

**37:575:201:07 US Labor and Work Before the End of Reconstruction  
Rutgers University, Fall 2020**

Instructor: Professor Francis Ryan

Email: [fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu](mailto:fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu)

Mon-Weds 2:15-3:35

**Course Description:** This class will introduce the important developments and themes in the history of work in the Americas from the period of initial contact between European, African and Native American civilizations to the period after the U.S. Civil War. The approach will center on the historical shifts that influenced the decisions that shaped early American concepts of work, including slavery, indentured servitude, free labor and the rise and impact of industrialization and the early labor movement.

Please note that this course also meets the writing distribution requirement for the School of Arts and Sciences. In addition to developing your own writing skills through writing successive drafts, you will learn to provide constructive feedback to other students' writing. As part of the writing component, the class has two additional instructors who will facilitate writing instruction in the class, coordinate peer review sessions on designated days, and assess final writing projects. At the conclusion of the course, students should demonstrate an increase in their knowledge and skills in writing/revising academic essays. Specifically, student should be able to:

- enter into a dialogue with specialists in a particular field of study,
- read essays and extract and explain key points and terms,
- organize a paper from thesis, to topic sentence, to conclusion,
- interact with texts by using meaningful citations in their papers,
- use a range of sentence structures, and
- write meaningful, clear, and organized papers.
- thesis development
- logic and organization
- tone, vocabulary, and spelling

**Learning Objectives:** The following learning objectives of the course are based on Rutgers University's "Permanent Core Curriculum Learning Outcome Goals" (May 2008) and relate to the overall objective of a liberal arts education. "A Rutgers SAS graduate will be able to:"

*In the history and social science of the core:*

H. Understand the basis and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.

K. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.

L. Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors

M. Understand different theories of human culture; social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

*In the writing and communication area of the core:*

S1: Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.

S2: provide and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers and instructors/supervisors through successive drafts.

T: Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.

U: Evaluate and critically assess sources and use conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

V: Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

*In 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).
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (Goal 6)

*In the School of Management and Labor Relations:*

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

## Evaluation Breakdown

Attendance and participation: 10%

Paper 1: 20%

Paper 2: 25%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 25%

*Disability Statement:* 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>.

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

*Statement on Academic Freedom:* Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class will introduce an array of sometimes conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

Please note that the syllabus may change during the semester as I deem necessary.

**Canvas:** This course uses the web-based classroom management system Canvas—please access the site for posted readings and announcements.

**Required Book.** The following required book is currently out of print but has been uploaded onto the class Canvas site. You do not need to purchase the book.

Rosenweig, et al. *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History Volume 1: To 1877*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Bedford/St. Martin Press, 2008

The online readings compliment the material in the text. Some of the online readings are primary sources and will be noted as such on the syllabus. Other online readings are secondary sources—commentaries and historical analysis provided after the events have taken place.

Primary Sources and some of the secondary readings are from the following books:

Zinn and Arnove, *Voices of A People's History of the United States*. (2004)  
Baron and Lichtenstein, *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*. (1991)

### **Remote Class Format: What to Expect**

***Weekly Meetings:*** Our class will meet over the next 15 weeks via the Canvas course site provided by Rutgers.

The class is fully remote—and is organized in an asynchronous format—we will meet virtually once a week via Zoom (on Monday afternoon starting at 2:15). I will schedule these meetings for the class and you can join easily. At these times, I will provide overviews of the themes we are addressing—brief lectures that also allow for questions from you. Each week, I will also provide instructions for homework assignments that you can complete by class time on Wednesday. I will be available to meet during scheduled class time via Zoom each Wednesday for anyone who would like to do so—a kind of virtual office hour. I will explain this in more detail in the first week of the class.

On the syllabus you will see that each week I provide a chapter from the textbook—which has been uploaded to the Canvas site. I also give additional short readings that augment the themes we cover in any given week. For each week's reading assignment, I also have uploaded Focus Questions—these help guide you as you read and make clear exactly what I expect you to take away from the chapters. One of the benefits of these weekly Focus Questions is that they become the range of questions I select from when I make up the midterm and final exams.

**Writing Assignments:** This class fulfills one of the writing requirements for undergraduates at Rutgers—and I realize that it is the reason why most of you are registered for the class. There are two main writing assignments over the course of the semester—both are about 5 pages in length. You will have an opportunity to write a first draft of the paper, and you will receive commentary on the draft from both fellow students and your assigned writing assistant. The class has two writing assistants assigned to work with groups of students; I will also serve in this capacity for a group as well. You will find the group you are assigned to when I send out a document in the second week of class. Details to follow.

All writing assignments should be emailed to your designated reader before class time the day they are due.

**Participation:** It is important to participate and be involved in the weekly meetings. Zoom keeps a record of attendance, and I will keep a record of each Monday meeting. Most weeks I will provide an additional discussion question and invite you to contribute to the chat room which is a feature of our Canvas site. This is another important way that I will keep track of your engagement with the class.

**Take Home Exams:** Since we are not meeting in a traditional classroom, I will provide you with take home exams for the midterm in October, and the second exam in December. These are open book. I will provide you with more detail on these in the coming weeks.

**Some reflections on the semester ahead:** The situation we are dealing with is really unprecedented. There will be many challenges ahead of us. Sometimes technology doesn't work as expected, and we will have to confront challenges as they arise. For all of us, this is a stressful time: many of us are dealing with the health crisis individually or managing the consequences of family members being ill. For many of us, our access to internet connection may pose some challenges. A lot of us are trying to connect to Zoom or Canvas when we have others in our households also using the same internet source, and this may lead to delays and frustration. I know that some of you are currently in different time zones and may have difficulty connecting to weekly Zoom sessions. I will be sure that you have access to information provided through posted lecture notes and make myself available to you at other times as needed.

Through our semester together, please know that I understand the various challenges facing each of you and will work with each of you and will be available help. If there are any issues that come up, please reach out to me by

email. I also ask that you be patient and understanding with me as I organize the class in this remote format.

### **Weekly Class Summary**

#### **Week 1: August 31-September 2: Introduction to the Class.**

Syllabus presented in class. No assigned class readings.

#### **Week 2: September 8-9: A Meeting of Three Worlds: Europe, Africa and American Colonization, 1492-1680.**

*Who Built America?* 7-56.

Bartolome de las Casas, *"In Defense of the Indians"* (1550)

C.L.R James, "The Old United States."

#### **Week 3: September 14-16: Servitude, Slavery, and the Growth of the Southern Colonies, 1620-1760.**

*Who Built America?* 63-106

*Traveler Peter Kalm on Unfree Labor in Pennsylvania* (1753)

#### **Week 4: September 21-23: Family Labor and Growth of the Northern Colonies, 1640-1760.**

#### **Draft of paper 1 due Wednesday Sept. 23: peer review**

*Who Built America?* 111-155.

In class reading: "First Mate Edward Coxere Describes a Storm at Sea." (1659)

Film: "A Midwives Tale."

#### **Week 5: September 28-September 30: Toward Revolution, 1750-1776.**

*Who Built America?* 160-209.

“Samuel Drowne’s Testimony on the Boston Massacre,” March 16, 1770.  
“New York Mechanics Declaration of Independence,” May 29, 1776.

**Week 6: October 5-7: MIDTERM WEEK**

Midterm: Monday Oct 5.

**Week 7: October 12-14: A Revolution, Constitution, and the People, 1776-1815.**

*Who Built America?* 210-257.

*Peter Bestes and Other Slaves Petition for Freedom* (April 20, 1773)

Thomas Paine, *African Slavery in America*, 1775

**Final Draft of paper 1 due Wednesday Oct 14**

**Week 8: October 19-21: The Consolidation of Slavery in the South.**

*Who Built America?* 271-318.

Harriet A Jacobs, “*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*,” (1861)

**Week 9: October 26-28: Northern Society and the Growth of Wage Labor, 1790-1837.**

*Who Built America?* 324-375.

*David Johnson remembers apprenticeship life in the artisan shoe shop.* (1830)

**Week 10: November 2-4: Immigration, Urban Life and Social Reform in the Free Labor North, 1838-1860.**

*Who Built America?* 377-425.

*A Reporters Account of Lynn Women’s Mass Meeting During the Great Strike.* (1860)

**Week 11: November 9-11: The Spread of Slavery and the Crisis of Southern Society, 1836-1848.**

*Who Built America?* 426-475.

*Frederick Douglass Confronts Working Class Racism.* (1836)

**Draft of Paper 2 Due Monday Nov 9: peer review.**

**Week 12: November 16-18: The Settlement of the West and the Conflict Over Slave Labor.**

*Who Built America?* 483-527.

In class reading: "The Western Dialect" (1880)

**Week 13: November 23-25: The Civil War: America's Second Revolution, 1861-1865.**

*Who Built America?* 533-582.

*John Brown's Last Speech.* (November 2, 1859)

*A Mechanic, "Voting by Classes."* (October 13, 1863)

**Week 14: November 30--December 2: Reconstructing the Nation, 1865-1877.**

*Who Built America?* 589-626.

*Martin Delany's advice to former slaves* (July 23, 1865)

*A Northern Unionist Lectures Ex Slaves on the Work Ethic* (1865)

**Final Draft of Paper 2 due Wednesday, December 2.**

**Week 15: December 7-9: Final Class Overview.**

**Final Exam to be Announced.**

## Paper Assignments:

### Development of the Labor Movement

#### Paper Assignment 1

*“The beginning of European settlement of the Americas from 1492 was marked by an extensive demand for labor. As the assigned class readings and film documentaries show, the earliest forms of labor involved both coerced labor and forms of indentured servitude that utilized the work of Europeans, Native Americans and African peoples. By the late 1600s, this fluid labor arrangement became more restrictive and formalized, with a form of racially (African) based slavery imposed in North America. What factors contributed to this development? How and why did this transformation occur?”*

Write a 5 page paper that addresses the question posed above. In your response, be sure to base your claims on materials read in the assigned readings (you do not need to read additional sources for this assignment.)

Drafts of the paper are due Wednesday, **September 23**. You will be given feedback from the TAs assigned to work with you in the following week. The final draft is due via the Canvas Drop Site and as an email attachment to your designated reader by the end of the day, Wednesday, **October 14**.

All papers should follow standard grammar, punctuation and citation methods.

Final drafts are to be submitted electronically to your designated reader by class time the day they are due.

### Development of the Labor Movement

#### Paper Assignment 2

*As the industrial revolution developed in the United States, traditional patterns of work were disrupted and replaced by more ridged, structured, factory-based workplaces. The older notion of the “Artisan Republic”—in which craftsmen could aspire to the status of a master within their given field—was threatened. American workers resisted this change. In what ways did Americans seek to maintain these older traditions of work, and how successful were they?*

Write a 5 page paper that addresses the question posed above. In your response, be sure to base your claims on materials read in the assigned readings (you do not need to read additional sources for this assignment.)

The first draft is due **November 9**. You will be given feedback from the TAs assigned to work with you in the following week. The final draft of the paper should be submitted via the Canvas drop site and as an email attachment to your assigned reader by the end of the day **December 2**.

It is important that you know who your assigned reader is: please consult the group listed provided on the Canvas site. Paper drafts that are not sent in a timely fashion to the appropriate reader will be downgraded.