

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY  
SPRING 2013  
(38:578:612/55945)**

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble  
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 Office hours: Tuesdays 7:15-8:15 or by appointment.

Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm  
 Labor Education Center  
 Room 166

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers an historical perspective on labor and employment relations in developed capitalist economies, especially the United States. It is centrally concerned with how and why the treatment of workers and the value and reward to work have changed over time. We begin with work in the household economy and the relation between family and market work. Next, we consider the rise and decline of chattel slavery and what constitutes free and unfree labor. In the remainder of the course we explore the work and labor relations of market economies. Themes include: changing notions of the rights and responsibilities of labor and capital; the role of the state in labor relations and the economy; the rise and fall of social democracy, collective bargaining, and welfare capitalism; new worker movements in the United States and globally; global capitalism and the effects of increasing domestic and global economic inequality.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The course aims to give students an:

- \*understanding of the broad outlines of the historical evolution of work, labor movements, and social policy in the United States;
- \*understanding of how the U.S. story compares with and is shaped by other regions and by global forces;
- \*ability to analyze the strengths and weakness of the various labor relations systems that have existed in the U.S. and in other nations;
- \*ability to identify and evaluate the main arguments presented in a historical text;
- \*ability to make an argument (written and oral) using historical evidence/examples.
- \*appreciation of the power of the past to shape the present;
- \*appreciation of the historical imagination and the “lessons” of history;
- \*enlarged sense of personal and political possibility.

## **COURSE TEXTS**

1. **\*Articles.** All the required articles are indicated by \* below and are available on the web through SAKAI at <https://sakadi.rutgers.edu/portal>. PRINT OUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED ARTICLES AND BRING THEM WITH YOU TO CLASS. For problems

or questions with Sakai, call or email Debbie McNeill at 848-932-6926 or [mcneill@work.rutgers.edu](mailto:mcneill@work.rutgers.edu). If you do not have access to a computer, some are available at the Carey Library in the Labor Education Center. For library hours call 848-932-9513 or e-mail the associate librarian Eugene McElroy at [Mcelroy@work.rutgers.edu](mailto:Mcelroy@work.rutgers.edu).

**2. Books.** The following required books are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore, 100 Somerset Street, New Brunswick, N.J. (<http://rutgers.bncollege.com>). Call 732-246-8448 for hours. All are in paperback. The current RU bookstore prices for new and used copies are listed below. The books are also available for purchase on the internet from a variety of sources.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written By Himself* (Boston, 1845). [Dover Thrift edition]. \$1.50/1.15.

William Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991). \$27.00/20.25.

Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer –And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010). \$15.00/11.25.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING:**

- 1. Class Attendance and Participation (20%)**
  - 2. Class Presentations (10%)**
  - 3. Weekly Response Papers (60%)**
  - 4. Final Individual or Group Project (10%)**
- (See page 6 for a fuller explanation of each of these requirements)**

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Week 1 (Jan 22) ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTIONS**

### **Week 2 (Jan 29) FAMILY ECONOMIES**

Reading:

\*Marjorie L. DeVault, "Doing Housework: Feeding and Family Life," in Amy S. Wharton, *Working In America* (London: Mayfield, 1998), 21-31.

\*Jeanne Boydston, "To Earn Her Daily Bread: Housework and Antebellum Working-Class Subsistence," in *Unequal Sisters* (London: Routledge University Press, 2000), 80-92.

\*Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," in *Unequal Sisters* (London: Routledge University Press, 2000), 436-465.

Response Paper #1. What are the main arguments in each of the three readings? Did you find the arguments of each author persuasive? Why or why not?

### **Week 3 (Feb 5) SLAVERY AND FREEDOM**

Reading:

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Boston, 1845), entire, 1-76.

\*Eric Foner, "Emancipation and the Reconstruction of Southern Labor," excerpts from *A Short History of Reconstruction* (NY: Harper & Row, 1990), reprinted in Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds. *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 112-123

Response Paper #2. According to Douglass, what effect did slavery have on the slaves and on the slave owners? What strategies did slave owners rely upon to sustain the system of slavery? Would you describe the new sharecropping system of labor that emerged in the rural South after the Civil War as a "free labor" system? Why or why not?

### **Week 4 (Feb 12) IMMIGRATION AND MIGRANT WORKERS**

Reading:

\*Gunther Peck, "Reinventing Free Labor: Immigrant Padrones and Contract Laborers in North America, 1885-1925," *Journal of American History* (December 1996): 848-871.

\*Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigrant in an Era of Economic Integration* (NY: Russell Sage, 2002), chapters 3, 7.

Response Paper #3. What are the main arguments in each of the readings? Do you find the arguments persuasive? Why or why not?

### **Week 5 (Feb 19) GILDED AGE CAPITALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS**

Reading:

Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement*, ch. 2.

\*Andrew Carnegie, "An Employer's View of the Labor Question," (1886) in *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays*, 92-105.

\*Samuel Gompers, "Economics and Ethics of High Wages;" and "The Shorter Working Day," in *Labor and the Employer* (E.P Dutton & Co., 1920), 58-63; 81, 86-91; and Samuel Gompers, "What Does Labor Want? A Paper Read before the International Labor Congress, Chicago, Illinois, September, 1893," in *Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 3, Stuart Kaufman and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1989), 388-396.

Recommended:

\*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 #4. Drawing on all the required readings, compare and contrast the solutions proposed by Andrew Carnegie and Samuel Gompers to the labor question. Who do you find more persuasive and why?

### **Week 6 (Feb 26) LABOR AND THE LAW**

Reading:

Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement*, preface, chapters 3-5, conclusion.

Response Paper #5. Forbath argues that the courts made the American labor movement more conservative by the early twentieth century. What evidence does he give to support his argument? Do you agree? Why or why not?

### **Week 7 (March 5) NEW DEAL REVOLUTIONS**

Reading:

\*Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Fireside Chats" (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>.

\*Bruce Nelson, "Radical Years: Working-Class Consciousness on the Waterfront in the 1930s," in Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds. *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 314-326.

\*Walter Reuther, "The Guaranteed Annual Wage, 1955," and "The Mike Wallace Interview, 1960," in Henry M. Christman, ed., *Walter Reuther: Selected Papers* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1961), 316-330, 59-66.

Response Paper #6. Discuss and assess the main ideas in each of the readings.

### **Week 8 (March 12) WELFARE CAPITALISM AND THE NEW MANAGERIALISM**

Reading:

\*Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-34, 236-267.

\*Vicki Smith, "Employee Involvement, Involved Employees: Participative Work Arrangements in a White-Collar Service Occupation," in Amy Wharton, *Working in America*, 460-473.

Response Paper #7. According to Jacoby, why did the union sector decline and the non-union sector expand after the 1940s? Do you agree? How well does modern

welfare capitalism as depicted by Jacoby and Smith meet the needs of today's work force?

Submit a paragraph describing your proposed final project. Include a preliminary list of sources.

### **Week 9 (March 19) Spring Break.**

### **Week 10 (March 26) OTHER LABOR MOVEMENTS**

Reading:

\*Michael Honey, "Martin Luther King and the Memphis Sanitation Strike," in Boris and Lichtenstein, eds. *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 420-431.

\*Dorothy Sue Cobble and Michael Merrill, "[Promise of Service Worker Unionism](#)" in *Service Work: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Marek Korczynski and Cameron Lynne Macdonald (New York and London: Routledge, 2009): 153-174.

\*Ruth Milkman, "Immigrant Workers and the Future of American Labor," *American Bar Association Journal of Labor and Employment Law* vol. 26, no. 2 (Winter), 295-310.

Response Paper #8. Discuss and assess the main arguments in each of the readings.

### **Week 11 (April 2) The Politics of Inequality**

Reading:

Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, 1-160.

Response Paper #9. What is the winner-take-all economy? Why is it a problem according to Hacker and Pierson? Do you agree? Why or why not?

### **Revised Final Project Proposal Due.**

### **Week 12 (April 9) The Politics of Inequality**

Reading:

Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, 161-306.

Response Paper #10. What is winner-take-all politics? Why is it a problem according to Hacker and Pierson? Do you agree? Why or why not?

### **Week 13 (April 16) RAISING THE GLOBAL FLOOR**

Reading:

\*Jody Heymann and Alison Earle, *Raising the Global Floor: Dismantling the Myth That We Can't Afford Good Working Conditions for Everyone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), preface, chapters 3.

\*Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (2007), chapters 2,3.

\*Ron Blackwell, "Building a Member-Based International Program," in Greg Mantsios, ed. *A New Labor Movement for the New Century* (1998), 320-328.

Response Paper #11. Discuss and assess the main arguments in each of the readings.

### **Week 14 (April 23) STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

### **Week 15 (April 30) STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

Final Papers Due Tuesday, May 7.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING:**

### **1. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)**

*Class Attendance.* Students are expected to attend class regularly. You should plan to arrive on time and stay the full class session. Often important information is communicated at the beginning and at the end of class.

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. If you are unable to meet during my office hours, you can call or e-mail me to set up an appointment for a different time.

If you anticipate a problem with attendance or timeliness, you should discuss the matter with me *before* signing up for the class. The grade for attendance will be lowered for students who miss more than two classes.

*Class Participation.* Students should read carefully the assigned texts *prior* to each class meeting and come to class prepared to participate actively in class discussion. You should be able to articulate the main ideas of each text, as you understand them, and to offer your own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. To facilitate class discussion, please bring with you a copy of the readings the day they are to be discussed.

The quality of your comments is as important as their frequency. The best comments are informed by the week's readings or by other relevant evidence and examples. Active, respectful listening is as important to class participation as talking. Students will be 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.

Finally, students will be asked to serve as small-group discussion leaders and to: a) encourage participation from each member of the group; b) keep the group focused on the assignment; and, c) help the group reach common or shared understandings of the material, if possible. Leaders are not expected to be experts or to have all the answers.

## **2. CLASS PRESENTATIONS (10%)**

Every student is required to make two types of presentations to the class. First, twice over the course of the term, on pre-assigned days, students will share either a website or a short video (under 5 minutes) relevant to the class readings. Second, each student will present the principal conclusions from their final project, as described below. These presentations will be scheduled for the last two weeks of the semester.

## **3. WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS ON THE READING (60%)**

Students are required to submit short weekly papers for ten of the fifteen weeks of the semester responding to questions posed by the instructor on the readings for that week. These questions are listed under the reading for each week. Students also may submit an additional response paper for extra credit. The response papers should be 2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced. Longer papers are discouraged. Papers should be posted on Sakai by 4 pm on Tuesday *before* the class meets. Late papers will be graded down. No paper will be accepted after the class has met and discussed the reading.

The response papers will be graded on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest score. A cumulative grade will be awarded at the end of the semester using the following conversion from points to grades:

50-60 = A-/A  
 41-49 = B/B+  
 31-40 = C/C+  
 25-30 = D/D+  
 Below 25 = F

## **3. GROUP or INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (10%)**

Students should work individually or in groups of two or three to prepare a classroom presentation and a written paper based on a project chosen from either A, B, C or D below. A short preliminary paragraph describing the proposed project (who is in your group; the historical figure/film/public site/special topic the group has chosen; the sources you or your group will consult) is due week 8 (March 12). A final proposal is due week 11 (April 2).

Student presentations will be scheduled April 23 and April 30. Classroom presentations should be no longer than TEN minutes. Following each presentation,

FIVE minutes will be set aside for discussion and feedback from the class. There are no formal guidelines for the classroom presentation, but you are encouraged to use your creativity in coming up with imaginative ways of presenting your findings and “teaching” the material to the class. Web-based visuals and/or short clips from videos are encouraged. But remember, your time is limited and the questions listed below should guide your presentation.

The final paper should be 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, and answer the questions posed by the instructor on the syllabus. The paper is due May 7 and should be submitted on SAKAI. Group members may submit individual or co-authored papers. Grades for late papers will be lowered.

### **A. LABOR LIVES PROJECT**

Choose an important historical figure in labor and employment history. Read at least TWO sources (autobiography, biography, or memoir) that offer contrasting perspectives on the individual. A list of recommended books is posted on Sakai. The class presentation and paper should answer the following questions:

- \*Why did you choose this individual?
- \*How did this person change or influence the course of history?
- \*How have historians judged this individual? What is your assessment?
- \*What did you learn from this person’s life that affirms, contests, or extends course themes?

### **B. LABOR HISTORY THROUGH FILM**

Choose a film related to the themes of the course. A list of recommended films and source materials is posted on Sakai. View the film and read at least TWO substantial written accounts about the events, the era, the figures, or the issues portrayed in the film. The classroom presentation and written paper should answer the following questions:

- \*Why did you choose this film?
- \*What message(s) or images concerning labor or labor relations are communicated in the film?
- \*How accurate are these messages or images in your opinion?
- \*How does this film affirm, contest, or extend course themes?

### **C. VISITING A LABOR HISTORY PUBLIC SITE**

Choose a public history site (museum, monument, restored historic site or town, significant on-line exhibit) relevant to this course. Visit the site in person or virtually. Consult at least TWO substantial written sources related to the site. The classroom presentation and the written paper should answer the following questions:

- \*Why did you choose this particular site?
- \*Why is this site important historically?
- \*What message(s) or images concerning labor or labor relations are communicated by this public site?
- \*How accurate are these messages or images in your opinion?

\*How does this public site affirm, contest, or extend course themes?

**D. A Proposed Individual or Group Project Relevant to the Course Approved by the Instructor.**

PLEASE NOTE: Papers that you have written or are writing for other classes are not acceptable submissions. Also, the use of word for word text from any source without quotation marks or paraphrasing another person's ideas without crediting the source of the idea is plagiarism, which can result in failure in this course and disciplinary action through University channels. All papers for this course will be submitted to Turnitin.com. For Rutgers University's Policy on plagiarism, <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtm>. For information about proper citation of written and web-based material, please read, "Documenting Sources" and "Correct Forms for Citation," which are available on the Sakai web page for this course.

INCOMPLETE GRADES ARE GRANTED IN ONLY THE MOST EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES AND ONLY WITH PRIOR PERMISSION.

16 December 2012