I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will introduce the important developments and themes in American business and labor from the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the present day. The approach will center on how workers responded to employer initiatives that shaped, influenced and ultimately determined the course of U.S. labor and employment relations. Worker lead job actions and community demonstrations and how employers responded—often backed by the raw power of the state—will be recurring themes throughout the course. We will also look at how race, gender and ethnicity influenced and often defined the terms of engagement for both parties. Whenever possible, we will analyze and take what we gain from our understanding of the past and use it to help us make better sense of where we are in the present and how we might begin to think about regaining some measure of control over our working and non-working lives.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course we will:

- Understand the basis and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.
- Understand different theories of human culture; social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

III. EXPECTATIONS

Preparation
We will be covering a lot of ground in a very short time so please read and bring the assigned material to each class, take good notes and come to class ready to discuss what you’ve learned.

We Will Disconnect!
Using laptops, ipads or cell phones (including texting, talking, emailing, etc.) are all prohibited during class. (Occasionally, I will ask/allow you to use laptops and ipads but I will let you know when.)

Communication
Check your official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. I will communicate any official course correspondence via email. Students are responsible for all information communicated via email. Feel free to contact me via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

When emailing always include “Business/Labor History of the 20th Century” in the subject line of your email.

IV. EVALUATION
Final grades will be based on the following:

1. Class Prep (12pts)
2. Class attendance (14pts)
3. Class participation (14pts)
4. Mid-Term (30pts)
5. Final Exam (30pts)

Class Preparation
It is vitally important that you come to class ready to contribute to the discussion. With this in mind, everyone will be required to hand in a 1-page summary (approximately 300 words) for each weekly reading assignment—including weeks 2-13. Each summary is worth 1 point of your final grade (for a total of 12pts). One-page summaries should be delivered to the Sakai drop box prior to the start of each class. (Note: I will read them and keep in touch on an as needed basis.)

Attendance
Fourteen points (14pts) of your final grade will be based on attendance so it is vitally important that you come to every class. Failure to sign the sign-in sheet will result in a loss of attendance points. You can only be excused for an illness, death in the family or other real emergencies.

Students who are late to class will lose attendance points so please be punctual. Also, if you leave early without permission you will be marked absent for the entire class.

Participation
Another fourteen points (14pts) of your final grade will be based on your in-class participation. Class sessions will include short lectures, small group discussions, group exercises and large group discussions. The expectation is that everyone will have an opportunity to actively participate in each class.
When participating in discussions use your experience and the information you get from the readings. When you take a position try to back it up with facts, data and examples. And above all, we must all be respectful and listen when others are speaking. You do not have to agree but you must give full attention and consideration to other points of view.

Mid-Term and Final Exams
The mid term and final will be worth 30pts each and they will be written take-home exams that will cover all course readings, lectures, discussion questions, films, group exercises, etc. You will have one week to complete the mid-term and one week to complete the final exam.

V. COURSE READINGS
There is one textbook for the course:


All other materials will be available on the course Sakai website. Students can access the course Sakai site by following these directions:

- Go to http://sakai.rutgers.edu
- To log on, enter your Rutgers net ID and password in the upper right hand corner.
- Look for the tabs at the top of the next page.
- Click on the tab: 37:575:481:81
- Click on “resources” on the menu on the left hand side of the next page. You should see a folder for each week of class and inside each folder you will fine all of the course readings.

VI. SYLLABUS

PART I: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE

(WEEK 1) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD
COURSE INTRODUCTION
Read: Sakai:
The syllabus

In-Class: Introduction: Our expectations for the class, review of the syllabus and a discussion about the issues that will be addressed throughout the course and how it relates to you, your jobs, and your expectations for the future.

(WEEK 2) WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH
A POLARIZED AMERICA (SOUND FAMILIAR?)

Read: Who Built America? Prologue (pgs. 2-19)
Sakai Folder:


In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on wealth and income polarization in the Gilded Age.

**Documentary: The Grand Army of Starvation**

**WEEK 3**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH**

**INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM**

Read: Who Built America? Chapters 1&2

**Sakai Folder:**


In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on Railroad Barons and the emerging upper class of the late 19th Century.

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**PART II: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA**

**WEEK 4**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH**

**REFORM AND RADICALISM**

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 3 & 4

**Sakai Folder:**

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on worker control, work organization, union organization and building community in the early 20th century.

PBS: THE KILLING FLOOR

(WEEK 5) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1ST
WWI, LABOR’S UPSURGE AND THE RED SCARE

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 6 & 7

Sakai Folder:

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on race, ethnicity, culture and politics in the U.S. after WWI.

MOVIE: MATEWAN

(WEEK 6) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH
THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE FIRST NEW DEAL

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 8

Sakai Folder:
Kim Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands: The Businessmen’s Crusade Against the New Deal, Paradise Lost, p. 3-25.

Brecher, Strike!, Depression Decade, p. 166-192.

In-Class: Harry Bridges and the Longshoremen (The Hiring Hall of the 1930s)

Documentary: From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks

PART III: LABOR LEAPS FORWARD

(WEEK 7) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH
THE SECOND NEW DEAL AND THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 9

Sakai Folder:
Jeremy Brecher, Strike! pgs. 193-236

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on sit-down strikes

YouTube Documentary: With Babies and Banners

Mid-Term
(WEEK 8) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22ND
LABOR AND THE WAR YEARS

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 10

Sakai Folder:

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on War Years and collective bargaining

Mid-Term Due

(WEEK 9) WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH
LABOR’S POST WAR DEAL, MCCARTHYISM, AND THE PURGING OF THE LEFT

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 11

Sakai Folder:

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on the impact of Taft Hartley, McCarthyism and the stage set for Labor’s decline.

Movie: On The Waterfront

(WEEK 10) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH
THE 60S AND THE RISE OF PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONISM

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 12

Sakai Folder:

In-Class: Lecture/Discussion on worker rights, civil rights and the politics of the 60s.

Documentary: At the River I Stand

PART IV: LABOR’S DECLINE AND THE WAY FORWARD

(WEEK 11) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH
THE 70S AND “THE LAST DAYS OF THE WORKING CLASS”

Read: Who Built America? Chapter 13

Sakai Folder:

**In-Class:** Lecture Discussion of what how unions responded to attacks from Corporate America.

(WEEK 12) **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH**  
**Reagan, Neo-Liberalism and “Trying To Be for Labor When It’s Flat On It’s Back”**

**Read:** Who Built America? Chapter 13

**Sakai Folder:**  


**In-Class:** Lecture/Discussion on the problems within unions.

**Movie:** Blue Collar

(WEEK 13) **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3RD**  
**The Global Economy and the Rise of Low Wage Work**

**Read:** Who Built America? Chapter 14

**Sakai Folder:**  

**In-Class:** Lecture/Discussion the current state of “traditional” unions and why there is no alternative to the strike.

(WEEK 14) **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH**  
**Worker Power in the 21ST Century (We Need Hiring Halls!)**

**Read:** Who Built America? Chapter 15

**Sakai Folder:**  

**In-Class:** Lecture/Discussion unions, worker centers, and worker power in the workplace.

**Final Exam**