

**U.S. Labor and Work Before the End of Reconstruction**  
**37:575:201:06**  
**Labor Education Center—Room 133**  
**Tuesday 9:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**



**Instructor: Patrick McGrath**

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Office Hours: Labor Education Center—Room 158, Tuesday 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m., or by appointment

**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.

Over the course of the semester we will have several unannounced **quizzes**, which will ask students to summarize or interpret material from that day's assigned reading. These quizzes will be factored into students' participation grade.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required at all class meetings. **More than 2 unexcused absences** will negatively affect a student's overall participation grade. **More than 6 unexcused absences** will result in a failing grade for the course. Students with a **perfect attendance record**—that is, zero unexcused absences— will receive a 3-point grade increase on their final exam. (A final exam grade of 90, for example, would be marked up to a 93.)

### **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>).

### **Learning Objectives:**

This course meets a number of SAS learning objectives. "A Rutgers SAS graduate will be able to:"

*In the history and social science areas of the core:*

**H:** Understand the basis and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.

**K:** Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.

**L:** Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors

**M:** Understand different theories of human culture; social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

*In the writing and communication area of the core:*

**SI:** Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.

**S2:** Provide and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers and instructors/supervisors through successive drafts.

**T:** Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.

**U:** Evaluate and critically assess sources and use conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

**V:** Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

### **Course Schedule and Assignments**

#### Week 1: Introduction to the Course

- September 6: Overview of requirements and expectations for the course

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

- September 13:
  - Readings:

- *Who Built America?*, chapter 1

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

- September 20:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 2
    - *Peter Bestes and Other Slaves Petition for Freedom* (sakai)

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

- September 27:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 3
- **Draft of paper 1 due.**

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

- October 4:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapters 4 and 5

### Week 6: MID-TERM EXAM

- October 11: Midterm Exam.

### Week 7: The Consolidation of Slavery in the South, 1790 – 1836

- October 18:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 6

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

- October 25:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 7
    - *Commonwealth v. Pullis* (Sakai)
  - **First Paper Due**

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

- November 1:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 8

- “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 8:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 9
    - “Frederick Douglass Confronts Working Class Racism,” 1836 (Sakai)
- **Draft of Paper 2 due**

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

- November 15:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 10

Week 12: THANKSGIVING

- No Class

Week 13: The Civil War: America’s Second Revolution, 1861 – 1865

- November 29:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapter 11

Week 14: Reconstructing the Nation and Industrial Growth, 1865 – 1887

- December 6:
  - Readings:
    - *Who Built America?*, chapters 12 and 13

Week 15: Wrap-up

- December 13: Review for final exam
- **Paper 2 due**

**FINAL EXAM: DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

