

**COMPARATIVE LABOR MOVEMENTS**  
**(aka LABOR MOVEMENTS & DEMOCRACY)**  
**Labor Studies and Employment Relations 575:301**  
**Spring 2013**

**Syllabus**

Class Meetings:

Room 216  
Hickman Hall  
Douglass Campus  
Monday & Wednesday, 2:15–3:35pm

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Office Hours: 2-4pm on Thursdays or Appt.

Course Overview:

This course probes the causes, contours and effects of labor movements in comparative perspective across both time and space. Students will be introduced to workers' collective action as a worldwide phenomenon that has been central to the political economic development of capitalist democracies. Taking a historical institutionalist approach to labor as a social movement, the course emphasizes how a country's unique history and its institutional context have shaped the political opportunities for workers' evolving collective action.

With reference to three centuries of transatlantic history, the class covers both key political achievements of the working class (including the extension of suffrage and the expansion of welfare states) as well as labor's contemporary challenges (such as responding to economic globalization, accommodating shifting social cleavages and devising strategies for revitalization).

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspective on work (as well as the world more broadly) – SAS(a) & LSER(6).
- Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts – SAS(d) & LSER(8).
- Develop a solid understanding of labor movements' causes, contours and effects.
- Use the comparative approach and theoretical models to critically analyze labor movements, employment relations, and social justice in countries not covered in this course.
- Improve professional competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving; verbal and written communication; and leadership, team and interpersonal skills.

Class Materials:

Students are not required to purchase any books. All readings will be made available on Rutgers Sakai (<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>).

Course Requirements:

Class Participation	30% of the course grade
Midterm Exam	20%
Term Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%

Course Outline:

**Introduction (Jan 23)**

No reading. We go over the syllabus and review strategies for effective engagement with the assigned readings.

**SECTION I: THEORIZING LABOR MOVEMENTS**

This section of the course probes how we can conceptualize labor movements: Who belongs to them? What does a movement seek to do? Why does a movement end up doing what it does?

**Week 1: Work & Labor Markets (Jan 28 & 30)**

**Power in Labor Markets (MONDAY)**

Paul Frymer and Dorian T. Warren. 2011. "What NBA stars and Occupy Wall Street protesters have in common." *Washington Post*, October 28.

Wolfgang Streeck. 2005. "The Sociology of Labor Markets and Trade Unions." In Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg, eds. *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, only read pages 260-266 (from "Labor Markets and Trade Unions" to "A Typology of Trade Unions and Labor Markets").

**Is Collective Action Necessary? (WEDNESDAY)**

Rick Fantasia & Kim Voss. 2004. *Hard Work. Remaking the American Labor Movement*. Berkeley: UC Press, only read pages 19-33 (second half of Chapter 1: Why Labor Matters: The Underside of the "American Model"); pages 1-18 are recommended.

**Week 2: Institutions & Workers' Collective Action (Feb 4 & 6)**

**Theorizing Determinants of Social Action (MONDAY)**

Theda Skocpol. 1995. "Why I am a Historical Institutionalizer." *Polity* 28(1): 103-106.

**An Example: Institutional Roots of Racism in American Labor (WEDNESDAY)**

Paul Frymer. 2007. *Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1-21 (Chapter 1: Introduction).

**Week 3: Labor as a Social Movement (Feb 11 & 13)**

**Creating Collective Voice (MONDAY)**

Sidney G. Tarrow. 1998. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ix (Table of Contents) & 1-9 (Introduction) and 71-73 (part of Chapter 5: Political Opportunities and Constraints).

**Building toward Action (WEDNESDAY)**

Sidney G. Tarrow. 1998. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 106-122 (Chapter 7: Framing Contention).

**Week 4: Comparing Labor Movements – Why, What & How? (Feb 18 & 20)**

**The Mechanics of Comparative Research (MONDAY)**

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers. 1980. “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22(2): 174-197.

**Explaining Important Outcomes (WEDNESDAY)**

Gregory Luebbert. 1991. *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1-14 (Introduction).

**SECTION II: LABOR & THE EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM**

In this section of the course, we study how labor movements in many countries played pivotal roles in the building of national systems of democratic capitalism.

**Week 5: Promoting Democracy (Feb 25 & 27)**

**Toward What Kind of Democracy? Establishing the Primacy of Politics (MONDAY)**

Sheri Berman. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-19 (Chapter 1: Introduction).

**The California Farm Worker Movement (WEDNESDAY)**

Cletus E. Daniel. 1987. “Cesar Chavez and the Unionization of California Farm Workers.” In Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, eds. *Labor Leaders in America*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, only read pages 350-373; remaining pages of the chapter are recommended.

**Week 6: Building Welfare States (March 4 & 6)**

**The Labor Movement and the New Deal (MONDAY)**

Nelson Lichtenstein. 2003. *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 20-53 (Chapter 1: Reconstructing the 1930s).

**An Alternative Path in Sweden (WEDNESDAY)**

Sheri Berman. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 162-176 (Chapter 7: The Swedish Exception).

**Week 7: Balancing Democracy & Capitalism – How Much Market Rule? (March 11 & 13)**

**Participatory Governance at the Firm Level (MONDAY)**

Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streeck. 1994. "Workplace Representation Overseas: The Works Councils Story." In Richard Freeman, ed. *Working under Different Rules*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, only read pages 97-117.

**Divisions among Workers (WEDNESDAY)**

Peter Swenson. 1991. "Labor and the Limits of the Welfare State. The Politics of Intra-class Conflict and Cross-Class Alliances in Sweden and West Germany." *Comparative Politics* 23(4): 379-399.

**Week 8: In-Class Midterm (March 25)**

No reading. Prepare for midterm. (MONDAY)

**SECTION III: KEY CHALLENGES FOR LABOR MOVEMENTS**

In this section, we review some of the key challenges that countries' labor movements currently face around the world. How should they react? How can they be revitalized? Is there scope for a truly transnational labor movement?

**Week 8 continued: Shifting Gender Roles (March 27)**

No reading. We will watch a movie. (WEDNESDAY)

**Week 9: The Labor Movement's Response to Shifting Gender Roles (April 1 & 3)**

Hanne Rosin. 2012. "Who Wears the Pants in this Economy?" *New York Times Magazine*, August 30.

Dorothy Sue Cobble. 2009. "It's Time for New Deal Feminism." *The Washington Post*, December 13.

This week's reading load is very light in order to give you a chance to start early on the two pieces by Streeck that are assigned for next week. Getting the most from either of Streeck's essays requires you to invest some time for reflection. The movie will spill over into the session of April 1, and the class discussion of the topic will take place on April 3.

### **Week 10: The Rise of Neo-Liberalism (April 8 & 10)**

#### **Democratic Capitalism in Crisis? (MONDAY)**

Wolfgang Streeck. 2011. "The Crisis of Democratic Capitalism." *New Left Review* 71(Sept/Oct): 5-29.

#### **Shifting State-Society Relations (WEDNESDAY)**

Wolfgang Streeck. 2012. "Citizens as Customers." *New Left Review* 76(July/Aug): 27-47.

### **Week 11: Labor Movements' Responses to Neo-Liberalism (April 15 & 17)**

#### **Framing the "WHY" (MONDAY)**

Michael McTernan. 2012. "Distributional Conflicts in the US and Europe. The Emergence of a New Transatlantic Agenda for Progressive Politics." Policy Network Paper, London, November.

#### **Framing the "HOW" (WEDNESDAY)**

Sasha Abramsky. 2011. "A Conversation with Marshall Ganz." *The Nation*, February 2.  
Marshall Ganz. 2009. "Why Stories Matter: The Art and Craft of Social Change." *Sojourners* (March): 18-19.

### **Week 12: Union Revitalization (April 22 & 24)**

#### **Toward New Social Coalitions? (MONDAY)**

Carola Frege, Edmund Heery and Lowell Turner. 2004. "The New Solidarity? Trade Union Coalition-Building in Five Countries." In Carola Frege and John Kelly, eds. *Varieties Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 137-158.

#### **In-Class Debates (WEDNESDAY)**

No reading. Teams prepare for in-class debates that address the question "*Which Way Forward for the US Labor Movement?*" Details to be announced a few weeks before.

**Week 13: Labor as a Transnational Social Movement? (April 29 & May 1)**

**Beyond National Solidarity? (MONDAY)**

Andreas Bieler and Ingemar Lindberg. 2011. "Globalisation and the New Challenges for Transnational Solidarity: An Introduction." In Andreas Bieler and Ingemar, eds. *Global Restructuring, Labour and the Challenges for Transnational Solidarity*. London: Routledge, 3-15 (chapter 1).

**Weighing the Options (WEDNESDAY)**

Richard Hyman. 2011. "Trade Unions, Global Competition and Options for Solidarity." In Andreas Bieler and Ingemar Lindberg, eds. 2011. *Global Restructuring, Labour and the Challenges for Transnational Solidarity*. London: Routledge, 16-30 (chapter 2).

**Week 14: Review (May 6)**

No reading. Bring questions. (MONDAY)

**Week 15: Final Exam (May 9 – 15)**

Appendix – Further Information on Course Assignments & Class Rules:

**ACCESS TO READINGS**

All readings will be made available to students on Rutgers Sakai (<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>). These directions lead you to the course site:

- Go to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
- To log on, enter your Rutgers NetID and password in the upper right-hand corner.
- Look for the tabs at the top of the next page. Click on the tab: 38:575:301.
- Click on “resources” on the menu on the left-hand side of the next page. You should see the course syllabus and all of the course readings.

**SPECIAL RULES ON ENGAGING WITH THE READINGS**

Students are required to print out all assigned readings to allow for effective engagement with the material. Moreover, students are expected to bring hard-copy versions of the assigned texts to class meetings. Doing so will help with in-class discussions of the readings.

**SPECIAL RULES ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

There will be no use of laptops, tablets or smart phones during class sessions without special permission. While such instruments are important tools for research, they have also become distractions in the classroom. For in-depth learning in the course, students are asked to pay focused attention and contribute critical thought in class discussions. I will prepare PowerPoint presentations that will include the main points of each class session. The slides from these presentations will be shared with students through Sakai after each class session.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION (IN-CLASS & ONLINE)**

Be prepared for class and always read the assigned materials before our meetings. You are expected to bring questions and comments about the course material so that you can participate in class discussions. With much of our time spent learning through discussion, it is necessary for everybody to participate. I might ask students to use their questions to stimulate discussions and will ensure broad participation. It is critical that we respect one another’s thoughts and address our comments at others’ ideas, not at people themselves. This course is not a forum for demeaning or threatening language. Finally, please take careful notes to complement my PowerPoint slides.

Students should plan to attend every course session, and I ask you to sign in personally at the beginning of class. If for some unavoidable reason you must miss a class, please let me know in advance through the university’s absence reporting website (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>) so that your absence will not remain unexplained. If you are late or leave early repeatedly, and if you miss class unexcused, your participation grade will suffer.

Part of your participation grade will come from your input in online discussions and collaborative work on the course's Sakai site. You are required to contribute to **at least ten threaded discussions** that we have each week before the Wednesday class. Moreover, I expect you to contribute definitions of **three key terms** in the course's online glossary. Additional participation beyond these requirements is encouraged and will be rewarded with extra credit.

The class participation grade will include your attendance and your contribution to the intellectual life of the class, both online and in the classroom. Criteria for assessment include depth of content, relevance and responsiveness to other students' contributions.

### **GROUP DEBATES**

The session on April 24 will be used for in-class group debates that address which strategies the US labor movements should pursue to best serve workers' interests. Groups will be formed on March 27, and time will be provided in class on April 1 for groups to coordinate on their preparation for the debates.

### **PAPER ASSIGNMENT**

(Topic due in class April 8. One-page outline due in class April 15. Paper due in class April 22.)

There will be a 5-page (double spaced) individual term paper. It will take the format of a policy brief. Write a paper outlining the rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative or course of action with respect to a current policy debate in American employment relations. A policy brief is the response to a request directly from a decision-maker. You can choose which policy question you want to answer, but the brief needs to be addressed to the President of the AFL-CIO (Richard Trumka). Detailed information on the purpose and structure of a policy brief will be provided halfway through the course. (Hint: Reflected choices of the paper topic will allow you to reap substantial synergies between writing this paper and preparation for the in-class debates.)

The papers should reflect thorough consideration of the assignment. All papers should demonstrate careful reading of the course material and **cite all sources** that are consulted in a consistent citation style. Moreover, students' writing should demonstrate university-level competence in grammar and style.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Students are expected to check their Rutgers email accounts regularly for class announcements. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them via email by the instructor. Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. When emailing the instructor, always include "Comparative Labor Movements" in the subject line of your email.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

While I encourage students to work together to understand theories and concepts, all written work should be your own. If you cite an author or use his/her ideas, please cite properly. Plagiarized assignments will receive a failing grade.

### **EXTENSIONS AND LATE PAPERS**

Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor and only in the event of significant and verifiable personal emergency. In the interest of fairness to all, no extensions will be granted due to the stresses of academic life. I will accept unexcused late papers, but note that the grade will be lowered by a grade for each day that the assignment is due.

### **KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS**

Throughout the course, students should keep up with current events by reading at least one quality newspaper (e.g. Financial Times, New York Times) and one news magazine (e.g. The Economist, The Atlantic) on a regular basis. You may also choose foreign-language publications, or fulfill this assignment by checking Internet and newsgroup news sources regularly. In addition, you will be expected to read any newspaper clippings handed out in class or emailed by the instructor.