

## **History of Labor and Work in the U.S.: 1880-1945**

### **37:575:202 - Summer 2020 [Online]**

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#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the major developments 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. Importantly, this course will challenge some of the assumptions you may have about how U.S. society works and will require you to step outside of your comfort zone in thinking about the relationship between historical and contemporary social problems and possible solutions and alternatives. The course is designed to equip students with the critical thinking skills to challenge conventional wisdom, myths, and misconceptions and will provide a solid foundation for exercising their rights and responsibilities as global citizens.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

##### **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)

## **From the Instructor**

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.

## **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. You do not need to purchase any books for this course!

2. Other Required Readings: In addition to the textbook, the other required readings are also available online within the course Canvas site.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Week 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE / SETTING THE STAGE**

*Tuesday, May 26 to Sunday, May 31*

Readings:

- Course Syllabus
- Slott and Voos, "A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877"
- WBA? Prologue

Assignments due by May 31:

- Introduce yourself to the rest of the class in the online Discussion Forum
- Provide "Account Related Information" for the Canvas website
- Take the quiz on U.S. labor history based on "A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877"

**Week 2: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE (1880 to 1893)**

*Monday, June 1 to Sunday, June 7*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 1

Assignment due by June 5/7:

- Forum Discussion

**Week 3: WORKERS' RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM (1880 to 1893)**

*Monday, June 8 to Sunday, June 14*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 2

Video Clip:

- "Homestead Strike of 1892"

Assignment due by June 12/14:

- Group Forum Discussion

**Week 4: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM TRIUMPHS (1893 to 1900)**

*Monday, June 15 to Sunday, June 21*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 3
- "Statement from the Pullman Strikers"
- "How to Write an Argumentative Essay" Video Clip: "The Writing Process"

Assignment due by June 21:

- First Draft of Writing Assignment 1

**Week 5: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK AND HOME (1900 to 1914)**

*Monday, June 22 to Sunday, June 28*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 4 - pp. 180-202.
- "Machinist Orrin Cheney Testifies to Congress on the Taylor System of Shop Management"

Video Clip:

- "The Beat of the System"

Assignment due June 28:

- Peer Review and Edit of another student's Writing Assignment 1

**Week 6: REFORM AND RADICALISM IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900 TO 1914)**

*Monday, June 29 to Sunday, July 5*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 5
- “Radical Alternatives”
- “The IWW and the Free Speech Fights”
- “Proclamation of the Striking Textile Workers of Lawrence”

Assignment due by July 5:

- Final Version of Writing Assignment 1

**Week 7: THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON WORKERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS (1914 to 1920)**

*Monday, July 6 to Sunday, July 12*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 6
- “Post-War Backlash”

Video Clip:

- “The Seattle General Strike”

Assignment due by July 10/12:

- Group Forum Discussion

**Week 8: THE “LEAN YEARS” FOR AMERICAN WORKERS (1920 to 1929)**

*Monday, July 13 to Sunday, July 19*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 7

Assignment due by July 17/19:

- Group Forum Discussion

**Week 9: THE GREAT DEPRESSION & THE FIRST NEW DEAL (1929 to 1934)**

*Monday, July 20 to Sunday, July 26*

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 8
- “Depression”
- “Rose Chernin on Organizing the Unemployed in the Bronx in the 1930s”

Video Clips:

- “1929 Stock Market Crash”
- “San Francisco General Strike.”

Assignment due by July 26:

- First Draft of Writing Assignment 2

**Week 10: LABOR UPSURGE: THE INDUSTRIAL UNION MOVEMENT AND THE SECOND NEW DEAL (1935 to 1939)**

*Monday, July 27 to Sunday, August 2*

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 9
- “Industrial Union Upsurge”
- “Steelworkers Organizing Committee, a New Declaration of Independence”

Video Clip:

- “Chicago Memorial Day Massacre.”

Assignment due Aug 2:

- Peer Review and Edit of another student’s Writing Assignment 2

**Week 11: WORKING PEOPLE & WORLD WAR II (1939 to 1946)**

*Monday, August 3 to Sunday, August 9*

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 10
- "World War II"

Video Clips:

- "Manpower Needs in WWII"
- "Rosie the Riveter: Women Workers in WWII."

Assignment due by August 7/9:

- Group Forum Discussion

Assignment due by August 12:

- Final Version of Writing Assignment 2

**Final Week: FINAL EXAM**

*Monday, Available August 10 through August 14*

Assignment due by August 14:

- Final Exam

## GRADING CRITERIA AND COMPONENTS

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

### #1 –Quiz: Week 1

50 points = **5% of the grade**

[Note: Students will get the full 50 points by completing the quiz on time]

### #2 –Forum Discussions: Weeks 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11

Each forum discussion = 50 points.

6 x 50 = 300 points = **30% of the grade**

### #3 – Writing Assignments: Weeks 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11

Week 4 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 1 = 50 points

Week 5 – Peer Review Writing Assignment 1 = 50pts

Week 6 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 1 = 100 points

Week 9 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 2 = 50 points

Week 10 – Peer Review Writing Assignment 2 = 50pts

Week 11 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 2 = 150 points

Total = 450 points = **45% of the grade**

### #4 – Final Exam

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

200 points = **20% of the grade**

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