LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Fall 2014
Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm
Labor Education Center, Room 115
(38:578:612:01)

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble
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Office hours: After class or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers a historical-comparative-global perspective on the changing nature of work, worker movements, and employment relations in the United States. We begin with the industrial revolution and the rise of market economies. Next we consider slavery and other systems of coerced labor. The rest of the course explores various aspects of the labor question in modern capitalist economies. A central concern is understanding how and why the rewards to work and the treatment of workers have changed over time. Other course themes include changing conceptions of workplace fairness; the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers; the role of the state in the economy and the workplace; the rise and fall of collective bargaining and welfare capitalism; globalization and the rise of multinational corporations and neo-liberalism; the problems of workers today and the emergence of new worker movements around the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to enable students to:
* Appreciate the power of the past to shape the present;
* Understand how and why work and workplace policies have changed over time;
* Understand how U.S. labor history compares with other regions;
* Understand how global forces shaped U.S. labor history;
* Assess how the state, employers, and worker organizations affect societal living standards and well being;
* Analyze the strengths and weakness of different labor systems;
* Apply insights from the past to solving contemporary labor problems;
* Identify and evaluate the main arguments in a text;
* Enhance written and public presentation skills;
* Develop group process and leadership skills;
* Expand their sense of personal and political possibility.

PLEASE NOTE: Cell phones and other electronic devices, including laptop computers, must be turned off and closed during class. Do not sign up for this class if you are unable to comply with this policy.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. Class Attendance and Participation (20%)
2. Weekly Response Papers (50%)
3. Final Quiz (10%)
4. Final Project (20%)

COURSE READINGS

1. Articles. All required articles are available electronically through the SAKAI website at [https://sakai.rutgers.edu](https://sakai.rutgers.edu). For problems or questions with Sakai, email Debbie McNeill at mcneill@work.rutgers.edu. If you have computer problems, computers are available at the Carey Library in the Labor Education Center. Regular hours are M-Th, 10-8 pm; F, 10-2 pm. For further information call 848-932-9513 or e-mail the associate librarian Eugene McElroy at Mcelroy@work.rutgers.edu. Print out all readings and bring them to class the day they are assigned.

2. Books. The following required books are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore ([http://rutgers.bncollege.com](http://rutgers.bncollege.com)). They are also available for purchase on-line from a variety of sources. All are in paperback.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written By Himself* (Dover Thrift edition, 1995, reprint 1845). [THIS BOOK IS NOT ON SAKAI]


COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1 (Sept 2) INTRODUCTIONS

Class 2 (Sept 9) THE TRANSITION TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

Reading:
* A conversation with Kenneth Pomeranz, world historian at [http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/5.1/laichas.html](http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/5.1/laichas.html).

Assignment: Be prepared to comment in class on each of the readings. What did you find surprising or new? What questions did the readings raise for you?
Class 3 (Sept 16) SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

Reading:
*Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Boston, 1845), 1-96. [This book is NOT on sakai; it is available for purchase at the bookstore or online].  

Response Paper #1. According to Douglass, what effects did slavery have on slaves and slave owners? How did slave owners sustain the system of slavery? Would you describe the new systems of labor that replaced slavery after the Civil War as free labor systems? Why or why not?

Class 4 (Sept 23) IMMIGRANT AND CONTRACT LABOR

Reading:

Response Paper #2. Discuss and assess what you see as the central claims in each of the readings.

Class 5 (Sept 30) CORPORATE CAPITALISM AND LABOR WARS

Reading:
*Visit http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/carnegie, the PBS website on Carnegie. Click on “People and Events” and read “Andrew Carnegie,” “Herbert Spencer,” and “The Homestead Strike.” Click on “Special Features” and read ”Meet Andrew Carnegie.”  

Response Paper #3. Drawing on all the readings, compare and contrast the ideas of Carnegie and Gompers. Whose ideas do you find more persuasive and why?
Class 6 (Oct 7) MANAGERIAL DILEMMAS AND WELFARE CAPITALISM

Reading:

Response Paper #4. What is Scientific Management (Taylorism)? What is Fordism? What is Welfare Capitalism? Which of these management philosophies do you find still useful and why?

Class 7 (Oct 14) NEW DEAL REVOLUTIONS

Reading:
*Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Fireside Chats” (READ FOUR ONLY: May 7, 1933; September 30, 1934; April 28, 1935; January 11, 1944), selected and formatted on Sakai or accessed July 15, 2010, at [http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/FIRESI90.HTML](http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/FIRESI90.HTML).

Response Paper #5. Discuss and assess the main arguments in the Nelson and Cobble readings. After reading President Roosevelt’s four fireside chats, discuss which New Deal programs, if any, seem most relevant to solving present-day problems. Why or why not?

Class 8 (Oct 21) INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM, AMERICAN-STYLE

Reading:

Response Paper #6. Why did Jack Metzgar’s father support unionism in the steel industry? How does Metzgar explain the demise of the American steel industry? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Class 9 (Oct 28) OTHER LABOR MOVEMENTS

Reading:
*Dorothy Sue Cobble, “Feminism Transforms Women Service Workers,” in Boris and


Response Paper #7. Discuss and assess the main **arguments** in each of the readings.

**Class 10 (Nov 4) THE GREAT REVERSAL AND THE POLITICS OF INEQUALITY**

Reading:
Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, chapters 1,2,3 and conclusion.

Response Paper #8. What is the winner-take-all economy? Why is it a problem according to Hacker and Pierson? What can be done to address the problems of the winner-take-all economy **and** the winner-take-all politics?

**SUBMIT FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**CLASS 11 (Nov 11) TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GLOBAL CAPITALISM**

Reading:
*Jody Heymann and Alison Earle, Raising the Global Floor* (2010), chapter 3.

Response Paper #9. Discuss and assess the main **arguments** in the readings.

**Class 12 (Nov 18) WORKER DILEMMAS AND CHOICES**

Reading/Viewing:
Watch at least two of these films: Blue-Collar (1978); Silkwood (1983); North Country (2006); Office Space (1999); El Norte (1991); Bread and Roses (2001).

Response Paper #10. Discuss the workplace or economic dilemmas confronted by one or more characters in the films you have chosen and the strategies they devised to address their problems.

Review For Quiz

**NOVEMBER 25: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Class 13 (Dec 2) IN-CLASS QUIZ AND PREP FOR FINAL PROJECTS**

**SPEAKER: JULIE MOSCINSKI, DIRECTOR, SMLR LIBRARY GROUP AND INSTRUCTOR MEETINGS**
Class 14 (Dec 9) STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF CASE STUDIES

SUBMIT REVISED LIST OF SOURCES ON SAKAI ON DECEMBER 9

FINAL PAPER WITH FINAL LIST OF SOURCES DUE DECEMBER 16.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING:

1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)

ATTENDANCE. Students are expected to attend each class. You should plan to arrive on time and stay the full class session. After two absences, the grade for attendance and participation will be lowered. Leaving early or arriving late also lowers your grade. If you anticipate a problem with attendance or timeliness, you should discuss the matter with me before signing up for the class. If work or other conflicts preclude your class attendance you should sign up for a class on a different night or for an on-line class.

You do not need to tell me when you will be absent nor should you ask my permission to miss part or all of a class. These are your decisions to make. The only absences excused without penalty are those for religious holidays and for documented medical emergencies.

In case of an absence, you should arrange with another student in the class to get the material you missed or talk with me during my office hours about any material you missed. The answer to the question “Did I miss anything?” is “yes.” If you are unable to meet after class, you can call or e-mail me to set up an appointment for a different time.

PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSION. Students should complete all assignments prior to each class meeting and come to class prepared to participate actively in class discussion. Students will be called upon to offer their own understanding of the main claims in each text and their opinion of these claims. You will not be judged on whether or not you agree with the claims of the authors but on whether your ideas are informed by the week’s readings and/or substantiated by other evidence and examples. Students are expected to help raise the level of class discussion by contributing their own informed responses and by interacting with others to help clarify and extend their comments. Please don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore the views of others. Active, respectful listening is as important to class participation as talking. Please bring print copies of the readings to class.

PARTICIPATION IN SMALL GROUPS AND AS SMALL GROUP LEADER. Over the course of the semester, students will participate in small group activities. Each student also will be asked to serve as a small group discussion leader one or more times. Your goal as a discussion leader is to encourage participation from each
member of the group; keep the group focused on the assignment; and help the group reach common or shared understandings of the material, if possible. Small group leaders should be prepared to summarize the group’s conclusions and present them to the class. Small group leaders are not expected to be experts or to have all the answers.

3. WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS ON THE READING (50%)

Students are required to submit short 2-3 page papers responding to questions posed by the instructor on the required texts. Response papers should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and no longer than 3 pages.

Papers should be posted on Sakai by 7 pm on Tuesday before the class meets. No papers will be accepted after the deadline. If you have computer problems, there are computers available in the SMLR library.

Papers will receive a grade of 1 point, ½ point, or 0 points, with 1 being the highest score. For full credit, responses should 1) show evidence of engagement with each of the questions posed by the instructor; 2) show evidence of understanding some of the main ideas in the readings, and 3) not have major writing problems. Students may accumulate up to 10 points over the course of the semester. Points translate to grades as follows:

- 9.5 & 10 = A
- 8.5 & 9 = A-
- 7.5 & 8 = B+
- 7 = B
- 6.5 = B-
- 6 = C+
- 5 & 5.5 = C
- 4.5 = C-
- 4 = D
- Below 4 = F

4. IN-CLASS QUIZ (10 percent)

There will be one in-class quiz. Approximately an hour of class time will be set aside for the quiz. The quiz is designed to help you retain, integrate, and apply the information and ideas we cover over the course of the semester. It will cover some of the most significant terms, concepts, and events presented in the required reading and discussed in class.

5. FINAL PROJECT CASE STUDY: IMPROVING WORK AND WORKER LIVES (20 percent)
Identify and assess a collective effort or policy intervention from the past or present that aims to improve work or worker lives. Your analysis should be based on two or more scholarly or research-based articles as well as relevant class readings and other sources.

Prepare a class presentation and a written paper that answers the following questions:

* What collective effort or policy intervention did you choose and why?
* What did it aim to accomplish and how successful was it?
* How do you explain its successes as well as its limitations?
* How does your case study confirm, extend, or contest class themes and readings?

Students may work individually or in groups of two or three on the final project. Group presentations will be allotted more time than individual presentations; each member is expected to have a speaking part. Group members may submit individual or co-authored papers. Co-authored papers are expected to be longer and rely upon additional sources.

Due Nov 4: A paragraph indicating 1) who is in your group; 2) the collective effort or policy you have identified; 3) a preliminary list of sources you plan on consulting.

The final written paper with bibliography is due December 16 and should be submitted on SAKAI. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and include a list of all sources consulted, including relevant class and outside readings. Individual papers should be 3-5 pages in length; co-authored papers 4-7 pages. Please do not submit papers over 7 pages. Grades for late papers will be lowered. Incompletes are granted in only the most extreme circumstances and only with prior permission.

**Academic Integrity.** Papers submitted for other classes are not acceptable. In addition, using phrases from another person’s writing without quotation marks or paraphrasing another person's ideas without crediting the source of the idea is plagiarism. I use Turnitin.com and other detection methods to find duplicate papers or work cut and pasted from the Internet. Plagiarism or any form of cheating can result in course failure and disciplinary action through University channels.

**Special Needs:** Any student with a disability requiring accommodations should contact me as soon as possible.

**Final Grades:** Final course grades are available through regular university channels. If you need your final grade earlier, contact Amy Marchitto at amarchitto@work.rutgers.edu.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2014