

2026SP - U.S. LABOR & WRK 37:575:201:02

Contact Information

Instructor

Catherine Mary O'Brien Sobol (Mary)

cmo105@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Office hours: Virtually through Zoom, Wednesday 4-5 PM. Or in person after class.

Class Meeting

- Class Meets in person on Monday's **from 2:00PM PM to 5:00PM PM (EST)**
- Class Location: Tillet Hall, room 251; 53 Avenue E, Piscataway, NJ
- Class starts on Monday **January 26, 2026**

Course Introduction

This course introduces the essential developments and themes in the history of work in the Americas from the period of initial contact between European, African, and Native American civilizations through the period of Reconstruction after the American Civil War. The course's approach centers on the historical shifts that influenced the decisions that shaped early American work concepts, including slavery, indentured servitude, free labor, and the rise and impact of industrialization and the early labor movement.

Course Objectives

Core Curriculum: SCL, HST, WCr and WCd

- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time. (HST-1)
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. (SCL-1)
- Communicate complex ideas to a general audience in standard written English and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revisions. (WCr)

- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and correctly use the conventions of attribution and citation; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (WCd)

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)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department

- Demonstrate understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in labor and employment relations. (Goal 1)
- Make an argument using contemporary or historical evidence. (Goal 4)

Textbook & Reading Materials

Required Materials:

- Clark, Hewitt, Brown, Jaffee, *Who Built America? Vol. 1* (Third Edition, ISBN 9780312446918) (Digital form)

The textbook will be provided to you as a copied/scanned PDF, organized by chapter, in the Modules section under each week's page. If you decide to purchase a used version, it is relatively inexpensive online.

Alternatively, the text is available online for you to read/view, and download a **high-quality PDF version** of the chapters you will need for this course. To access the digital version online, go to Who Built America and register for a Free account.

Technology Requirements:

- Access to the internet
- Reliable computer
- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint - refer to [Rutgers University Software Portal](#) - Free Access to download/access if you don't have these applications already
- [Basic Computer Specifications for Canvas \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Evaluation

Written assignments

You will write two papers this semester on topics to be announced. Each accounts for 20% of your final grade. You can submit a draft version for each assignment so I (your instructor) can provide feedback. Based on the input, you then complete the final paper. A sign-up sheet for individual consultation of your draft (via Zoom) will be provided. Schedules will be announced.

Lateness Policy

I know you are responsible for submitting assignments on time. However, circumstances may prevent you from doing so. Please let me know in advance should you foresee any late submissions of your assignments.

In-Class Discussions

We will discuss the course topics throughout the class. Your participation in the class discussions is part of your course grade, so you are highly encouraged to participate.

Attendance

This is an in-person class, so you are expected to attend each class on time for the duration of the meeting. Attendance also counts towards your course grade, so do your best to be present. If you have an extenuating situation, please reach out to me.

Academic Integrity

Be sure to review and abide by Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy

Exams

There will be 2 exams for this course.

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

| Grading Component | Percentage towards Final Grade |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| In-class discussions and attendance, Creating exam questions | 30% |
| First Essay | 20% |

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Second Essay | 20% |
| First Exam | 15% |
| Second Exam | 15% |

Grading Scale for the semester

| Number of Points | Letter Grade |
|------------------|--------------|
| 90 - 100 | A |
| 87 - 89 | B+ |
| 80 - 85 | B |
| 76 - 79 | C+ |
| 68 - 75 | C |
| 60 - 67 | D |
| 59 and below | F |

Accommodation Request

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. 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 ([See Documentation Guidelines](#)). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you and your instructor with a Letter of

Accommodation. Please discuss the accommodations with your instructors as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the [registration form](#).

Class Schedule & Topics

The class schedule and topics are noted under the Course Schedule, Topics, and Activities. Classes are on Monday, 2:00PM-5:00PM (EST)

Rutgers Support Resources for you

Rutgers Student Health Services:

- Rutgers Student Affairs is dedicated to the health of the whole student body, mind, and spirit. It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff. [Health, Counseling, and Wellness services](#) are available at several locations throughout Rutgers University.

Academic Services:

- For academic support, including tutoring, visit the [Rutgers-New Brunswick Learning Centers](#).
- For coaching help with writing skills and assignments, visit the [Rutgers - New Brunswick Writing Tutors in the Learning Center](#).
- Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the [Rutgers Libraries website](#).

Veteran Services:

- Rutgers is proud to support veterans. If you are an Armed Forces veteran, please visit the [Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services website](#) for more information.

TurnItIn Statement

Your writing submissions in this course will run through the plagiarism tool TurnItIn.

Students (You) agree that by taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **Turnitin.com** (via Canvas Assignments Portal) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely to detect plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the [Usage Policy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If you disagree, please get in touch with me immediately.

Canvas Support Information

If you are new to Canvas or need a refresher tutorial, visit:

- [Getting Started In Canvas for Students](#)
- [Canvas \(Links to an external site.\)](#)Canvas is Web Accessibility Guidelines compliant. More on [Canvas Accessibility Standards](#)

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas:

- Contact [Rutgers IT Help Desk \(Links to an external site.\)](#). 833-648-4357, email help@oit.rutgers.edu, accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Refer to the [Canvas Student TutorialLinks to an external site.](#)
- Canvas [Student Guide PDF Version](#)
- Access Rutgers Canvas via the [MyRutgers Portal](#), rutgers.instructure.com, mobile app and <https://canvas.rutgers.edu>
- For Canvas assistance, Passwords, or any other computer-related technical support, contact the [Rutgers Canvas Help Desk](#).
 - help@canvas.rutgers.edu

How to Access Zoom

All class sessions are conducted in person in the classroom. However, we will utilize ZOOM if we need to revert to remote learning. You must do so if you have not activated your Rutgers ZOOM account before class starts. Below are the steps:

1. Follow instructions on [Creating a Rutgers ZOOM Account \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Note: be sure to read what to do if you have an existing personal ZOOM account that uses your Rutgers email.
2. Once you have activated your Rutgers, are copyright-protectedviolates class sessions.
3. To access and join the scheduled class sessions, select the ZOOM tab from the left navigation menu, then select Join to join the scheduled session. If you are new to ZOOM, review the tutorials under Course Tools Tutorials or at [Rutgers ZOOM Homepage](#).

Copyright Fair 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, sharing 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 to share 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.

Your Responsibilities

- Read the syllabus
- Be here on time
- Pay attention
- Do the readings
- Turn in your assignments on time
- Make sure your assignments are submitted
- Find out what you missed if you are unable to attend

Where to Next?

After reviewing the Syllabus, proceed to Modules.