

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Spring 2014 Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10
(38:578:612/55945)

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 7:15-8:15 pm or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers a historical perspective on work and labor relations in the United States and globally. We begin with the household economy and the relation between family work 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 changing nature of work and labor relations in market 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; debates over 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 emergence of new worker movements around the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to enable students to:

- *Understand how and why work and labor policies have changed over time;
- *Understand how U.S. labor history compares with other regions;
- *Understand how global forces shape U.S. labor history;
- *Assess how worker organizations, employer policies, and the state affect societal wellbeing and living standards;
- *Analyze the strengths and weakness of different labor relations systems;
- *Appreciate the power of the past to shape the present;
- *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; and
- *Enlarged 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. Please do not sign up for this class if you are unable to comply with this policy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. **Class Attendance (15%)**
2. **Class Participation (15%)**
3. **Weekly Response Papers (50%)**
4. **Quizzes (10%)**
5. **Final Project (10%)**

COURSE READINGS

1. **Articles.** All required articles are available through the SAKAI website at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>. For problems or questions with Sakai, call or email Debbie McNeill at 848-932-6926 or mcneill@work.rutgers.edu. If you have computer problems, computers 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.

2. **Books.** The following required books are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore (<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).

Cheri Register, *Packinghouse Daughter: A Memoir* (Perennial, 2001).

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

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1 (Jan 21) INTRODUCTIONS

Class 2 (Jan 28) FAMILY ECONOMIES AND EARLY CAPITALISM

Reading:

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

*Christine Stansell, "The Origins of the Sweatshop," in *Working-Class America* (University of Illinois, 1983), 78-103.

*Jonathan Prude, "The Social System of Early New England Textile Mills: A Case Study, 1812-40," in *Working-Class America* (University of Illinois, 1983), 1-36.

Response Paper #1. What are the main arguments in each of the three readings? Which article did you find most interesting and why?

Class 3 (Feb 4) SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

Reading:

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Boston, 1845), 1-96.

*Eric Foner, "Emancipation and the Reconstruction of Southern Labor," excerpts from *A Short History of Reconstruction* (Harper & Row, 1990), reprinted in *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 system of labor that emerged in the rural South after the Civil War as a "free labor" system? Why or why not?

Class 4 (Feb 11) GILDED AGE CAPITALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Reading:

*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.

*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.

*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 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?

Class 5 (Feb 18) IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND DEMOCRACY

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 Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (NY: Russell Sage, 2002), chapters 3.

*View the half hour newscast by Andrew Whitman, "Triangle Shirtwaist Fire: Lessons From the Ashes." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAejKfB0ZK4>.

Response Paper #4. Discuss and assess the main ideas in the two readings and the video.

Recommended: Visit <http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm>. Click on "The Great Migration." Then read the selections under "Read about the Great Migration."

Class 6 (Feb 25) MANAGERIAL DILEMMAS AND WELFARE CAPITALISM

Reading:

*Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), 5-22, 43-48.

*R. L. Bruckberger, "The Ford Revolution," (1959) in *Henry Ford*, 156-162.

*David Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," in *Workers in Industrial America* (1993), 48-78.

IN-CLASS QUIZ #1

Class 7 (March 4) NEW DEAL REVOLUTIONS

*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>.

*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 Mike Wallace Interview, 1960," in Henry M. Christman, ed., *Walter Reuther: Selected Papers* (The MacMillan Company, 1961), 316-330.

Response Paper #5 Discuss and assess the main ideas in each of the readings.

Class 8 (March 11) CLASS CULTURES AND CLASS MOBILITY

Reading: Cheri Register, *Packinghouse Daughter*, 1-129.

Group Presentations on assigned sections of the Register book.

Response Paper #6 How did Cheri Register's class background shape her beliefs and experiences growing up in Albert Lea Minnesota? Is class still a salient political, economic, and cultural divide in the U.S. today?

Spring Break March 15-23.

Class 9 (March 25) THE GOLDEN AGE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Reading: Cheri Register, *Packinghouse Daughter*, 129-end.

Response Paper #7: What were the issues at stake in the 1959 strike? What effects did the strike have?

Class 10 (APRIL 1) 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, "Feminism Transforms Women Service Workers," in Boris and Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 459-472.

*Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, chapters 4-6.

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

SUBMIT FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

CLASS 11 (April 8) THE POLITICS OF INEQUALITY

Reading:

Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, introduction, chapters 1-3, conclusion.

Response Paper #9. 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?

Class 12 (April 15) GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND NEW WORKER MOVEMENTS

Reading:

*Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (2007), chapters 7 and 10.

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

*Ai-Jen Poo, "A Twenty-First Century Organizing Model: Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign," *New Labor Forum* 20:1 (Winter 2011).

Extra Credit Response Paper: Discuss and assess the main arguments in each of the readings.

In-Class Quiz #2

Class 13 (April 22) RESEARCH STRATEGIES FOR FINAL PROJECTS

Presentation by Julie Moscinski, Director, James B. Carey Library, SMLR. (4:30-5:45); Individual Research in Carey Library (6-7).

Class 14 (April 29) THE STORIES WE TELL: LABOR HISTORY THROUGH FILM

STUDENT PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 6

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING:

1. CLASS ATTENDANCE (15%)

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 will be lowered. The grade for attendance will also be lowered for leaving early or arriving late. If you anticipate a problem with attendance or timeliness, you should discuss the matter with me *before* signing up for the 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.

2. CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%)

Class Discussion. Students should complete all assignments *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 the strengths and weaknesses of the texts. You will not be judged on whether or not I agree with your opinions but on whether your ideas are informed by the week's readings and/or substantiated by other evidence and examples. To facilitate class discussion, please bring hard copies of the readings to class.

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.

Small-group Leader. Over the course of the semester, each student will be asked to serve as a small group discussion leader. 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 are not expected to be experts or to have all the answers.

First Responder. Once, on a pre-assigned day, each student will act as a “first responder.” First responders recommend a short video (5 minutes MAX) or website for the class to view that is relevant to the class readings for that day. First responders should send the instructor a link to their recommended video or website THE DAY BEFORE the class meets. The instructor will choose one or more of those submitted to share with the class. When presenting a chosen video or website to the class, students should introduce it by explaining why they chose it and how it is relevant to the readings for the evening.

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

Students are required to submit short 2-page papers responding to questions posed by the instructor on the required texts for **eight** of the **nine** weeks response papers are due. The questions are listed under the reading for each week. Students may also submit an extra credit response paper for class 12 (April 15) which can add ½ point to your total.

Response papers should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and no longer than 2 pages. A paragraph on *each* assigned text (including videos) should be sufficient. For *each* reading, students should 1) identify the main ideas or arguments in the text and 2) identify a concept or idea that you found of interest and explain why. Papers should be posted on Sakai **by 4 pm** on Tuesday *before* the class meets. No papers will be accepted after the deadline.

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 readings; 2) grasp some of the main ideas in each of the readings, and 3) not have major writing problems. Points translate to grades as follows:

8 (or more) = A

7 & 7.5 = A-

6.5 = B+

6 = B

5 & 5.5 = B-

4 & 4.5 = C+

3.5 = C

3 = C-

Below 3 = D/F

4. TWO SHORT QUIZZES (10 percent)

There will be two short in-class quizzes. If the first quiz grade is higher than the second, the first quiz grade will count and be averaged with the second quiz

grade. If the second quiz grade is higher than the first, only the second will be counted.

NO more than an hour of class time will be set aside for each quiz. The quizzes are designed to help you retain, integrate, and apply the information and ideas we cover over the course of the semester. They will consist of identification of significant terms, concepts, and events that have been discussed in class.

5. FINAL PROJECT: LABOR HISTORY THROUGH FILM (10%)

Choose a film related to the themes of the course from the list of recommended films distributed in class and posted on SAKAI. View the film and read at least two substantial accounts (in addition to relevant course readings) about the events, the era, the figures, or the issues portrayed in the film.

Prepare a class presentation and a written paper that answers these questions:

*Why did you choose this film?

*What message(s) or images concerning work 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?

Students may work individually or in groups of two or three on the final project. Papers should be 3-6 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and include a list of all sources consulted, including relevant class and outside readings.

A paragraph indicating the film you have chosen and some of the sources you plan on consulting is due week 10 (April 1). The paper is due May 6 and should be submitted on SAKAI. Group members may submit individual or co-authored papers. 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.