

Course No. 37:575:207:90

New Jersey Labor History (online)

**Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations
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Overview

History can sometimes seem remote. But in this course on New Jersey's workers and labor unions, the history of the state's workers will be as close as our backyards. We will learn how America's workers and their allies fought hard to win the rights and improvements we take for granted today, like minimum wage, weekends, and Social Security.

But we'll learn that by studying people and events in our own state, like the child workers in Paterson who went on strike in 1835 to win an 11-hour day, and the unemployed families of the "Army of Unoccupation" who took over the State House in Trenton in 1936 to press for relief during the Great Depression. We'll learn about surprising events like the battle of black and white workers at Seabrook Farms against vigilantes and the Ku Klux Klan (in 1934), and the war between striking workers in Elizabeth and mobsters from Murder, Inc. (in 1946).

We will also visit some of the sites where this history took place, walking the streets of Paterson where thousands of immigrant strikers marched in 1913, and standing on the balcony of Pietro and Maria Botto's house where Big Bill Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn rallied the strikers. The history of America's working class really is exciting, and there's no better way to find that out than by learning about the labor movement in New Jersey. Please be aware that at least two physical site visits are required for the course.

Among other topics, we will explore the history of trade unions and other worker movements in New Jersey from the first demands voiced by the Hibernia iron workers in the 1770s to the changing political role of the New Jersey AFL-CIO, the growth of public sector unions, and the challenges faced by the union movement in New Jersey today.

We'll examine the craft unionism of the New Jersey Federation of Labor and its dominant building trades unions, the "one big union" philosophies of the Knights of Labor and the IWW, the revolutionary goals of Paterson's Italian anarchists and the Passaic textile strike's Communists, the industrial unionism of the CIO, the rise of public sector unionism, and new methods of organizing in the late twentieth century such as workers' centers.

We place New Jersey worker movements in historic context with contemporaneous labor movements elsewhere in the United States and in other countries, and we examine the impact of political ideology, culture, ethnicity, race and gender issues on the development of New Jersey worker movements.

An important goal of the course is for students to learn to think logically and critically about ideas and events in history and to evaluate arguments from a variety of perspectives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via the Canvas Inbox 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. *Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this point.*

Class Structure

The course is organized into 7 modules, each lasting 1 to 3 weeks and covering a chronological period and theme. There will be an assignment for each week ranging from 2-page reading responses to 3-page site visit reports, forum discussions, and a final 4-page paper. There will also be two quizzes. 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.

This online course also requires you to physically visit at least two labor-history-related sites in New Jersey. The site visits are organized around the periods we will be studying: one for the earlier period (Modules 1-2), one at Paterson (Module 3), and one for Modules 4-7 (two of these three are required). *Note: If you are unable to complete these visits due to physical disability or distance from New Jersey, you must contact the instructor during the first week of the course to arrange alternative assignments.*

Students are responsible for checking their Canvas inbox and the course shell frequently, and completing all readings, videos, and assignments on time.

Required Text

Workers in New Jersey History by Joseph Gowaskie. This will be our basic outline text. It is available in pdf format in the course shell or at <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/3744> (click on PDF-1). It is also available in hardcopy if you prefer from the Rutgers University Bookstore (732-246-8448), online (for example at bn.com), or from Classics Bookstore in Trenton (email book_cellar@mindspring.com).

All other readings listed below will be available in the course shell or via the Web.

Class Schedule

Changes may be made in the schedule and readings.

Module 1: Work in Early New Jersey

Week 1: <i>Tuesday, Jan 16</i> <i>Sunday, Jan 21</i>	Introduction and overview. Become familiar with the web site that has the online course (the “course shell”).
	Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 1.
	Assignment: Introduce yourself in Meet the Other Students and post Account Profile

Week 2: <i>Monday, Jan 22-</i> <i>Sunday, Jan 28</i>	Iron, Slavery, and Indenture
	Readings: Green, "Child Labor" and "Oxford Furnace" (very short) Kury, "Labor and the Charcoal Iron Industry: The New Jersey-New York Experience" Bezís-Selfa, "Slavery and Free Labor in the Iron Industry"
	Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)

Module 2: Artisans and Early Trade Unions

Week 3: <i>Monday, Jan 29</i> <i>Sunday, Feb 4</i>	Artisans and Laborers
	Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 2; Bensman, <i>The Practice of Solidarity</i> , chapters 4 and 11.
	Assignment: Forum Discussion (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)

Module 3: Industrial NJ: Paterson

Week 4: <i>Monday, Feb 5-</i> <i>Sunday, Feb 11</i>	The Factory System and the Significance of Paterson
	Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 3; and four very short articles: "The Situation in New Jersey" and "The Strike on the Jersey Central," 1877 NYT; "March of the Mill Children"; Leonora Barry’s Report to the Knights of Labor, 1887
	Assignment: Site Visit 1 Report (3 pp.)

Week 5: <i>Monday, Feb 12</i> <i>Sunday, Feb 18</i>	The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913
	Readings: The Paterson Strike Pageant Program at Paterson Strike Pageant; Golin, <i>The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike 1913</i> , chapters 1-2
	Assignment: Listen to Library of Congress "Working in Paterson" oral history, post response to Forum (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)

Week 6: <i>Monday, Feb 19</i> <i>Sunday, Feb 25</i>	The Red Scare and the Roaring 20s
	Readings: DeBrizzi, "The Standard Oil Strikes In Bayonne, New Jersey, 1915-16"; Howard Green, "The Red Scare" (1919) (New Jersey Heritage magazine)
	Assignment: Quiz 1

Module 4: The Great Depression

Week 7: <i>Monday, Feb 26</i> <i>Sunday, Mar 4</i>	The Great Depression in New Jersey
	Readings: Gowaskie, Workers in New Jersey History, chapter 4; Sidorick, Condensed Capitalism, chapters 1 and 2 (excerpts).
	Assignment: Site Visit 2 Report (3 pp.)

Week 8: <i>Monday, Mar 5 -</i> <i>Friday, Mar 9</i>	New Jersey Workers Fighting Back in the 1930s
	Readings: The Army of Unoccupation (Trenton 1936); "The Negro Joins the Picket Line" and "Them Women Sure Are Scrappers" (Seabrook 1934); Cowie, Capital Moves, chapter 1 (part)
	Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)

March 10-18 – Spring Break!

Module 5: World War II and Aftermath

Week 9: <i>Monday, Mar 19</i> <i>Sunday, Mar 25</i>	The New Jersey Homefront in World War II
	Readings: Sidorick, Condensed Capitalism, chapter 3
	Assignment: Listen to Rutgers NJ Homefront oral histories, post response to Forum (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200).

Week 10: <i>Monday, Mar 26</i> <i>Sunday, Apr 1</i>	Postwar Strikes and Repression
	Readings: Bruno, "1946 UE strike against Phelps-Dodge Copper Co."; Schrecker, "McCarthyism and Organized Labor"
	Assignment: Reading Response (2 pp.)

Module 6: 1950s-1970s; Public Sector Unionism

Week 11: <i>Monday, Apr 2 - Sunday, Apr 8</i>	Public Sector Unions in New Jersey
	Readings: Golin, <i>The Newark Teacher Strikes</i> , chapter 1; Steve Early articles on NJ Public Worker Organizing; McCartin. "Public Sector Unions under Assault"
	Assignment: Forum Discussion (400-600 words), respond to 2 others (100-200)

Week 12: <i>Monday, Apr 9 - Sunday, Apr 15</i>	Industrial Decline and Deindustrialization
	Readings: Gowaskie, <i>Workers in New Jersey History</i> , chapter 5; Sidorick, <i>Condensed Capitalism</i> , chapter 8; "Singer Plant Closes"
	Assignment: Site Visit 3 Report (3 pp.)

Module 7: New Jersey Workers in the Recent Past

Week 13: <i>Monday, Apr 16 Sunday, Apr 22</i>	NJ Workers in the Period of Neoliberalism
	Readings: New Jersey Adjunct Professors Organize; Farmworker Support Committee newsletter (skim); Laborers Join with NJ Worker Centers; Debate on union political activity.
	Assignment: Quiz 2

Final Assignment

Week 14: <i>Monday, Apr 23 Sunday, Apr 29</i>	Final Paper
	Assignment: Final Paper (4 pp.)

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:

Meet the Other Students and Profile Posting: Week 1
1% of the grade (10 points)

Reading Responses: Weeks 2, 8 & 10
21% of the grade (Each reading response = 70 points)

Site Visit Reports: Weeks 4, 7 & 12 -- Any two of these three are required
20% of the grade (Each of two site visit reports = 100 points)
Optional extra credit for third site visit and report: 2.5% extra (25 points)

Quizzes: Units 6 & 13
(Quizzes are True/False, Multiple Choice, and one Essay Question)
20% of the grade (Each quiz = 100 points)

Forum Discussions: Weeks 3, 5, 9 & 11
28% of the grade (Each forum = 70 points)

Final Paper: Week 14
10% of the grade (100 points)

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.