

**37:575:201:03 U.S. Labor and Work Before the End of Reconstruction
Rutgers University, Fall 2024**

Instructor: Professor Francis Ryan
Email: fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu
Meeting Time: Monday 5:40-8:40
Classroom: Cook-Douglass Lecture Hall 103

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, 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*, 3rd 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)

Weekly Meetings: Our class meets once a week. In the event of another pandemic lockdown or some other unexpected development, the class will continue in remote format on the class Zoom site provided on Canvas. It is not expected that this will happen, but it is important to be clear in case such a scenario is deemed necessary by the university.

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 assigned Writing Assistants.

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

Generative AI (ChatGPT, etc) is not permitted at any stage (brainstorming, initial drafts, or final draft) of the writing assignments in this class. Anyone violating this regulation will receive a 0 grade for the assignment in question.

Participation: It is important to participate and be involved in the weekly meetings. Please come to class on time and stay for the duration. If you need to miss class, come late, or leave early please let me know. Attendance and participation account for 10% of the semester grade. This component will be determined by your attendance and record of participation in weekly discussions and engagement with the class materials. You are responsible for signing the weekly attendance sheet handed out at break.

Weekly Class Summary

Week 1: September 9: Introduction to the Class.

Syllabus presented in class. No assigned class readings.

Week 2: September 16: 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 23: 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 30: Family Labor and Growth of the Northern Colonies, 1640-1760.

Draft of paper 1 due

Who Built America? 111-155.

"First Mate Edward Coxere Describes a Storm at Sea." (1659)

Film: "A Midwives Tale."

Week 5: October 7: 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 14: MIDTERM WEEK

Week 7: October 21: A Revolution, Constitution, and the People, 1776-1815.

Who Built America? 210-257.

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

Francis Hopkinson, *"Account of the Grand Federal Procession, Performed at Philadelphia on Friday July 4, 1788."*

Final Draft of paper 1 due

Week 8: October 28: 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)

Thomas Paine, *African Slavery in America* (1775)

Week 9: November 4: Northern Society and the Growth of Wage Labor, 1790-1837.

Who Built America? 324-375.

Indenture Agreement, Philadelphia, John Henry Coates. (May 29, 1750)

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

Week 10: November 11: 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 18: The Spread of Slavery and the Crisis of Southern Society, 1836-1848.

Who Built America? 426-475.

Frederick Douglass, *“Frederick Douglass Confronts Working Class Racism.”* (1836)

Draft of Paper 2 Due

Week 12: November 25: The Settlement of the West and the Conflict Over Slave Labor.

Who Built America? 483-527.

Meera Munoz Pandya, *“The Transcontinental Railroad and the Asian-American Story,”* Smithsonian National Postal Museum (2019)

In class reading: *“The Western Dialect”* (1880)

Week 13: December 2: 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: December 9: 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.

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 **October 2**. You will be given feedback from the TAs assigned to work with you in the following week. Final drafts are to be submitted electronically to your designated reader by class time on **October 23**.

All papers should follow standard grammar, punctuation and citation methods. Late papers will be downgraded.

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 20**. You will be given feedback in the following weeks. The final draft of the paper should be submitted as an email attachment to your designated reader by the start of class **December 11**. Late papers will be downgraded.