

**Course No. 37:575:202:90**  
**History of Labor and Work in the U.S. 1880 to 1945**  
**Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations**  
**Fall 2021**

Instructor: Dr. Dan Sidorick  
Zoom/Canvas  
Thursday 5:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

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Office hours: Via Zoom - Contact  
Instructor

Special Information for the Fall 2021 Semester

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this course, which is normally taught in-person on the College Ave campus, will be conducted remotely, through a combination of synchronous class meetings using Zoom, and asynchronous discussions, assignments, and quizzes using Canvas. The standard weekly meeting on Zoom will take place at the same starting time that the original course was scheduled for, at 5 p.m. ET on Thursday evenings, but most weeks we will be meeting for only half of the scheduled time, or about 90 minutes. This will be supplemented by increased use of asynchronous Canvas discussion forums and weekly assignments, and optional but recommended individual meetings with the instructor in Zoom Office Hours. Quizzes will be timed and open-book, and conducted in Canvas.

We will aim to make the experience of this course as close as possible to the in-person class, and the weekly Zoom meetings will be a combination of (1) the instructor discussing highlights of the weekly lectures and other important course topics, and (2) participation by everyone in discussions and other activities, often using break-out rooms for smaller-group interaction. After a short non-recorded section of the class each week for open discussion, the lectures and activities will be recorded and posted in Canvas each week for later review.

I will be asking for your help and feedback in improving the course throughout the semester, so you can expect some changes, but I will keep the course as straightforward and stable as possible. I understand that we are all living through difficult times, and I strongly encourage you to contact me at any time about any problems related to COVID or otherwise. Together we will be able to make this work for everyone. If you anticipate any technology issues with accessing and using Zoom or Canvas, contact me immediately so we can take care of any issues.

Overview

History has often been presented as the story of how powerful people have changed human societies over the course of time, with presidents, generals, and the wealthy playing central roles. This course will turn the standard approach on its head and instead look at America and the changes it has undergone through the eyes of working people.

What was life like for machine operators, office workers, sharecroppers, housewives, coal miners, immigrants, teachers, and retail workers during the period of American industrial dominance, and how did their actions affect the course of history? This course will tackle these questions, looking at the development of the labor movement and other movements of "ordinary" people and the enormous changes they have wrought in American history. We will not ignore the important roles of the powerful, but we will examine them together with the actions and ideologies of working-class people and their organizations. And we will look at the world surrounding the labor movement and the social and cultural changes in each period.

We will also study the differing forms and ideologies of numerous workers' organizations to understand why some made a real difference and others had little lasting effect. The labor movement has changed dramatically from the early period of industrialization, when the United States was still primarily an agricultural country, through the explosive growth of mass production in the twentieth century. Our approach will highlight the fact that American history has not been a smooth narrative of progress, but rather that change has come about only after struggle over different views of what path the country should take.

This course satisfies several specific Rutgers learning objectives that are detailed below after the course schedule. Please contact me at [daniel.sidorick@rutgers.edu](mailto:daniel.sidorick@rutgers.edu) if you have any questions about the course.

*Statement on Disability:* 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>.

*Statement on Academic Honesty:* All work in this course must be your own. Be careful to always cite your sources. For direct quotes, include them within quotation marks and cite appropriately. Since none of us lived during the times we are studying, we must, of course, rely on the words and writings of others, but these must always be cited -- otherwise the use of those words is considered plagiarism. Any assignments containing the work of others and not cited properly will receive a grade of zero, and could result in an F for the course. *Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this point.* *In accordance with department policy, student papers will be submitted through 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 the course instructor immediately.*

### Student Requirements

1. *Class participation* (20% of your grade). Your active participation in class is essential for the success of the class. This part of your grade is based on attendance, coming to class on time and prepared by finishing all readings before class, and taking an active part in class discussions and activities. This semester your participation will take place primarily in Zoom. Contact the instructor if there are problems affecting your ability to attend a class.
2. *Online discussion forums and Canvas assignments* (20% of grade). To supplement our class sessions, we will also have discussions and other assignments in Canvas. In the discussion forums you will post responses to questions and to other students' postings by the deadlines listed, basing your comments on class readings and other materials. Often the forum topic will be used as a starting point for in-class discussions in the following class.
3. *Mid-Term Quiz* (15% of grade). The mid-term quiz will consist of essay questions and identification questions (people, events, concepts, etc.), and will be based on lectures, readings, films, and discussions. This semester the quizzes will take place in Canvas, and will be timed and open-book.
4. *Final Quiz* (15% of grade). The final quiz will consist of essay questions and identification questions (people, events, concepts, etc.), and will be based on lectures, readings, films, and discussions, covering the entire course but concentrated on the second half of the semester. This semester the quizzes will take place in Canvas, and will be timed and open-book.
5. *Class paper 1* (15% of grade). For a paper on an assigned topic, you will submit a draft version and later a final version (the draft is required in order to submit a final version). The draft will be reviewed by the instructor.
6. *Class paper 2* (15% of grade). For a paper on an assigned topic, you will submit a draft version and later a final version (the draft is required in order to submit a final version). The draft will be reviewed by another student using a Guided Peer Review. Your review of another student's paper will be part of your grade.

Note: The general policy on late assignments is that all late assignments will be downgraded one letter grade (e.g. A to B) and will not be accepted more than one week after due date. Contact the instructor immediately if you experience or anticipate any problems and we will make arrangements as necessary.

The best way to attain a grade you are happy with is to come to class, pay attention, take notes (from lectures and readings and videos), and participate in discussions, both in-class (Zoom) and Canvas!

### Required Text

The following required book is available for purchase or rental or free online:

Rosenzweig, et al., *Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History, Volume II: Since 1877*, 3rd ed., Bedford / St. Martin's Press, 2008. (Referred to as WBA in following pages.)

The textbook is also available for free as a series of pdf files in Canvas. You may use these in place of purchasing the textbook, but if you are able, I recommend getting the actual textbook.

All other readings listed below will be available on the Canvas system or via the Web. In order to participate actively in discussions, you must complete the readings by the day that they are listed on the syllabus. Be sure to read the non-textbook readings as well as the textbook -- they give additional in-depth insights that may be missing in the textbook, and content from both textbook and supplemental readings will be included in quizzes and papers.

### Class Schedule

Changes may be made in the schedule and readings -- be sure to check Canvas and your email often.

### **GETTING STARTED**

Thursday, Sep 2

Introduction and overview. What is the Labor Movement? Why 1880?

Studying history "from the bottom up." The U.S. and working people in 1880.

### **THE "GREAT UPHEAVAL OF 1877";**

### **INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE (1877 to 1893)**

Thursday, Sep 9

Readings:

- Jeremy Brecher, "The Great Upheaval," pp. 138-148.
- WBA Ch. 1 - pp. 23-49, 70-71.

### **WORKING PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE**

Thursday, Sep 16

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 2 – pp. 77-79, 91-120.
- Susan Levine, "Labor's True Woman"

### **INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM AT HOME AND ABROAD (1893 to 1900)**

Thursday, Sep 23

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 3 – pp. 124-157, 167-174.
- "Statement from the Pullman Strikers" [PS]
- Eugene Debs, "Interview from Jail" and "A Call to the People." [PS]

**THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900 TO 1918): REFORM AND EFFICIENCY**

Thursday, Sep 30

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 4 - pp. 181-202, 216-217
- “Frederick Winslow Taylor Explains...” [PS]
- “Machinist Testifies on the Taylor System...” [PS]

Assignment – Submit 1st Draft of Writing Assignment 1

**THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900 TO 1918): RADICALS AND SOCIALISTS**

Thursday, Oct 7

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 5 – pp. 223-225, 241-269
- Sidorick, "The 'Girl Army': The Philadelphia Shirtwaist Strike of 1909-1910"
- "Lawrence Textile Strike" [PS]

**WORLD WAR 1 AND THE 1918 PANDEMIC; FIRST HALF OF COURSE REVIEW**

Thursday, Oct 14

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 6 - pp. 279-280, 292-312, 320-329
- Cal Winslow, "[When the Seattle General Strike and the 1918 Flu Collided](#)"

Review for Quiz #1 (covering material from the first half of the course through 1918)

Students will take Quiz 1 between 10/15 and 10/19 in Canvas (90-minute, open book)

**THE FIRST RED SCARE AND THE “LEAN DECADE” FOR AMERICAN WORKERS (1918 to 1929)**

Thursday, Oct 21

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 7 – pp. 335-339, 343-352, 375-384
- Sharon McConnell-Sidorick, "[Silk Stockings and Socialism](#)"

**THE GREAT DEPRESSION & THE FIRST NEW DEAL (1929 to 1935)**

Thursday, Oct 28

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 8
- Sidorick, "The Dorrance Dynasty" and "Camden in the Great Depression"

Assignment -- Final Version of Writing Assignment 1

**LABOR UPSURGE: THE INDUSTRIAL UNION MOVEMENT (1935 to 1939)**

Thursday, Nov 4

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 9, pp. 455-473
- “Dollinger Remembers the Flint Sit-down Strike,” pp. 345-349. [PS]
- (Optional) “Flint Sit-down Strike Graphic Comic”: <https://bit.ly/32etb6w>

**THE SECOND NEW DEAL (1935 to 1939)**

Thursday, Nov 11

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 9, pp. 444-455, 473-491

Assignment: Submit 1st Draft of Writing Assignment 2; Peer Review of Another Student’s 1st Draft

## **DIVISION AND UNITY IN AMERICAN WORKING-CLASS HISTORY**

Thursday, Nov 18

Readings:

- James Barrett, "Unity and Fragmentation: Class, Race, and Ethnicity on Chicago's South Side, 1900-1922," *Journal of Social History* (1984)

Viewing of *Matewan* (on your own) and discussion (in class)

## **WORKING PEOPLE & WORLD WAR II (1939 to 1946)**

Thursday, Dec 2

Readings:

- WBA Ch. 10, 497-505, 517-547.
- Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Lost and Found: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History* (December 1988)

Assignment: Final Version of Writing Assignment 2

## **WORK AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN POST-WAR AMERICA**

Thursday, Dec 9

Readings:

- "The Unions Strike Back": <http://brownpoliticalreview.org/2018/06/unions-strike-back-janus-west-virginia-oklahoma-future-organized-labor/>

Review of course and brief lecture on work and labor after 1946.

Review for Quiz #2 (covering material primarily from the second half of the course since 1918)

Students will take Quiz 2 between 12/10 and 12/15 in Canvas (90-minute, open book)

## Grading Criteria and Components

### Grading Criteria:

A	90-100%	900 to 1000 points
B+	85-90%	850 to 899 points
B	80-85%	800 to 849 points
C+	75-80%	750 to 799 points
C	70-75%	700 to 749 points
D	60-69%	600 to 699 points
F	59% and below	0 to 599 points

### Grading Components:

Grades are based on the following components:

First Canvas Discussion Forum (Introductions)  
2% of the grade (20 points)

Six Remaining Canvas Discussion Forums  
18% of the grade (Each forum = 30 points)

Quizzes  
30% of the grade (Each quiz = 150 points)

First Class Paper  
15% of the grade (150 points)

Second Class Paper  
15% of the grade (150 points)

Class participation (Zoom)  
20% of the grade (200 points [120 attendance, 80 participation])

Please note: All late assignments will be downgraded one letter grade (e.g. A to B) and will not be accepted more than one week after due date.

## Learning Objectives for This Course

### ***Core Curriculum: SCL, HST, WCr and WCd***

- Historical Analysis [HST]
  - k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.
  - l. Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.
- Social Analysis [SCL]
  - m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Writing and Communication [WCR; WCD]
  - s. Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, &/or supervisors through successive drafts & revision. [WCR]
  - t. Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. [WCD]

### ***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).

### ***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)

### ***Additional course objective from the instructor:***

- Demonstrate the ability to think logically and critically about ideas and events in American history and to evaluate arguments from a variety of perspectives.