learn to:*

**I:** Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations.

**4:** Make an argument using contemporary or historical evidence.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Read the entire syllabus** and make sure you understand it. This is your contract with your instructors.
2. **Be prepared for class.** Always complete any reading, discussion, and writing assignments by their due dates. Check your email regularly for class announcements.
3. **Participation.** For most weeks of this course, we will have in-person class meetings whenever possible or have synchronous (live) class meetings on Zoom should we have to go remote. In addition, we will have discussion forums or other assignments that you will complete over a course week. You should participate fully in these forums and assignments. If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to participate in course activities (due to COVID-19, serious illness, or another major reason), report it in writing in advance or as soon as possible using the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. Not all absences will be excused. The participation grade will be based on the completion of eight discussion forums on assigned readings and videos throughout the semester, but points will be deducted for unexcused absences from class meetings.
4. **Absences due to illness.** If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or any other transmissible disease (cold, flu, etc.), or have been told to quarantine, you must remain at home and not attend in-person class meetings. Please report absences in writing in advance or as soon as possible using the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. Medical documentation is not required for reporting absences. Students with excused absences will be able to make up missed course work.
5. **Covid 19 vaccine requirements and face masks.** All Rutgers students, faculty, and staff are required to be [fully vaccinated](#) against Covid-19, obtain a booster when eligible, and upload records to the university vaccine portal. As of October 2022, face masks are not required in most in-door settings on campus, including classrooms. For more information, see: [https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/health-and-safety/community-safety-practices/ Links to an external site.](https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/health-and-safety/community-safety-practices/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)
6. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity requires that all academic work be the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the university community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. For more information on the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>
7. **Copyright:** The instructor for this course holds the copyright to the course teaching materials, including lecture slides, discussion questions, exams, and assignments. The copyrights to the readings and films belong to their rights holders (authors, producers, publishers, etc.). Students may not copy or distribute this material without the permission of the instructor. Unauthorized distributions of course materials are serious offenses. For more information on the Rutgers University Copyright Policy, see <http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7-current.pdf>

8. **Disability Statement:** 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: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.
9. **Statement on Academic Freedom:** Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This course will introduce an array of sometimes-conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.
10. **Missed Exams:** All students are expected to take the scheduled midterm and final exams at the designated times.
11. **Canvas:** This course uses the Rutgers Canvas course management system, accessible at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu>. Click "NetID Login" on the right side of the main Canvas site. Once you log in, you can access the course site by clicking the "Courses" tab. The course site features the syllabus and weekly modules with the reading, viewing, and writing assignments.
12. **Paper Assignments:** All paper drafts, peer reviews, and writing conferences be completed for full credit. You will submit all drafts of your papers electronically on Canvas and they will be checked using Turnitin.
13. **Lateness Policy:** All late paper assignments will be marked down 10 points for every 24-hour period they are late. All drafts, peer reviews, and writing conferences have point values. If you have a severe personal emergency that makes it impossible for you to meet the deadlines, please contact your instructors.
14. **Required Readings:** Many of the reading assignments will be chapters from the following textbook, which has been digitized and is available for you on the course Canvas site. You may purchase a copy of the third edition of the textbook if you prefer:

Rosenzweig, Roy and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds. *Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History Volume Two: Since 1877*, Third Edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin Press, 2008.

In addition to the textbook, there are other required readings and videos that will either be assigned to for class meetings and discussion forums. These will be posted as PDF files, Word documents, video files, or web links in the modules on the weekly modules on the course Canvas site. Some of the additional readings are primary source documents written in the past that provide perspectives and insight on historical developments and events. Other additional readings are secondary source commentaries and historical analyses written after the events have taken place.

15. **Assignment Points:** Assignments are assigned points (up to 1,000 total points for all course assignments)

Knowledge Checks and attendance: 200 points (8 Knowledge Checks worth 25 points each; points deducted for unexcused absences for class meetings)

Paper 1: 200 points (25 points for the first draft and peer review; 25 points for the second draft and writing conference; 150 points for the final draft)

Midterm Exam: 200 points

Paper 2: 200 points (25 points for the first draft and peer review; 25 points for the second draft and writing conference; 150 points for the final draft)

Final Exam: 200 points

16. **Final Grades:** Here is how the 1,000 point grade scale translates into final letter grades:

900 to 1000 points = A	850 to 899 points = B+	750 to 799 points = C+	600 to 699 points = D
	800 to 849 points = B	700 to 749 points = C	0 to 599 points = F

**The syllabus, schedule, and assignments are subject to change as the course evolves.**

**Weekly Class Schedule:**

**Week 1: Course Introduction and Historical Background – September 9**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Prologue and Chapter 1, pp. 23-49

*1877: The Grand Army of Starvation*

Assignment:

Week 1 Discussion Forum: Student Introductions.

Knowledge Check: What do Unions Do?

**Week 2: The Knights of Labor – September 16**

Readings:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Chapter 2, pp. 77-106.

Alex Gourevitch, “Our Forgotten Labor Revolution,” *Jacobin*, August 25, 2015

Podcast: “The Long Hot Summer of Labor” from NPR.

Assignment:

Week 2 Knowledge Check: The Knights of Labor and “Our Forgotten Labor Revolution”

**Week 3: Industrial Capitalism and Conflict in the Gilded Age – September 23**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II Chapters 2 and 3*, pp. 123-144

Samuel Gompers, “What Does Labor Want?”, pp. 388-396

Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth*, Chapter 2  
“Statement of the Pullman Strikers,” June 15, 1894  
Video clip on the American Railway Union and the Pullman Strike from *American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene V. Debs*

Assignment:

Week 3 Knowledge Check: Gompers vs. Carnegie

**Week 4: The IWW, The UMWA, and Mother Jones – September 30**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II Chapter 5, pp. 223-255*

Elliott Gorn, *Mother Jones*, Chapter 7

Video on the Industrial Workers of the World from *The Wobblies*

Assignments:

**Paper 1 Draft 1 Due October 7**

**Week 5: Race, Immigration, and Exclusion – October 7**

Readings and Videos:

*Who Built America Vol. II Chapter 3, 144-179*

Video clip of tour of the Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State University with Dr. David Pilgrim

Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in America”

Wong Hau-Hon, “Reminiscences of an Old Chinese Railroad Worker”

Video clip “Between Two Worlds: The Chinese Exclusion Act” from *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*

Assignment:

Week 5 Knowledge Check: Ida B. Wells and the Anti-Lynching Movement; Wong Hau-Hon and the Experiences of Chinese Immigrants

**Week 6: Writing Conferences – October 14**

Assignment:

Attend a one-one-one conference with your instructor to discuss Paper 1 in advance of submitting the final paper.

**Week 7: The Uprising of the 20,000 and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire – October 21**

Video:

*American Experience: Triangle Fire*

Assignments:

**Paper 1 Final Due**

Week 7 Knowledge Check: Legacies of the Triangle Fire

**Mid-Term Exam Begins, due October 28.**

**Week 8: World War I and The Red Scare; Midterm Exam – October 28**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II Chapter 6, pp. 279-300*

Joseph McCartin, “Fighting for Industrial Democracy in World War I”

“A Little Patriotic Affair: New Brunswick during World War I”

“Two Antiwar Speeches by Eugene V. Debs”

Video clip on Eugene V. Debs and his antiwar activism during World War I from *American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene V. Debs*

Assignment:

**Midterm Exam Due**

**Week 9: Work in the Roaring Twenties – November 4**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Chapters 4 and 7, pp. 181-192 and 366-389

“Frederick Taylor Explains Scientific Management”

“Machinist Orrin Cheney Testifies on the Taylor System”

“Mrs. LL Ray Outlines Welfare Capitalism”

*The Great Depression: A Job at Ford’s*

Assignment:

Week 9 Knowledge Check: *A Job at Ford’s*

**Week 10: The Great Depression and the First New Deal – November 11**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Chapter 8, pp. 391-443

Bruce Nelson, “The Big Strike”

Video Clip on the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the First New Deal from *The Great Depression: New Deal, New York*

Assignment:

Week 10 Knowledge Check: “The Big Strike”

**Week 11: The Rise of the CIO and the Second New Deal – November 18**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Chapter 9, pp. 445-494

“Genora Dollinger Remembers the 1936-37 GM Sit-Down Strike”

“Louis Adamic Lists the Virtues and Advantage of the Sit-Down Strike”

*With Babies and Banners: The Story of the Women’s Emergency Brigade*

Assignments:

**Paper 2 Draft 1 Due November 23**

*November 25, 2023 Thanksgiving Break – No Class*

**Week 12: Working in the Arsenal of Democracy – December 2**

Readings and Video:

*Who Built America Vol. II* Chapter 10, pp. 497-551

A. Philip Randolph, “Why Should We March?”

Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Executive Order 8802”

*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*

Assignment:

Week 12 : Knowledge Check: *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*

**Week 13:** “City of Steel” Film regarding the Industrialization and De-Industrialization of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Discussion to Follow – December 9. **Final Paper 2 Due.**

**Week 14: Final Exam Review – December 16**

Instructor will provide a conclusion to the class and discuss the Final Exam

**Final Exam: Due on December 21, 2023**

### **Rutgers COVID-19 Information**

For up-to-date information about Rutgers and COVID-19, visit <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu>

### **Additional Help With Writing**

[The Rutgers Learning Centers](#) offers remote writing coaching services to students enrolled in this course. Visit <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/services/writing-coaching> for more information.

### **Student Affairs**

[The Office of the Dean of Students](#) provides support to students who may be facing exceptional difficulties that could jeopardize their education. Visit their website to learn more about the type of support they offer and/or to schedule an appointment.

### **Health & Wellness**

[Student Health & Wellness Services](#) provides health services to students on its various campuses through Student Health Centers.

### **Student Resources**

[The Fall 2023 Information for SMLR students page](#) with links to resources for mental health, academic coaching, and financial assistance.

### **Scholarships for SMLR Students**

[This page](#) contains information about scholarships available for current (and future!) SMLR students enrolled in the [LSER, LER, and HRM undergraduate programs](#) and the [MLER, MHRM, and IR/HR PhD graduate programs](#).

### **Technical Support**

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas:

- Visit the [Canvas Video Guide](#)
- Contact [Rutgers IT Help Desk](#) or call 833-OIT-HELP
- Visit the [Getting Started in Canvas page](#)