

575:202:99 Labor and Work in the US 1877 – 1945 – Spring 2025

Professor: Dr. James Robinson
Class meetings: Sundays 5:40PM-8:40PM (roughly)
Office Hours: By appointment (in personal Zoom room)
Location: Zoom (through Course Canvas)
Personal Zoom: <https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/4827626887?pwd=MDRYMkhCaGNIRkVQdE9EUDV1OXRWQT09>
Contact: jr1589@rutgers.edu

INTRODUCTION

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.

This course will explore the history of working people the United States from the end of Reconstruction through the end of World War II. Through looking at labor history, we will learn about social and political history as well in order to examine this pivotal period in the lives of the ordinary people of the United States.

This course is aimed primarily at students who have little or no experience with college-level history and assumes no prior knowledge of the historical developments we will cover.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course meets online, combining lectures and discussions. I expect you to arrive at the class zoom having read the material and ready to discuss it. You will do 4 major assignments (2 papers and 2 exams), weekly discussion posts on canvass, and in-class lectures and activities.

SMLR Learning Objectives

Three Core Areas for Success in SMLR

The curriculum in the programs within SMLR focus on different areas (ie. HRM, LSER) and levels of study (ie. UG, Masters', PhD). Across these programs, we strive to advance students cognitive skills and processes, their Knowledge of Theory and Application, and develop their professional skills.

- 1) Cognitive Skills and Processes
- 2) Knowledge of Theory, Practice, and Application
- 3) Professional Development

Cognitive Skills and Processes

The cognitive skills and process area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to help students develop skills central to lifelong learning and participation in society and the workplace.

I) Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Produce quality research papers with proper convention of attribution/citation
- Produce high quality executive summaries
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

II) Quantitative Skills – Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods for research workplace issues.

- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information

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- Apply quantitative methods to analyze data for HR decision making including cost-benefit analyses, ROI, etc. (HRM)
- Apply qualitative methods appropriately, alone and in combination with quantitative methods

III) Research Skills – Demonstrate an ability to collect, analyze and synthesize information to make logical and informed decisions impacting the workplace. Use evidence to evaluate hypotheses, theories and approaches to workplace issues.

- Employ current technologies to access information, to conduct research, and to communicate findings
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Assess and critique relevant evidence and research findings
- Access high-quality historical, qualitative, and quantitative evidence or research
- Use evidence-based analysis to appraise the validity of various hypotheses, theories, and approaches to workplace issue

Knowledge of Theory, Practice and Application

The knowledge of theory and application area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to ensure that students learn the key theoretical and foundation areas of study in their domains and realize opportunities to apply that knowledge to practice situations.

IV) Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
- Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues

V) Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work
- Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective
- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)
- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context (HRM)

VI) Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance

- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work
- Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to their field
- Develop human resource management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers (HRM)
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of human resource practices (HRM)

Professional Development –

VII) Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations

- Develop effective presentation skills appropriate for different settings and audiences
- Develop career management skills to navigate one's career
- Develop capabilities to work and lead in a multicultural and diverse environment
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- Develop cultural agility competencies
- Demonstrate lifelong personal and professional development skills

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REQUIRED TEXT

Rosenzweig, Lichtenstein, Brown, Jaffee, *Who Built America? Vol. 2* (Third Edition, ISBN 978-0312446925)

The textbook will be provided to you as a PDF on Canvas, but used copies are quite inexpensive online, if you desire a tangible version.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Read the syllabus

Do the readings

Turn in your assignments on time

Make sure your assignments are submitted

Attend the meetings (on a computer. Cellphones aren't going to be enough.)

EVALUATION

Attendance and Class Discussion

You are expected to come to class on time. I will have a sign-in spreadsheet link which you will mark. Class starts at 5:40, so sign in before then. If you arrive late, you'll need to mark an "L" next to your name. If you forget to do it, I won't know if you were actually in class or not, and you will be marked absent.

If I call on you, and you don't respond, I will assume you have just left your computer open and are not actually in attendance in the class. I will remove you from the class and mark you as absent. If you need to leave for an emergency, send me an email and I'll read it later.

We will often discuss readings in the course. It is on you to come prepared to discuss issues related to the materials. Discussions will engage with the material, so class participation is required. If you don't keep up with the readings, you will not do well on this part of the course. Come ready to ask questions and answer questions as best as you can.

Discussion forums

For most classes, you will have discussion posts due on Canvas. I will post primary sources and several questions for you to answer about each. You are also required to respond to at least one of your discussion group members, for each discussion topic, which helps to make what you are doing actual discussions, one day later. All posts will be due on Fridays 11:59PM and response to a classmate's post on Saturdays 11:59PM. If I go to grade it and it isn't there, it will be marked Incomplete. There are no make-ups.

For example: your first discussion posts will be due at 11:59 PM on Friday January 24th. Your response to at least one of your peers, in each discussion topic, will be due by 11:59 PM on Saturday, January 25th. See syllabus for specific dates.

Please indicate which questions you are answering, and separate each into its own paragraph.

Your initial answers and responses should both be substantive contributions, every time. A single-sentence answer and "I agree!" as a response will not earn credit. Please put some time into these, as they are not box-checking exercises to take up your time. I don't expect multiple-paragraph answers (though if you are really feeling it, go for it!), but these discussions are a prime method of learning, and the more work you put into them, the better off we all are. You must give at least one paragraph of 5 sentences per question answer, as well as the response to a classmate, or it will be marked incomplete. Most weeks each topic will require you to answer two questions.

All discussions are mandatory, and any that you do not complete will result in a lower grade.

I will drop two missed discussion posts at the end of the semester.

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Written assignments

You will write two papers this semester, on topics to be announced. Each accounts for 20% of your final grade. You will write 2-3 drafts of each. All are mandatory, as is participation in peer review. If you miss a peer review, it is your responsibility to make it up, or you will receive no credit for it. Missing your writing conference, or coming unprepared, will earn you a significant reduction on your final paper grade. Each part of the process counts toward your final assignment grade. I expect an honest attempt at a full paper for all drafts. Doing otherwise will negatively impact your grade.

It is your responsibility to make sure you turn in each draft and your peer editing form. If you do not have a submission receipt from Canvas, then you have not submitted your essay, and you will be graded accordingly. Failing to do the Peer Review, any of the drafts, or Writing Conference will result in reduction of grade. Declining to make substantial changes to your drafts (unless otherwise advised) will result in a failing grade. Turning in no final paper, or turning in only a final paper, or turning in the same paper multiple times, will result in a failing grade.

Exams

There will be a first exam due April 6th, and a second exam due May 11th. They will be written long answer essays that are take-home exams (not in class.)

Lateness Policy

All late major assignments will be marked down. One grade will be deducted for every 24-hour period (or portion thereof) your paper is late. Turning in the wrong version will also result in loss of points. 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.

Cheating/plagiarism

There are serious consequences, including expulsion, for both cheating and taking someone else's work without attribution. The university has clear, strict policies on these matters. I will report all violations. If you have not done so already, please familiarize yourself with the university's academic integrity policy by visiting academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/. The relevant parts are brief and straightforward. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Use of AI such as ChatGPT is not permitted in any stages of the writing process on any assignment, from gathering initial ideas through the final product. Using any type of "paraphrasing" tool to "improve" your work is a violation of the academic integrity policy, as you are submitting work that is no longer your own. Something else has rewritten your work for you, and it may include plagiarized text without your knowledge. I expect that all ideas and work will be your own.

All major assignments are run through TurnItIn. This means it is extremely easy to catch cheating. Remember, if you copy something word for word, and try to present the work as your own without any citations, that counts as cheating, whether it was "intentional" or not.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class Attendance	10%
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Discussion Posts	10%
Paper I	20%
Paper II	20%
First exam	20%
Second exam	20%

I grade according the following grade breakdown:	A 89.5-100
	B+ 84.5-89.49 B 79.5-84.49
	C+ 74.5-79.49 C 69.5-74.49 D 59.5-69.49
	F 0-59.49

Use of Class Materials

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, the syllabus, exams, lecture materials, and assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Code of Student Conduct and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students. You may not make audio or video recordings of any part of this class without my consent.

Statement on Abilities and Accommodations

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: ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

For extra support around mental health services, academics, and financial assistance:

<https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/current-students>

Extra Credit Opportunities (competition of any of the first three will result in adding 5 points to the lowest of your 4 major assignments. You may do more than one extra credit assignment.)

1. Student Evaluations (Email me a copy of the completed course evaluations at the end of the course)
2. Watch the documentary "Slavery by Another Name" (available through Rutgers Library in Kanopy) and write a 800 word review.
3. If you do all of the discussion posts without any Incompletes, you will receive 5 extra credit points towards the your 4 major assignments.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 26 Reading Due	Introduction and The Failures of Reconstruction <i>Who Built America</i> Chapter One, Cornerstone Speech, Mississippi Black Codes Discussion Posts Fri Jan 24 11:59PM, Responses to Classmate Sat Jan 25 11:59PM
February 2 Reading	The Gilded Age and the Chinese Exclusion Act <i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Two, Knights of Labor Preamble

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Watch	“Grand Army of Starvation”
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Jan 31 11:59PM, Response to Classmate Sat Feb 1 11:59PM
Handing Out	1 st Paper Prompt
February 9	Immigration and urbanization
Reading	Sumner and Carnegie
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Feb 7 11:59PM, Response to Classmate Sat Feb 8 11:59PM
February 16	Washington and Du Bois, Jim Crow
Reading	<i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Three, Washington, and Du Bois, Reconstruction and Civil Rights documents (for paper),
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Feb 14 11:59PM, Response to Classmate Sat Feb 15 11:59PM, Paper Thesis Statement and Outline (bring to class)
February 23	Populism, Imperialism
Reading	<i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Four, Populist Platform, Aguinaldo
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Feb 21 11:59PM, Responses to Classmates Sat Feb 22 11:59PM, First draft of first paper due by class (Peer Reviewer assigned after class), Peer Reviews due Wed Feb 26 11:59PM
March 2	The Progressive Era and consumerism
Reading	<i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Five, IWW Preamble, Sanger
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Feb 28 11:59PM, Responses to Classmates Sat Mar 1 11:59PM, Second draft of first paper by class
March 9	The Great Migration
Reading	Bond
Watch	<i>An Outrage: The History and Legacy of Lynching in the South</i> (available through Rutgers Library in Kanopy)
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Mar 7 11:59PM, Responses to Classmates Sat March 8 11:59PM
March 16	Writing conferences (Zoom individual meetings in Dr Robinson’s personal zoom room!)
March 23	Spring Break
March 30	World War I, Influenza Pandemic, Red Scare
Reading	<i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Six
View	WWI Posters (https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwipos/)
Listen	15 Minute History podcast: The “Spanish” Influenza of 1918-20
Handing Out	First Exam
Due	Discussion Posts Fri Mar 28 11:59PM, Response to Classmates Sat Mar 29 11:59PM, Final Draft of First Paper by classtime
April 6	Immigration and eugenics
Reading	<i>Who Built America</i> Chapter Seven, Congressional Debates, Virginia Sterilization Act, Immigration Sources (for paper)
Handing Out	2 nd Paper Prompt
Due	Discussion Posts Apr 4 11:59PM, Response to Classmates Sat Apr 5 11:59PM, First Exam by classtime

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- April 13** **The Other America in the 1920s**
Watch *The Night Tulsa Burned; Tiktok of West Virginia Coal War*
https://www.tiktok.com/@thisiscory/video/6957525290595781893?is_from_webapp=v1&is_copy_url=1
Due Discussion Posts Fri Apr 11 11:59PM, Response to Classmates Sat Apr 12 11:59PM
- April 20** **The Great Depression**
Reading/Listen *Who Built America* Chapter Eight, *Waterfront Worker*, “Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?”
Due Discussion Posts Fri Apr 18 11:59PM, Response to Classmates Sat Apr 19 11:59PM
First draft of Second Paper by classtime
- April 27** **The New Deal and the CIO**
Reading *Who Built America* Chapter Nine, SWOC: “A New Declaration of Independence”
Watch Sit-Down and Fight
Due Discussion Posts Fri Apr 25 11:59PM, Response to Classmates Sat Apr 26 11:59PM
- May 4** **World War II**
Reading *Who Built America* Chapter Ten, Wesley, *The Auto Worker*
Handing Out Second Exam
Due Discussion Posts Fri May 2 11:59PM, Response to Classmates May 3 11:59PM
Final draft of second paper by classtime
- May 11** **Second exam due, 11:59PM**