



History of Labor and Work in the U.S.: 1880-1945 (on-line)

37:575: 202 (Section 90) – Spring 2020

Instructor: Mike Slott
Phone #: 973-979-0703 (cell)
Email: ptslott@smlr.rutgers.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This on-line course explores the history of the labor movement in the U.S. from 1880 to 1945. Course themes include the sources and forms of conflict between workers and employers; changes in technology, production, and workplace organization in an evolving capitalist economy; the different types of unions and worker organizations which were formed in this period; and the on-going debate over the goals and purposes of unions.

Although unions are not the exclusive focus of the course, we will closely study how labor unions were affected by changes in our economy, politics, and culture, as well as how working people and their unions impacted and shaped these systems. Through this process of mutual interaction, who labor unions represented, what they sought to accomplish in the short- and long-term, and how they attempted to reach their goals evolved. At the same time, there was no change in the basic rationale for unions: to defend and advance the interests of working people vis-à-vis powerful employers and a government which often supported employers.

In this course, we will look at how the labor movement's ability to improve their members' living standards and working conditions widely fluctuated from 1880 to 1945. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries unions were relatively weak most of the time, almost marginal in their influence. However, in response to the crisis conditions of the Great Depression of the 1930s, workers organized powerful unions and became a central element of a new, progressive political coalition which reshaped our economy and political system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Rutgers University, the School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR), and the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department have established the following learning objectives for this course:

From the Rutgers University Core Curriculum: HST, SCL, WCr and WCd

- Explain the development of some aspect of society or culture over time. (HST, Goal k).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (SCL, Goal m).
- 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. (WCr, Goal s).
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; Evaluate and critically assess sources and the use of conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (WCd, Goal t).

From the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).
- Make an argument using contemporary or historical evidence. (Goal 4).

From the School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional. (Goal I).
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)

Instructor's Learning Objectives:

In addition to the learning objectives listed above, the following learning objectives are based on the specific topics and issues covered in the course:

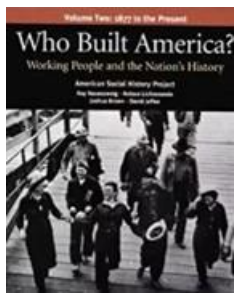
- Understand the critical role of the labor movement in our society.
- Recognize why and how workers have formed different types of labor organizations.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how workers and their organizations (including unions) have been shaped by the larger society of which they are a part, but have also contributed to changing the larger society.

Since this is an **on-line course** which includes peer review/editing and forum discussions involving a group of students, several learning objectives concern the process of interaction between students.

- Demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly, authentically, and maintain a content-oriented focus in response to other students' work.
- Maintain a positive and respectful attitude when interacting with other students, especially those who have different views and opinions.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES: 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>.

COURSE READINGS:



1. ***Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History, Volume II: Since 1877***, 3rd ed., Bedford / St. Martin's Press, 2008. (Referred to as **WBA?** In the following pages of the syllabus.) This is the **textbook** for the course. All assigned readings from the textbook are available on **Canvas**.

2. **Other Required Readings:** In addition to the textbook, the other required readings are also available online with the course. Most of the online readings are **primary sources and will be noted** in the syllabus – i.e. they are from the time period discussed in the text. Other readings are secondary sources; they are interpretations and evaluations of the events or developments.

The primary sources are from the following books:

- ***American Labor: A Documentary Collection (AL)***, edited by M. Dubofsky and J. McCartin, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- ***Major Problems in the History of American Workers (MPHAW)***, edited by E. Boris and N. Lichtenstein, 2nd ed., Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2003.
- ***Voices of a People's History of the United States (VPHUS)***, edited by H. Zinn and A. Arnove, Seven Stories Press, 2004.
- ***Voices of Freedom: Documentary History, volume 2 (VOF)***, edited by Eric Foner, 4th ed., W.W. Norton & Co., 2014.
- ***The Voice of the People (VOP)***, edited by J. Rees and J. Pollack, Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2004.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Tuesday, Jan. 21 to Sunday, Jan. 26

Become familiar with the web site for this on-line course. Then, read the syllabus and a very brief summary of U.S. labor history until 1877. You will also find a video introduction about my background and teaching philosophy.

Readings:

- Course Syllabus
- Slott and Voos, "A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877," pp. 1-4.

→Assignments due by Jan. 26:

- 1) Introduce yourself to other students by writing an on-line introduction
- 2) Provide "Account Related Information" for the Canvas website
- 3) Take the quiz on U.S. labor history based on "A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877"

Week 2: THE RAILROAD STRIKES OF THE 1870s: THE FIRST ACT IN AN ERA OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Monday, Jan. 27 to Sunday, Feb. 2

Readings:

- Gutman, "Trouble on the Railroads in 1873-1874: Prelude to the 1877 Crisis?" in *The Labor History Reader*, pp. 132-152 (1985).
- Brecher, "The Great Upheaval," pp. 138-148. [Primary Source - MPHAW]

→Assignment due by Feb. 2: Response Paper/Writing Assignment 1

Week 3: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE (1880 to 1893)

Monday, Feb. 3 to Sunday, Feb. 9

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 1 - pp. 23-52, 64-71 (begin on p. 64 with the section "Extractive Industries and Exploited Workers).

→Assignment due by Feb. 9: Forum Discussion

[Please note the initial submission to the forum discussion is due by Friday of this week.]

Week 4: WORKING PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM (1880 to 1893)

Monday, Feb. 10 to Sunday, Feb. 16

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 2

Video Clip: "Homestead Strike of 1892"

→Assignment due by Feb. 16: Group Forum Discussion
[Please note the initial submission to the forum discussion is due by Friday of this week.]

Week 5: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM TRIUMPHS (1893 to 1900)

Monday, Feb. 17 to Sunday, Feb. 23

- WBA? Chapter 3
- "Statement from the Pullman Strikers" (1894), pp. 234-236. [Primary Source - VPHUS]
- "How to Write an Argumentative Essay"

Video Clip: "Video on Writing Assignment 2"

→Assignment due by Feb. 23: First Draft of Writing Assignment 2

Week 6: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK AND HOME (1900 to 1914)

Monday, Feb. 24 to Sunday, March 1

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 4 - pp. 180-202.
- "Machinist Orrin Cheney Testifies to Congress on the Taylor System of Shop Management" (1911), pp. 83-85. [Primary Source - VOP]

Video Clip: "The Beat of the System"

→Assignment due by March 1: Peer Review and Edit of another student's Writing Assignment 2

Week 7: FINAL VERSION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Monday, March 2 to Sunday, March 8

Readings:

- "Revising Your Paper"

→Assignment due by March 8: Final Version of Writing Assignment 2

Week 8: REFORM AND RADICALISM IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900 TO 1914)

Monday, March 9 to Friday, March 13

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 5
- "Radical Alternatives" (pp. 134-137). [Primary Source - AL]
- "The Industrial Workers of the World and the Free Speech Fights" (1909), pp. 83-87. [Primary Source - VOF]
- "Proclamation of the Striking Textile Workers of Lawrence" (1912), pp. 272-275. [Primary Source - VOPH]

SPRING BREAK – March 14 to March 22

Week 9: THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON WORKERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS (1914 to 1920)

Monday, March 23 to Sunday, March 29

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 6
- "Post-War Backlash" (pp. 149-154). [Primary Source - AL]

Video Clip: "The Seattle General Strike"

→Assignment due by March 29: Group Forum Discussion

[Please note the initial submission to the forum discussion is due by Friday of this week.]

Week 10: THE "LEAN YEARS" FOR AMERICAN WORKERS (1920 to 1929)

Monday, March 30 to Sunday, April 5

Readings:

- WBA? Ch. 7

→Assignment due by April 5: Group Forum Discussion

[Please note the initial submission to the forum discussion is due by Friday of this week.]

Week 11: THE GREAT DEPRESSION & THE FIRST NEW DEAL (1929 to 1934)

Monday, April 6 to Sunday, April 12

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 8
- “Depression” (pp. 176-186). [Primary Source - AL]
- “Rose Chernin on Organizing the Unemployed in the Bronx in the 1930s” (1949), pp. 340-344. [Primary Source - VOPH]

Video Clips: “1929 Stock Market Crash” and “San Francisco General Strike.”

→Assignment due by April 12: First Draft of Writing Assignment 3

WEEK 12: LABOR UPSURGE: THE INDUSTRIAL UNION MOVEMENT AND THE SECOND NEW DEAL, PART 1 (1935 to 1939)

Monday, April 13 to Sunday, April 19

- WBA? Chapter 9

→Assignment due by April 19: Peer Review and Edit of another student’s Writing Assignment 3

Week 13: LABOR UPSURGE: THE INDUSTRIAL UNION MOVEMENT AND THE SECOND NEW DEAL, PART 2 (1935 to 1939)

Monday, April 20 to Sunday, April 26

Readings:

- “Industrial Union Upsurge” (pp. 187-193). [Primary Source - AL]
- “Steelworkers Organizing Committee, a New Declaration of Independence” (1936), pp. 163-166. [Primary Source - VOF]

Video Clip: “Chicago Memorial Day Massacre.”

→Assignment due by April 26: Final Version of Writing Assignment 3

Week 14: WORKING PEOPLE & WORLD WAR II (1939 to 1946)

Monday, April 27 to Sunday, May 3

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 10
- "World War II" (pp. 194-205). **[Primary Source - AL]**

Video Clips: "Manpower Needs in World War II" and "Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II."

→ Assignment due by May 3: Group Forum Discussion

[Please note the initial submission to the forum discussion is due by Friday of this week.]

Final Assignment - Exam

Thursday, May 7 to Friday, May 8

Assignment is available on Canvas on Thursday, May 7 and Friday, May 8. Students will take an "open book" exam based on questions from "Check Your Understanding" for Weeks 2 through 14.

GRADING CRITERIA AND COMPONENTS

Grading Criteria:

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:

#1 – Quiz: Week 1

50 points = 5% of the grade

[Note: Students will get the full 50 points by completing the exam.]

#2 – Forum Discussions: Weeks 3, 4, 9, 10, & 14

Each forum discussion = 50 points. 5 x 50 = 250 points – 25% of the grade

#3 – Peer Review and Edit of another Student’s Writing Assignment: Weeks 6 & 12

Each peer review = 50 points. 2 x 50 = 100 points = 10% of the grade

#4 – Writing Assignments: Weeks 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, & Final Assignment

65% of the grade

Week 2 - Response Paper/Writing Assignment 1 = 50 points

Week 5 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 2 = 50 points

Week 7 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 2 = 100 points

Week 11 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 3 = 50 points

Week 13 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 3 – 150 points

Total: = 400 points = 40% of the grade

#5 – Final Exam

Open book. Questions are based on the “Check Your Understanding” questions for each week of the course.

200 points = 20% of the grade

Total Course Points = 1000 = 100% of the grade.

Please note:

Unless there is prior notification and a legitimate reason, all late papers will be downgraded ½ letter grade (e.g. A →B+)