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“History does not merely refer to the past . . . history is literally present in all we do.”

--James Baldwin

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Fall 2026 Syllabus

Scott Hall Room 104

Preliminary—Subject to Change

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Why study U.S. Labor and Work before the End of Reconstruction?

Reconstruction is just one part of the history James Baldwin wanted America to see. In that sense, the history of our nation remains an inspiration for those who hope to build a freer and more equal America. I am hoping that throughout the semester you will develop a deep appreciation for the continuance of Mr. Baldwin’s words.

How do I get in touch with my instructor?

Use the Inbox messaging tool in Canvas. You can also meet me after class or via Zoom

If you need accommodation, let me know as soon as possible. You have the right to have your needs met.

What should you be able to *know* and *do* by the end of this course? (CORE LEARNING OBJECTIVES)

- Explain the development of some aspects of society or culture over time. (HST)
- Understand different theories about

human culture, social identity, economic, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (SCL)

- 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 & revision. (WCr)
- 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)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (LSER Dept. 1)
- Make an argument using contemporary or historical evidence. (LSER 4)

- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (SMLR I)

How will I be graded?

Criteria	Points
Attendance	200
In-Class Assignments	800 (100 pts. each)

	Important Due Dates
In-class assignment 1	
In-class assignment 2	
In-class assignment 3	
In-class assignment 4	
In-class assignment 5	
In-class assignment 6	
In-class assignment 7	
In-class assignment 8	

Modules	Assignments
Discovery and First Contact	<i>Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i> <i>The Four Voyages</i> <i>"With fifty men, all can be kept in subjugation"</i> Video : <i>Columbus and the Age of Discovery</i> Podcast: <i>Feral Hogs</i>
Kidnapping Children and Taking Out the Trash	<i>White Trash</i> <i>"Coercing Children to Virginia"</i> <i>"This Indenture Made"</i> <i>An Act for the Encouragement of White Servants</i> Video: <i>Rockin' English</i>
From Gold Coast to Slave Coast	<i>"A new refinement in cruelty"</i> Video: <i>The Terrible Transformation</i>
Defenders and Opponents of Racial Slavery	<i>"Cotton and Negroes are a constant theme"</i> <i>"A Christian defense of slavery"</i> <i>"I have wept over my birth in the land of slavery"</i> Video: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i>
The Rise of Free Labor	<i>Carpenters Preamble</i> <i>Printer Apprenticeship</i> <i>Tailors Sentenced</i>

The Factory System: Lowell Mills	<i>Boardinghouse Rules</i> <i>Factory Labor Report</i> Video: <i>Mill Times</i>
The Irish Potato Famine	Video: <i>The Great Hunger</i>
The Thirteenth Amendment	Eric Foner on the Thirteenth Amendment
Convict Leasing	<i>Slavery by Another Name</i> pp. 53-65 Video: <i>Slavery by Another Name</i>
Andrew Carnegie and the Battle at Homestead	<i>"The Mechanical Habit of Mind"</i> Video: <i>Andrew Carnegie: The Richest Man in the World</i>

****Please see the module on Course Essentials in Canvas for information on Turnitin, Academic Integrity, Disability Services, and Writing Assignments Overview and Policies.****