

U.S. Labor and Work Before the End of Reconstruction
37:575:201:03
Labor Education Center—Room 137
Monday, Thursday 10:55 a.m.-12:15 p.m.



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Office Hours: Labor Education Center—Room 136A, Mon., Thurs 2 p.m.-3 p.m., or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to American social and labor history, focusing on the role of working people in the making of the modern United States. Situating North American developments within a global context, the course will open with the discussion of European colonial expansion in the early modern period and conclude with the demise of Reconstruction in 1877. Topics will include native-colonial relations during European settlement; imperial conquest and competition in the Atlantic world; the rise of slave-based economies and patterns of slave resistance; the advent of wage labor and the

establishment of capitalist social relations in the early nineteenth century; the impact of mass immigration on American society and class relations; and the general dynamics of race, class, and gender in the context of labor and work. Particular emphasis will be given to the political, social, and ideological ramifications of the American War for Independence (1775-1783) and the American Civil War (1861-1865).

Required Course Materials

The only material required for this course is a textbook—Christopher Clark et al, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History, Volume 1: To 1877* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), Third Edition. **Please make sure to acquire the Third Edition.** This title will be available for purchase from the Rutgers bookstore at Barnes and Noble; it can also be purchased from various online book vendors, including Amazon.com. An e-book version is also available. Please note that only **VOLUME 1 is required for this course.**

Additional primary-source readings will be uploaded to the course website. Students will be notified via Sakai when additional readings have been posted.

Assessments

Student assessment will be based on two examinations (a midterm accounting for 20% of the final grade, and a final exam accounting for 25%), two papers (the first paper will be worth 20% of the final grade, the second paper 25%), and class participation (10%).

The **exams** will consist of short identifications and essays, drawing on material from the lectures and assigned readings.

Because this **course meets the writing requirement for SAS**, students will be required to submit drafts of their papers, engage in peer-review sessions with their fellow students, and revise their drafts accordingly.

Attendance

Attendance is required at all class meetings. **More than 4 unexcused absences** will negatively affect a student's overall participation grade. **More than 12 unexcused absences** will result in a failing grade for the course.

Electronics Policy

Students may bring laptop computers to class for the purpose of taking notes. The use of cell phones, except in the case of emergencies, is not permitted during class.

Academic Integrity

Students should present their work honestly and acknowledge when they borrow the language and ideas of others. To help avoid issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, students should familiarize themselves with the Rutgers's academic integrity guidelines (<http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>).

Students with Disabilities

Students in need of modified accommodation for exams and/or course assignments should contact the Office of Disabilities Services (<https://ods.rutgers.edu>).

Course Schedule and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

September 7: Overview of requirements and expectations for the course

Week 2: A Meeting of Three Worlds: Europe, Africa, and American Colonization, 1492 – 1680

September 11:

Readings: *Who Built America?*, pg. 7-31

September 14:

Readings: *Who Built America?*, pg. 31-56

Week 3: Servitude, Slavery, and the Growth of the Southern Colonies, 1620 – 1760

September 18:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 64-87

September 21:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 88-106

Peter Bestes and Other Slaves Petition for Freedom (April 20, 1773)

Week 4: Family Labor and the Growth of the Northern Colonies, 1640 – 1760

September 25:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 111-132

September 28:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 133-155

Week 5: The American Revolution, the Constitution, and the People 1750 – 1815

October 2:

Readings:

Who Built America?, chapter 4

October 5:

Readings:

Who Built America?, chapter 5

First Draft of Paper 1 Due in Class on October 5

Week 6: The Consolidation of Slavery in the South, 1790 – 1836

October 9:

Readings: *Who Built America?*, pg. 271-288

October 12:

Readings: *Who Built America?*, pg. 288-313

Week 7: Midterm

October 16:

Review for Midterm

October 19:

Midterm Exam

Week 8: Northern Society and the Growth of Wage Labor, 1790 – 1837

October 23:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 325-340

October 26:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 340-370

- *Commonwealth v. Pullis* (Sakai)

Paper 1 due on October 26

Week 9: Immigration, Urban Life, and Social Reform in the Free Labor North, 1838 – 1860

October 30:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 377-409

November 2:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 409-421

“A Reporters Account of Lynn Women’s Mass Meeting During the Great Strike,” 1860 (Sakai)

Week 10: The Spread of Slavery and the Crisis of Southern Society, 1838 – 1848

November 6:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 427-454

November 10:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 454-472

“Frederick Douglass Confronts Working Class Racism,” 1836
(Sakai)

Week 11: The Settlement of the West and the Conflict Over Slave Labor, 1848 – 1860

November 13:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 483-506

November 16:

Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 506-527

Week 12: The Civil War: America’s Second Revolution, 1861 – 1865

November 20: Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 533-557

November 21: Readings:

Who Built America?, pg. 557-582

First Draft of Paper 2 Due

Due to Thanksgiving, the Thursday class meets on Tuesday

Week 13: Reconstructing the Nation and Industrial Growth I

November 27:

Readings:

Who Built America?, chapter 12

November 30:

Readings: None

Week 14: Reconstructing the Nation and Industrial Growth II

December 4:

- Readings: *Who Built America?*, chapter 13

December 7:

- Readings: None

Week 15: Conclusion

December 11: Final Exam in Class

Paper 2 Due: Date TBA