

# Syllabus for Labor and the Global Economy

37:575:363:01, Fall, 2015

T-Th, 1:40-3 pm, Classroom: Bus Allison Road Classroom, 215

Prof. David Bensman

Welcome to Globalization and Labor Unions, a course offered by the Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations of Rutgers University to undergraduate students. This course is designed to enable students to understand the challenges posed by corporate-led globalization to the efforts of workers and their institutions to promote their interests and preserve their communities.

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David Bensman is Professor of Labor Studies and Employment Relations in the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in History in 1977. He began teaching at Rutgers in 1978. He is the author of several books, including, The Practice of Solidarity, American Hatters in the Nineteenth Century, (University of Illinois Press, 1985), Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community (with Roberta Lynch, McGraw-Hill, 1987, University of California Press, 1988), Who Built America? Volume 2 (with Steve Brier, The New Press, 1991), and Central Park East and Its Graduates: "Learning by Heart." (Teachers College Press, 2001).

He was an Associate editor of Labor Research Review for most of its existence, and has been a member of the Dissent Magazine editorial board since 1972. He is co-chair of the Columbia University Seminar on Globalization, Labor and Popular Movements. His website is: [smlr.rutgers.edu/DavidBensman](http://smlr.rutgers.edu/DavidBensman)

## **Books to Buy:**

Capital Moves by Jefferson Cowie

The Children of NAFTA, by David Bacon

Books are available at the Barnes and Noble bookstore

## **Schedule of Classes:**

Week One – Sept. 1, Introduction

Sept. 3 Film: Stolen Childhoods

Readings: Articles on Striking Farmworkers in Baja California and Wal-Mart at the Crossroads in Sakai

Week Two – No class, Sept. 8

Sept. 10 The Neo-Liberal World

Reading: Standing, A Precariat Charter, pp. 1-53 (in Sakai)

Week Three – Sept. 15, 17 Mass Production and the Fordist Model of Standard Employment Relations,

Required Reading: Cowie, 1-72

First Paper Assignment Due, Sept. 17

Week Four – Sept. 22, 24 Capital Moves

Required Reading: Cowie, 73-151

Week Five – Sept. 29, Oct. 1 The Labor Problem Reappears

Required Reading: Cowie, 152-210

Week Six – Oct. 6, 8 Immigration

Required Reading: Lowell, “Organizing Immigrant Workers,” in Adler, Tapia, and Turner, Mobilizing Against Inequality. Pp. 3-13 on sakai.

Tapia, Turner and Roca-Servat, “Union Campaigns as Countermovements,” in Adler, Tapia and Turner, pp. 14-31

Second paper assignment due.

Week Seven – Oct. 13, 15 Freeing Trade, Capital Investment and Labor Migration

Required Reading: Bacon – 1-79

Garson, Money Makes The World Go Around, 41-56 Reading on Sakai.

Week Eight: Oct. 20, 22 The Problem with Enforcing Trade Agreements

Required Reading: Bacon 80-184

Week Nine – Oct. 27, 29 Globalization in North America

Required Reading: Bacon 185-251

Week Ten Nov. 3,5 On the Border Today

Required Reading – Bacon 251-324

plus newspaper articles on current border situation (See sakai)

Week Eleven: Nov. 10, 12 Global Unionism Today

Third Paper Assignment Due

McCallum, Global Unions, Local Power, pp. 1-47.on sakai.

Turnbull, “Dockers vs. the Directive,” in Bronfenbrenner, Global Unions, pp. 117-137, on sakai

Robert Ross, “Bringing Labor Rights Back to Bangladesh.”

<http://prospect.org/article/bringing-labor-rights-back-bangladesh>

Week Twelve, Nov. 17, 19 Sweatshops and Boycotts

Daniel Clawson, "Code of Conduct and Living Wage Campaigns," in Clawson, The Next Upsurge, pp. 164-193.

Hobbes, "The Myth of the Ethical Shopper,"

<http://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/the-myth-of-the-ethical-shopper/>

Week Thirteen, Nov. 24, (No class Nov. 26) Wal-Mart and China,

"The Wal-Mart Effect, Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-walmart-sg,1,1534896.story>

"The Two Faces of China," by Keith Bradsher, The New York Times, Dec. 6, 2004, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C04E6DE1431F935A35751C1A9629C8B63>

"China: Facing Reality", by International Union of Food Workers,

[http://www.iuf.org/cgi3bin/editorials/db.cgi?db=default&ww=1&uid=default&ID=371&view\\_records=1&en=1](http://www.iuf.org/cgi3bin/editorials/db.cgi?db=default&ww=1&uid=default&ID=371&view_records=1&en=1)

Prestowitz, Three Billion New Capitalists, pp. 58-78. (see Sakai)

Week Fourteen Dec. 1, 3 Global Value Chains

Weil, The Fissured Workplace, pp. 159-182, 201,-207 on Sakai.

Nelson Lichtenstein, "Two Cheers for Vertical Integration : Corporate Governance in a World of Global Supply Chains." On Sakai.

Week Fifteen: Dec. 8, 10 Plans for Action?

Compare position papers of Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, and any of the Republican Presidential Primary Candidates

### **Assignments:**

Students will write three short papers (3-5 pages).

Short paper #1: How does the child labor shown in Stolen Childhoods affect you, if at all? Should the US government make sure that products made by child labor are not sold in the US? Why or why not? If not, is there anything else that should be done? By whom? Due Sept. 20

Short paper #2: Jefferson Cowie argues that industrialization provoked similar responses in Camden, Indianapolis, Tennessee and Mexico, that the social response to industrialization follows a predictable pattern. Is his argument convincing? Why or why not? Due Oct. 4

Short paper #3: While neo-liberal economists say that the international division of labor is a natural result of changes in technology and education. Bacon emphasizes that government policies shape trade and investment decisions. Which argument is more convincing? Why? Nov. 8

Final Paper: Which poses a greater challenge to the efforts of working people to improve their living standards: WalMart and the "Race to the Bottom," or Global Value Chains? Why? If you think that neither of these phenomena challenges the efforts of working people to improve their living standards, explain why? Due Dec. 20.

**Grading Policy:**

Attendance will count as 15% of grade.

Participation will count as 15% of grade.

Each short paper will count as 15% of grade.

Final Paper will count as 25%

Papers will be graded on originality, use of evidence, clarity, and persuasiveness.

Participation will be graded upon contribution