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**(Above Painting) “The Uprising” by Diego Rivera, 1931.**

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

37:575: 202 (Section 04) – Fall 2020

Instructor: John Lavin

Phone #: 610-724-1404 (cell)

Email: jl2600@rutgers.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the basic human rights at task in North American labor relations for the period from the end of the Civil War & Reconstruction (1880) to the end of World War II (1945). Course themes include an array of labor negotiation philosophies; changes in workplace technology and worker organizations which were formed in this period; and the primacy of racial injustice as well as women’s struggle for equality in employment, union membership and for voting rights.

We will witness how labor unions emerged in the Modern period and how workers’ organizations evolved with economic, political, and cultural shifts. We will examine *who* labor unions represented, *what* they sought to accomplish, and *how* race and gender became bases for employers denying justice and opportunity to millions of workers. In addition, how capitalism as a system and the corporation as a concept came to define labor and employment policy from the Age of Industrialism to the Present.

We will also examine how labor unions’ 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 desvastating conditions of the Great Depression of the 1930s, workers organized more powerful unions and became a central element of a new, progressive 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, Goals).

• 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.

• Adapt methods, skills and principles of restorative justice as pertinent to labor and social justice.

**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:**

*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 will also be made available online via Canvas. On a weekly basis instructor will provide Case Studies focusing the questions to be raised in Discussion, Essay Writing and Examinations.

**Grading**

Essay #1: 20%

Essay #2: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Class Participation: 20%

**Class Participation:**

Will be based upon students’ written and verbal responses to readings and other class activities as well as discussions (on Canvas as well as during group meetings). There will be role play exercises that course participants facilitate as well as reflections on learning and questions regarding class activities(both written and spoken).

**Exams:**

Both Midterm and Final Exams will be comprised of essay questions reviewing historical labor and employment problems covered in our reading and discussions. The due dates for the submissions of essay responses are listed in the syllabus. Otherwise, there are no time limits upon the writing of the answers ad students are welcome to consult and site any and all sources that they feel relevant to answering the questions (totally “open book”).

***Orientation Period: September 1st to September 22nd***



***(above) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressing the AFL-CIO)***

**Week #1  -- September 1st**

***INTRODUCTION TO LABOR HISTORY, GENDER AND RACIAL JUSTICE***

**Text: “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Address to AFL-CIO, December 11, 1961”**

***(See Module, Labor history Orientation/Canvas)***

•Syllabus & Course Calendar.

•Student Questionnaire: What do you want/need to learn from our course?

•Labor History Respects Witness as a form of Knowledge. *(How is Dr. King a witness to history?)*

•Labor History Recognizes Negotiation. *(What is Dr. King’s negotiation style?)*

**Week #2  -- September 8th to the 15th**

***INTRODUCTION TO LABOR HISTORY, GENDER AND RACIAL JUSTICE***

**Film, The Women of Summer: Parts One & Two *(See Module, Labor history Orientation/Canvas)***

• Review of Student Questionnaire: What do we want/need to learn from our course?

• Labor History Respects Witnesses. *(How are “The Women of Summer” witnesses to history?)*

• Labor History is a Labor negotiation? How do Dr. King and the Women of Summer negotiate?

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**Week #3  -- September 22nd**

***INTRODUCTION TO LABOR HISTORY, GENDER AND RACIAL JUSTICE***

***Activity: Testimony, Women’s Narratives & Equal Rights***

***Small Groups: Community Conference.***

***•Students will meet in small groups to learn Restorative Justice: Community Conferencing.***

***•Discussion: What are Human Rights? What are Labor Rights? What is (in)justice?***

***•What is Restorative Justice? What are Restorative practices? How does Restorative Leadership understand history?***

**Week #4  -- September 29th**

**REVIEW OF EARLY U.S. LABOR HISTORY & THE RAILROAD STRIKES OF THE 1870s**

Readings:

Slott and Voos, “A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877, ” pp. 1-4.

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]

**Week #5  -- October 6th**

Readings:

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

***Rough Draft of Essay #1 Due on October 10th.***

***Essay Assignment***

***Speaking in 1961 to a national leadership conference of labor unions, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated,***

***“Less than a century ago the laborer had no rights, little or no respect, and led a life which was socially submerged and barren.”***

***You will compose an essay (double spaced) of approximately five pages:***

1. ***Providing an historical example of Dr. King’s claim and explaining the struggle for “rights” of a particular group of workers in the United States in a specific industry, between 1861 and 1910. Examples might include railway workers, teachers, textile factory employees.***
2. ***Paying careful attention to marginalized populations such as immigrants in the context of exploitive industry practices, and women in the context of the movement for equality, and/or African Americans in the context of slavery, as well as others systematically oppressed in the workplace.***
3. ***Explaining how workers whose rights were violated advocated for change, and …..***
4. ***Recounting how the conflicts that populations endured did or did not resolve and, finally…..***
5. ***What lesson (regarding the example that you have chosen) can be learned from workers’ experience of promoting their rights, respect and a better life.***

***Students are encouraged to submit first draft of the essay on Saturday, October 10th (by Midnight) for review. Final Draft of Essay due Saturday, October 17th.***

**Week #6  -- October 13th**

Readings:

WBA? Chapter 2

In-class small group discussion project – \_The video, *The River Ran Red*

→**Assignment due Final Draft of Essay #1: Saturday, October 17th:**

**Each group’s responses to questions on *The River Ran Red* are submitted to Canvas by one the group’s members.**

***Final Draft of Essay due Saturday, October 17th.***

**Week #7  -- October 20th**

**INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM TRIUMPHS (1893 to 1900)**

WBA? Chapter 3

“Statement from the Pullman Strikers” (1894), pp. 234-236. **[Primary Source - VPHUS]**

“The Populist Platform” (1892), pp. 48-53. **[Primary Source - VOF]**

***Mid-Term Examination: October 20th***

**Week #8  -- October 27th**

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

Readings:

WBA? Chapter 4 - pp. 180-202.

“Machinist Orrin Cheney Testifies to Congress on the Taylor System of Shop Mangement” (1911) , pp. 83-85. **[Primary Source - VOP]**

In-class small group discussion project –Scientific management/Taylorism

**Week #9  -- November 3rd**

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]**

In-class small group discussion project – The video, *The Triangle Fire*

***Biography Assignment Essay #2***

**Identify Subject for Biography: Due Saturday, November 7th (Paragraph explaining Choice. The paragraph must answer the question, “What is the message of this person’s life.)**

**Week #10  -- November 10th**

**THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON LABOR; POST-WAR BACKLASH (1914 to 1920)**

Readings:

WBA? Chapter 6

“Post-War Backlash,” pp. 149-154. **[Primary Source - AL]**

Harvey O’Connor Remembers the Seattle General Strike” (1919), pp. 151-156. **[Primary Source - VOP]**

***Biography Assignment Essay #2***

**List of Biographical sources: Due Saturday, November 14th**

 **(At least five sources with a sentence explaining what each source reveals about the subject of the biography.)**

**Week #11  -- November 17th**

**Class #9: THE “LEAN YEARS” FOR AMERICAN WORKERS (1920 to 1929)**

Readings:

WBA? Ch. 7 In-class small group discussion project – The video, *Matewan* 7

Each Group’s responses to questions on Matewan are submitted to Canvas by Saturday, November 21st.

***Biography Assignment Essay #2***

**Rough Draft of Biographical Essay: Due November 21st**

**Week #12 – December 1st**

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

Readings:

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]**

***Final Draft of Biographical Essay #2: Due on December 5th***

 **“My Life Is My Message.”**

 **–Mahatma Gandhi**

**Biography is the account of a person’s life. As a narrative, it assumes the responsibility of explaining the period when a person lived as well as the places, the cultures, the organizations and the ideas that shaped an individual’s life. Furthermore, it examines how a person influenced family and community and, by contrast, how personal relationships influenced her or him or them. That person’s accomplishments as an actor or as a witness are important features of a biography.**

**The assignment for Essay #2 is that you write a short biography of a person who lived and worked in the United States between 1900 and 1940, explaining how and why the message of the person’s life that you have selected provides testimony witnessing the injustices confronting workers of his or her or their historical period. You may not select a famous leader but must describe a person who was a worker in a particular occupation, industry or social movement that gave meaning to work and workers’ destiny in the Twentieth Century.**

**Answering this question means looking beyond what a person has said or not said about their life. The challenge is to examine the message that you discern in actions, decisions, what the person experienced and/or what the person suffered and/or tried to change.**

**Identify Subject for Biography: October 30th (Paragraph explaining Choice. The paragraph must answer the question, “What is the message of this person’s life.”)**

**List of Biographical sources: November 6th**

 **(At least five sources with a sentence explaining what each source reveals about the subject of the biography.)**

**Outline of a life: November 13th (A chart showing the events, labor issues, movements and/or**

**personalities that influenced the subject of your biography.)**

**Biography: November 20th (Rough Draft of your Biographical Essay.)**

**Final Draft of Biographical Essay, Due: December 4th**

**Biographical Essay Requirements: The Five-Page Biographical Essay on the Life of a twentieth-century person (1900-1941) must include the following:**

**Statement of the Message of the subject’s Life & Reason Why You Chose the person.**

**Movements or Persons that Influenced your Subject.**

**Labor Issue(s) that affected your subject.**

**Events that the subject witnessed.**

**Decisions or actions or ideas that best express the subject’s Message.**

**Conclusion stating why your subject is relevant today.**

**At least three different sources providing your essay’s Statement of Life’s Message.**

**Primary Sources: Relevant texts produced (e.g. journal, letters or speeches) by or influential in the life of your subject; or, relevant objects (clothing, possessions like books, tools or medical records) as well as statements, technologies that existed at the time when your subject lived.**

**Secondary Sources: Full-length books such as biographies, films and other works of art such as portraits and sculpture, as well as research articles analyzing the twentieth-century person whom you have chosen as your subject. Secondary sources are usually created after the period in which your subject lived and intend to explain or assess historical significance.**

**Week of December 15th**

**Final Examination**