

Professor: John Lavin
Class meetings: Mondays 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. (on Zoom)
Location: RU Academic Building, Room 2125
Office hours: By Zoom Monday Mornings from 10 a.m. to Noon
(By Appointment)
Contact: JL2600@Rutgers.edu
Cell: 610-724-1404 (talk or text)



(*Liberator*, Harriet Tubman, wearing a coat, haversack slung over her right shoulder. Tubman points her right hand skyward, symbolic of the "North Star." Sculptor, James L. Gafgen, 2005. Delaware Riverbank, Bristol, PA.)

Course Description

This class will explore the history of work in the Americas from the initial contact between Africans, Indigenous Americans, Asians, and Europeans to the period after the U.S. Civil War. Our themes focus upon systems of economic and social justice, including: The African Slave Trade that employed military and legal systems to extract generations of unpaid labor; Genocidal Eviction of Native Americans off their land; as well as the enshrining of gender roles in which women were expected to labor without compensation and without rights; as well as Immigration systems that used concepts of debt and feudal loyalty to motivate workers.

The purpose of our learning, within these scenes of injustice, is to discern how people across time worked together, against difficult odds, in the cause of creating a more just society.

Throughout our course, students will be encouraged to relate past matters of social injustice to the crises of the present.

We will study the role played by advocates who challenged corporations, governments, and political institutions. Students will develop their opinions as problem solvers in 2021 (the present), based upon our understanding of the past. Our history is, therefore, a living history.

For example, we will inquire into the values at task in technological innovation with the rise and impact of industrialization that exploited new technologies in the 1800s to advance the profits of the wealthy rulers. And, on a parallel timeline, we will examine the early labor rights movements, including: How emerging unions advocated workers' rights for decent wages and job safety; How abolitionists fought to end slavery; and How suffragists promoted democracy and women's rights to vote in political elections and to bring about change for a more equal society.

The study of workers' conflicts promotes critical thinking, including:

- Essay-writing that examines how disputing viewpoints might find common ground;
- Research that seeks potential agreement even in cases of interests that are diametrically opposed;
- Dialogue that empathetically respects differences in the cause of deliberation;
- Appreciative inquiry that suspends prejudice and values others' perspectives through active listening.

To that end, while we will read deeply in the sweeping history of the period covered by our analysis, we will focus each week upon a select series of cases taken from an array of contexts that (among others) include:

- Potosi: Bolivian Silver Mining & Human Rights Violations 1546 A.D. to the present;
- The Zong Massacre: How Courts Failed to Address Genocide;
- Ancestral Recall: aTunde Adjuah's Jazz Composition of the African Diaspora;
- Bacon's Rebellion and Suppression of Democracy;
- Harriet Jacobs' Journal of Injustice;
- Lemuel Shaw (1781 – 1861), Voice of Judicial Conscience

Our readings elicit a range of students' thinking skills such as theorizing policies appropriate to social change; imagining unique conceptions found in poets and musicians' expressions of history's tragic and the comic scenes; as well as computing and communicating trends in the history of disease, social unrest, and disability. See the list of meetings and readings for the full account of our course activities and challenges.

Throughout our work, we will encourage, as crucial to our course, the examination of systemic racism's inequities in the present that have historically marginalized indigenous populations, as well as African Americans and Asian Americans. Equally important will be gender policies and practices silencing women and LGBTQ workers and their communities from having a voice at work and in society at large.

Course Structure

This course will blend synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction with in-person instruction. Some lectures will be recorded and posted to Canvas, where students will also conduct group discussions. However, our weekly Zoom meetings on Monday evenings at 5:00 p.m. is compulsory and will be crucial to conveying the essential concepts of our semester's deliberations of History. You are expected to be available for the full three hours every time this class is scheduled to meet. Note: We will most likely not meet the full three hours, but it is important that you be present.

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, Goal s).
- 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.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how workers and their organizations (including unions) have been shaped by the larger society of which they are a part but have also contributed to changing the larger society.

Our course includes peer review/editing and forum discussions involving a group of students, and several of our learning objectives concern the process of interaction between students.

- To demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly, authentically, and maintain a content-oriented focus in response to other students' work.
- To maintain a positive and respectful attitude when interacting with other students, especially those who have different views and opinions.

Cheating/plagiarism

Students in this class and in all courses at Rutgers University are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are among the behaviors that constitute violations of the Academic Integrity Policy. You are expected to be familiar with this policy. If you have questions about specific assignments, be sure to check with the instructor. The Academic Integrity Policy defines all forms of cheating and the procedures for dealing with violations. You should be familiar with this policy. The trust between the instructor and the class depends on your acceptance of this essential principle of behavior in the University. Do your own work and do not provide unauthorized assistance to others and you will find this course more rewarding.

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>.

EVALUATION

Written assignments

You will write two essays this semester, on topics to be announced. Each accounts for 20% of your final grade. You will write several drafts of each. All are mandatory, as is participation in peer review. Each part of the process counts toward your essay grade. There will also be two essay-based exams (a Mid-Term and a Final); each of these exams will be worth 20% of your grade (see rubric on page 15 of this syllabus). Please see the descriptions of your Essay Assignments and Examinations at the end of this syllabus. In addition, your participation in our class counts for 20% of your grade, which will include your involvement in class discussions and activities such as threaded discussions and presentations.

Grades	
Participation	20%
Essay #1 (on Reparations)	20%
Essay #1 (Biography)	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Course Participation.

Students are required to attend weekly meetings and to participate in discussions of films, readings, and other materials posted on the Course Canvas site and identified by the Syllabus as “required reading.”

Each week every student will be required to identify an “Exam Question” by participating in discussions of the topic for the week. All members of our class will participate by posting Exam Questions that the instructor will use to prompt short essays on both the Midterm and Final Exams (see the rubric for exam question in our course syllabus).

Students’ participation grade (20%) will be based upon the weekly submission of an Exam Question that reflects the topics raised in our course. The questions will be developed and shared on our Canvas Module page. Every student must submit an Exam Question to our Canvas site by Saturday of each week (see deadline dates on Assignments page). First Exam Question is due: September 11th.

Participation Grade Will Be Based Upon:

Attendance and Contribution to Class Meetings (33 Points)

Exam Questions (33 Points)

Final Meeting/Correspondence with Instructor (34 Points)

At the conclusion of course (November/December), instructor will review class documents and assess students’ participation by interviewing each student about their experience composing questions for our Midterm & Final Exams and writing short essays to answer the Exam Questions as well as the longer Essays (*on Reparations* and *Biography*) that are required for our course.

Lateness Policy

All late assignments will be marked down. One grade will be deducted for every 24-hour period (or portion thereof) your paper is late. That is, a B paper will turn into a C paper if it is up to 24 hours late, and into a D paper if it is up to 48 hours late. While the drafts are not assigned letter grades, failing to turn them or turning them in late will have the same effect on the final draft you hand in for a grade.

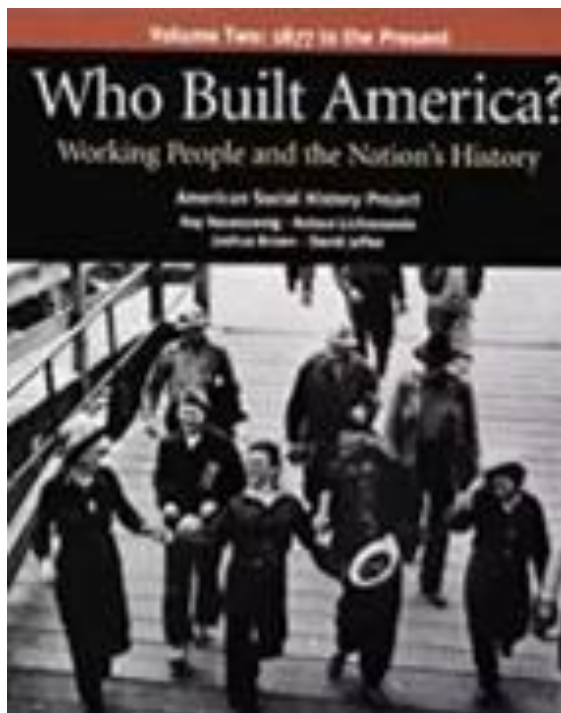
You must complete all written assignments in order to receive credit for this course.

We will turn back all assignments in a timely manner. If we do not turn back your assignment, it is your job to bring this to our attention. If you believe we have not recorded a grade for an assignment you have turned in, you must clear this up during the semester. After the semester is over, we will not be able to consider claims that you turned in an assignment if we have no record of it.

COURSE READINGS:

1. ***Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History***, 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 are also available online with the course. Most of the online readings are primary sources and will be noted in the syllabus – i.e. they are from the time period discussed in the text. Other readings are secondary sources; they are interpretations and evaluations of the events or developments.



Evaluation Breakdown

Attendance and participation: 20%

Essay #1: 20%
 Essay #2: 20%
 Midterm Exam: 20%
 Final Exam: 20%

Grading Criteria

A 90-100%
 B+ 85-90%
 B 80-85%
 C+ 75-80%
 C 70-75%
 D 60-69%
 F 59% and below

Class attendance

You are expected to attend each of our scheduled Monday evening Zoom Sessions, and to be on time. Be punctual and plan to stay for the entire class. Students who repeatedly arrive late and leave at break will have their grades lowered. If you need to leave early, see me before class; otherwise you are expected to remain until the class is over.

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.

Weekly Schedule

(Week One) September 8th <i>Introduction</i> <i>Child Labor, Human Rights, The Process of Questioning Authority.</i>	Required Activities: Review of Syllabus, Assignments, Grading Process. Discussion of Films, Readings, and Topics in Labor History.	<u>Due Sept. 11th</u> Exam Question: Potosi.
(Week Three) September 13th Slavery, Profit, Ethical & Moral Reasoning In History	Required Activities: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules); Discussion of Midterm Exam.	<u>Due Sept. 18th</u> Exam Question: Zong Massacre & Complicity in Courts/Insurance Industry.
(Week Four) September 20th Slavery,	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Sept. 25th</u> Exam Question: Reparations

Profit & Ethical Reasoning In History		
(Week Five) September 27th Understanding Rebellion	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Oct. 2nd</u> Exam Question: Rebellions
(Week Six) October 4th Union Rights	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Oct. 9th</u> Exam Question: Lemuel Shaw & Workers' Rights. Rough Draft of Essay #1 Due.
(Week Seven) October 11th Women's Rights	Required: Midterm Exam Sent Out: October 11th. Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Oct. 16th</u> Exam Question: Declarations of Sentiments
(Week Eight) October 18th <i>Civil Disobedience</i>	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Oct. 23rd</u> Final Draft Essay #1 Exam Question: Civil Disobedience
(Week Nine) October 25th <i>Environmental Rights</i>	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Oct. 30th</u> Thoreau, Walden & Nature Midterm Exam Due
(Week Ten) November 1st	Required:	<u>Due Nov. 6th</u> Exam Question:

State Sponsored Violence/ Terrorism	Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	Trial of John Brown
(Week Eleven) November 8th <i>Workers' Rights To Strike</i>	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Nov. 13th</u> Exam Question: Right to Strike
(Week Twelve) November 15th Biograph of an Advocate	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Nov. 20th</u> Rough Draft/ Essay #2
(Week Thirteen) November 22nd	Required: Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	<u>Due Dec. 4th</u> Final Draft/ Essay #2
(Week Fourteen) December 1st Review of Course	Required: Final Exam Sent Out: December 6 th Required Readings/Viewing (see Canvas Modules);	
(Week Fifteen) Exam Week	<u>Final Examination Due: December 18th</u>	

Essay Assignment #1
Rough Draft/Due 10/09/21
Final Draft/Due 10/23/21

Reflection

The beginning of European settlement of the Americas from 1492 was marked by an extensive demand for labor. That need was met, over the first two-hundred years of colonialism by:

- Imprisoning, transporting and subjugating African peoples to a system of slavery that imposed torture and confinement on them while guaranteeing white landowners free labor;
- Evicting Native Americans from their ancestral lands and extracting resources from them including unpaid labor;
- Indenturing poverty-stricken European immigrants to their employers in a form of servitude that indebted poor whites to the wealthy and expected their loyalty to Europe's aristocracy.

In the late 1600s, the class structures of the Americas became more restrictive and formalized according to a racist hierarchy that violated human rights in pursuit of profits for white landowners.

How and why did this transformation occur? Bryan Stevenson's film, ***Slavery to Mass Incarceration***, contends that reparations should be paid to individuals, families, and communities who were traumatized and exploited by the labor codes and practices established in the period after 1492.

Essay Assignment

Write a five-page paper that addresses the question of whether reparations will, finally, serve justice. Be specific about the particular losses that must be compensated in a particular situation and the form those reparations should take. Include references to specific events in the past and deadlines for reconciliation in the present and future. In your response, be sure to base your claims on materials from our assigned readings. You are not required to read additional sources for this assignment; however, you are permitted to research incidents not addressed by our course.

Essay Question #2.
Rough Draft Due 11/20/21
Final Draft Due 12/04/21

“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 1618 and 1865, 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 history. 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.

However, in the framework of this question, the person selected has to come out being big. More important – and more within reach – is that the student find some charming meaning in the figure. The student may be asked, more flexibly, to consider that person's struggle. For example: what forces did the selected person have to contend with, and how did this person then figure out what to do, for good or ill?

Step One: Week 9

Identify Subject for Biography: October 30th

Write a paragraph explaining your Choice. Explain the person that you have chosen for the biographical essay. “What dilemma does your chosen figure present to your mind?” This step asks the student to: (1) Identify someone; (2) identify a person in a difficult position in history, and (3) say what the student thinks the predicament is. Then, how does the student think the selected person could be good for us to study, so we may think about workers in such a position?

Step Two: Week 10

List of Biographical sources:

Select and list three-to-five sources that you think speak to your figure's predicament. Each source selected should clarify, or offer a new way of thinking about, your figure's struggle. Don't just use a source to confirm what you already think. For each source you choose, write a statement of exactly 35 words saying how this source stands to help you understand the chosen figure's struggle.

Step Three: Week 11

Develop an Outline of a life: This will be a chart or timeline showing the events, labor issues, movements and/or personalities that influenced the subject of your biography.

Essay Question #2 (Cont'd.)

Step Four: Week 12

Submit the Rough Draft of your Biographical Essay.

Step Five: Week 13

Submit the Final Draft of Biographical Essay.

Biographical Essay Requirements: The Five-Page Biographical Essay on the Life of a person who lived in the period from 1618 to 1865 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 grounding your subject in the history of their time.**
 - **Works Cited.**

Sources:

Primary sources are journals, letters or speeches, or actual artifacts such as period clothing, tools or medical records.

Secondary sources are full-length biographies, critical commentaries, films and other works of art such as films or sculptures. Secondary sources usually appear after the appearance of primary sources.

Mid-Term and Final Examinations

The examinations will each ask students to write short essays responding to questions of opinion that have emerged in our readings and discussions of the history of issues such as the human rights of workers, their families and communities. Attention will be paid to a series of themes related to concepts of accuracy, truth and justice in the course of our deliberations each week. Students will play a defining role in selecting questions that they wish to be asked on our mid-term and final exams.

**Students will receive the Exam Questions for the Mid-Term Exam on 10/11/21
And will Submit Examination Essay Answers on 10/30/21.**

**Students will receive the Exam Questions for the Final Exam on 12/06/21
And will Submit Examination Essay Answers on 12/18/21.**

Rubric Mid-Term and Final Exam: Short Essays			
Criteria	Ratings		Pts
Supporting Evidence/Proof Student must provide historical evidence supporting the opinion stated in the essay. Evidence needs to align with or prove the opinion in a manner that reflects an understanding of the workers			5.0 pts
	5.0 pts Full Marks	0.0 pts No Marks	
Statement of Opinion Student must express an opinion regarding the essay question. This opinion should be contained in a carefully worded sentence (or possibly two sentences).			5.0 pts
	5.0 pts Full Marks	0.0 pts No Marks	
Writing Writing on the short-essay exam answers should reflect careful reasoning, and good word choices that demonstrate good thoughts.			5.0 pts
	5.0 pts Full Marks	0.0 pts No Marks	
Relevance Short essay also must explain how problems of workers of the past are relevant to the struggles of workers in the present.			5.0 pts
	5.0 pts Full Marks	0.0 pts No Marks	
Total Points: 20.0			

(See Other Rubrics on Rubrics Page of Course Canvas Site)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This is an inclusive learning environment that is welcoming of all people and perspectives, including those of diverse races, religions, ethnicities, ages, gender identities and sexual orientations. If you go by a name or gender that is different from the one on official Rutgers documents, please let me know so that I can use the proper name and pronouns