Course Description
This course will cover topics in labor and employment history, including the changing nature of work, worker movements, and employment relations in the United States. The course will cover the industrial revolution and changing market economy of the late 18th and early 19th century, slavery and freedom, the “labor question” of how the promises of democracy and independence in the U.S. measured against realities of wage labor in the changing workplaces and economic arrangements of the 20th century, and the changing nature of work in the 21st. We will explore the attitudes, ideologies, cultures, and politics of workers, labor leaders, and employers. This course will also examine how workers of different national, ethnic, racial, and gender backgrounds have experienced work and contributed to the development of unions and worker movements. Other important themes include the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers, the role of the state in the economy and the workplace, the rise and decline of collective bargaining and the New Deal order, globalization and neoliberalism, and the current problems facing workers and the emergence of new worker movements.

Course Objectives
This course aims to enable students to:
- Understand how the past shapes the present
- Understand how and why work and workplaces have changed over time
- Understand how social, cultural, and economic forces have shaped U.S. labor history
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different labor systems
- Assess how the state, employees, and worker organizations affect working conditions and living standards
- Apply insights from the past to contemporary labor problems
- Identify and evaluate the main arguments and supporting evidence in a text
- Enhance writing, communication, and leadership skills
- Expand their sense of personal and political possibility

Format and Requirements
This is a reading seminar with an extensive writing component. As we learn about and discuss the history of work and employment in the United States, we will also be honing our critical thinking and writing skills. In class we will discuss theory, history, and policy related to labor and capitalism. There will be some small-group discussions on weekly readings and themes. We may also watch videos or other media related to the course. We will have workshops related to writing at the graduate level. Students will write two 2-page reading analysis papers, and weekly discussion forums based on the readings. The class will have one project based on your interest area. The final project will include a project proposal, annotated bibliography, rough draft, and final version.
**Class participation and grading assessment**

Class will take place in the discussion forums. Active, weekly engagement is expected from everyone. Each week students will post one question/thought for discussion by Wednesday. We will spend the rest of the week engaging with these ideas and others to shape our understanding of labor and work in the U.S. Final posts are due on Sunday night at midnight.

**How to read for class**

Reading is an active process. You must read critically. This does not mean you must find something to criticize about the material. Instead, you have to read closely, analyze the argument and use of sources, and then decide what you think about the author’s point. Are you convinced? Did something challenge your assumptions? Were your ideas confirmed or contradicted?

Start by reading the title, subheading titles (if any), and then the introduction and conclusion. As you read, ask yourself the following questions and take notes:

- What is the subject?
- What is the author’s argument? – restate this in your own words
- Why does it matter (what’s the big picture)?
- What sort of evidence is used? Is it used effectively?
- How is the reading organized?
- What assumptions did the author start with? How did that impact the argument?

You will find that reading critically will allow you to construct discussion questions, help you feel more prepared for class, and prepare well for the writing assignments more easily.

**How to develop effective discussion questions**

A crucial part of becoming skilled at critical thinking and analysis is learning to ask good questions. Because of this, I will ask you to develop and share at least one question for each week’s readings. The purpose of the questions is to direct the class to delve into the central issues and concerns in the readings. Questions can engage the historical material presented (for example, a question related to the effects of worker political participation in a period) or historiographical concerns (how the authors analyzed sources). Questions can also be about larger themes (how the reading relates to freedom, democracy, and/or U.S. political economy).

Questions that begin with who, what, where, and when can often be answered with specific information. For this reason, they do not make good discussion questions. Do not ask questions that can be answered with a quick internet search. Questions that begin with how or why ask for explanations. They are usually the analytical questions that tend to make for better discussion. If you have identified an issue or idea that interests you but do not have a question, try asking how or why it matters and see what happens.

**How to write for class**

All writing assignments should be double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins. Citations should use Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for footnotes. Your name should be in the first page header. Start numbering pages on page 2 (inside the page footer). All essays require a purposeful title. You must cite all your sources. Plagiarism will be penalized with a zero on the assignment, failure in the course, and/or reporting to the academic integrity office.
Themed analysis papers may not exceed 2 pages. These essays should critically engage with the readings/class discussion and how a theme relates to the broader course. You do not need to “cover” every aspect from the readings but should focus on what most interests you and supports YOUR analysis of the material. It is often useful to ask yourself what these readings contribute to our understanding of work and labor in the U.S. and what problems remain. This should be your analysis (defined as your thoughts/opinions plus reasoning/evidence), not a summary.

The final project should be 7-10 pages. Use Chicago style footnotes and bibliography.

**Basic Needs Security**
Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the [Dean of Students](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. I will help you find resources. Other family/close relation emergencies may occur. Mental health is a key component to a sustainable life. Let me know in advance or as soon as possible if you are not participating for any health or quality of life reasons. If you need assistance, please communicate early and often.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic integrity requires that all academic work be the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the university community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. For more information on the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, see [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/)

The instructor for this course holds the copyright to the course teaching materials, including lecture slides, discussion questions, exams, and assignments. The copyrights to the readings and films belong to their rights holders (authors, producers, publishers, etc.). Students may not copy or distribute this material without the written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized distributions of course materials are serious offenses. For more information on the Rutgers University Copyright Policy, see [http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7-current.pdf](http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7-current.pdf)

**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](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.

Turnitin
Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who do not agree should contact me immediately.

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. labor and employment history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

Rutgers Learning Centers
Rutgers is committed to your success and offers free academic services to all students. The Learning Centers provide tutoring, study groups, and review sessions for your courses. They also host workshops and provide individual academic coaching to help you further develop your study strategies and self-management skills. To learn more about how the LCs can help you succeed, visit rlc.rutgers.edu. If you need technical support visit Rutgers OIT.

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

Communication/Email/Electronic Devices
Feel free to email me with questions, concerns, ideas, and/or issues that may arise during the semester. Remember to check the syllabus or Canvas resources for general questions before contacting me. I will reply to most emails within 24 hours. Students are responsible for looking for announcements or updates on Canvas.

Course evaluation
Discussion forums 540
Analysis papers 200
Project proposal/bibliography 50
Rough draft 50
Final project 100
Total 940
Weekly schedule (may be subject to change; changes posted to Canvas)

Week 1-18 Jan: Introductions/Race & Nationalism and the History of Capitalism (Monday is a holiday, classes start on the 19th)
Readings:
- Syllabus
Assignment:
- Discussion forums (introductions and weekly reading)

Week 2-25 Jan: The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Market Capitalism
Readings:
Assignment:
- Race & Nationalism and the History of Capitalism analysis paper due
- Discussion forum

Week 3-01 Feb: Slavery and Freedom
Readings:
Assignment:
- Discussion forum
Week 4-08 Feb: Immigration and Contract Labor
Readings:

Assignment:
- Discussion forum

Week 5-15 Feb: The Gilded Age and Progressive Era “Labor Question”
Readings:
- IWW, “Manifesto and Preamble,” *History is a Weapon*, 1905 & 1908 (online).

Assignment:
- Discussion forum

Week 6-22 Feb: Project Proposal Prep Week
Assignment:
- Project proposal and annotated bibliography due

Week 7-01 Mar: Industrial Unionism
Readings:

Assignment:
• Discussion forum

Week 8-08 Mar: Labor and Social Movements
Readings:
• Dorothy Sue Cobble, “When Feminism Had Class” in What’s Class Got to Do With It?: American Society in the Twenty-First Century, ed. Michael Zweig (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, ), 23-34.
Assignment:
• Discussion forum

Week 9-15 Mar: Spring Break

Week 10-22 Mar: Public Sector Unions
Readings:
Assignment:
• Labor and Social Movements analysis paper due
• Discussion forum

Week 11-29 Mar: Neoliberalism and the Decline of Collective Bargaining
Readings:
Assignment:
• Rough draft due
• Discussion forum

**Week 12-05 Apr: New Labor Movements**
Readings:
Assignment:
- Discussion forum

**Week 13-12 Apr: Changing Nature of Work: A New Gilded Age?**
Readings:
- Edward T. O’Donnell, “Are We Living in the Gilded Age 2.0?,” *History Stories*, 31 Jan 2019 (online).
Assignment:
- Discussion forum

**Week 14-19 Apr: Working-Class Liberation in the 21st Century**
Readings:
- Megan Jula, “Millions of People are Tired of Getting Screwed. This is What a Worldwide Workers’ Movement Looks Like,” *Mother Jones*, 28 Feb 2018 (online).
Assignment:
- Discussion forum

**Week 15-26 Apr: Final Projects**
Assignment:
- Final projects due, 04 May 2021