



History of Labor and Work in the U.S.: 1880-1945 (on-line)

37:575: 202 (Section 90) – Fall 2016

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This on-line course traces the history of the labor movement in the U.S. from 1880, a time in which unions were relatively weak, to the end of World War II in 1945, when unions had gained significant economic and political power. Course themes include the sources and forms of conflict between workers and employers; changes in technology, production, and workplace organization in an evolving capitalist economy; the different types of unions and worker organizations which have been formed; and the on-going debate over the goals and purposes of unions.

Although not the exclusive focus of the course, we will closely study how labor unions have responded to changes in our economy, political system, and culture. *Who* labor unions represent, *what* they seek to accomplish in the short- and long-term, and *how* they attempt to reach their goals has evolved, even though the basic rationale for union organization – to defend and advance the interests of working people vis-à-vis powerful employers - has remained the same. In this course, we will look at how unions' ability to improve their members' living standards and working conditions has widely fluctuated.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries unions were relatively weak most of the time, almost marginal in their influence. However, in response to the crisis conditions of the Great Depression of the 1930s, workers organized powerful unions and became a central element of a new, progressive political coalition which reshaped our economy and political system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Rutgers University, the School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR), and the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department have established the following learning objectives for this course:

From the Rutgers University Core Curriculum: SCL, HST, WCr and WCd

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place (h).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal m).
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations. (Goal n).
- Explain the development of some aspect of society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history or science. (Goal k).
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors. (Goal L).
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience. (Goal S1).
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision. (Goal S2).
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry. (Goal t).
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and the use of conventions of attribution and citation correctly. (Goal u).
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (Goal v).

From the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

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

From the 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)

Instructor's Learning Objectives:

In addition to the learning objectives listed above, the following learning objectives are based on the specific topics and issues covered in the course:

- Understand the critical role of the labor movement in our society.
- Recognize why and how workers have formed different types of labor organizations.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how workers and their organizations (including unions) have been shaped by the larger society of which they are a part, but have also contributed to changing the larger society.

Since this is an on-line course which includes peer review/editing and forum discussions involving a group of students, several learning objectives concern the process of interaction between students.

- Demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly, authentically, and maintain a content-oriented focus in response to other students' work.
- Maintain a positive and respectful attitude when interacting with other students, especially those who have different views and opinions.

COURSE READINGS:

1. **Required Book.** The following required book is available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore (732-246-8448), located across from the New Brunswick train station in Ferren Plaza. It may also be purchased online at <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>.

Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History, Volume II: Since 1877, 3rd ed., Bedford / St. Martin's Press, 2008. (Referred to as WBA? in following pages.)

2. **Required Online Readings:** In addition to the textbook, the other required readings are in the **Document Sharing** section of the "course shell". Some of the online readings are **primary sources and will be noted** in the syllabus – i.e. they are from the time period discussed in the text. Other online readings are secondary sources; they are interpretations and evaluations of the events or developments.

Most primary sources and some of the secondary sources are from the following books:

- ***Major Problems in the History of American Workers*** (MPHAW), edited by E. Boris and N. Lichtenstein, 2nd ed., Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2003.
- ***Voices of a People's History of the United States*** (VPHUS), edited by H. Zinn and A. Arnove, Seven Stories Press, 2004.
- ***Voices of Freedom: Documentary History, volume 2*** (VOF), edited by Eric Foner, 4th ed., W.W. Norton & Co., 2014.
- ***The Voice of the People*** (VOP), edited by J. Rees and J. Pollack, Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2004.

OUTLINE OF COURSE UNITS

GETTING STARTED:

Tuesday, Sept. 6 to Sunday, Sept. 11

Become familiar with the web site that has the on-line course. Then, read the syllabus and a calendar for the course (including your assignments). You will also find a brief introduction about my background and teaching philosophy, as well as a video introduction to the course.

→ Non-graded Assignments:

- 1) Introduce yourself to other students by writing an on-line introduction
- 2) Take a brief spelling quiz on the most commonly misspelled words.

Unit 1: A BRIEF REVIEW OF EARLY U.S. LABOR HISTORY

Monday, Sept. 12 to Sunday, Sept. 18

Readings:

- Slott and Voos, "A Very Brief History of U.S. Labor until 1877," pp. 1-4.
- Brecher, "The Great Upheaval," pp. 138-148. [MPHAW]

→ **Assignment: Response Paper**

Unit 2: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THE GILDED AGE (1877 to 1893)

Monday, Sept. 19 to Sunday, Sept. 25

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 1 - pp. 23-52, 64-71 (begin on p. 64 with the section "Extractive Industries and Exploited Workers").

→ **Assignment: Peer Review of another Student's Response Paper from Unit 1**

Unit 3: WORKING PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM (1877 to 1893)

Monday, Sept. 26 to Sunday, Oct. 2

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 2
- "Knights of Labor – Preamble to the Constitution" (1886)

Video Clip: "Andrew Carnegie and the Homestead Strike"

→Assignment: Group Forum Discussion

Unit 4: INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM TRIUMPHS (1893 to 1900)

Monday, Oct. 3 to Sunday, Oct. 9

- WBA? Chapter 3
- "Statement from the Pullman Strikers" (1894), pp. 234-236. **[Primary Source - VPHUS]**
- "How to Write an Argumentative Essay"

→Assignment: First Draft of Writing Assignment 1

Unit 5: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK AND HOME (1900 to 1914)

Monday, Oct. 10 to Sunday, Oct. 16

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 4 - pp. 180-202.
- "Machinist Orrin Cheney Testifies to Congress on the Taylor System of Shop Management" (1911), pp. 83-85. **[Primary Source - VOP]**
- Frederick W. Taylor – Excerpts from "The Principles of Scientific Management" (1911), **[Primary Source]**
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1911taylor.html>

Video Clip: "The Beat of the System"

→Assignment – Peer Review of another Student's Writing Assignment 1

Unit 6: FINAL VERSION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1

Monday, Oct. 17 to Sunday, Oct. 23

Readings:

- "Revising Your Paper"

→Assignment – Final Version of Writing Assignment 1

Unit 7: REFORM AND RADICALISM IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900 TO 1914)

Monday, Oct. 24 to Sunday, Oct. 30

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 5

Unit 8: THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON WORKERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS (1914 to 1920)

Monday, Oct. 31 to Sunday, Nov. 6

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 6

Video Clip: "The Seattle General Strike"

→Assignment – Group Forum Discussion

Unit 9: THE "LEAN DECADE" FOR AMERICAN WORKERS (1920 to 1929)

Monday, Nov. 6 to Sunday, Nov. 13

Readings:

- WBA? Ch. 7

→Assignment – Group Forum Discussion

Unit 10: THE GREAT DEPRESSION & THE FIRST NEW DEAL (1929 to 1935)

Monday, Nov. 14 to Sunday, Nov. 20

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 8

Video Clips: "1929 Stock Market Crash," FDR Fireside Chat on Economic Recovery Plans," and "San Francisco General Strike."

→Assignment: First Draft of Writing Assignment 2

UNIT 11: PEER REVIEW OF WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Monday, Nov. 21 to Wednesday, Nov. 23

→Assignment – Peer Review of another Student's Writing Assignment 2

THANKSGIVING BREAK – Thursday, Nov. 24 to Sunday, Nov. 27

Unit 12: LABOR UPSURGE: THE INDUSTRIAL UNION MOVEMENT AND THE SECOND NEW DEAL (1935 to 1939)

Monday, Nov. 28 to Sunday, Dec. 4

Readings:

- WBA? Chapter 9
- “Dollinger Remembers the Flint Sit-down Strike,” pp. 345-349. [VPHUS]
- “Steelworkers Organizing Committee, a New Declaration of Independence” (1936), pp. 163-166. [Primary Source – VOF]

Video Clips: “AFL vs. CIO Split in 1935,” and the “Chicago Memorial Day Massacre.”

→Assignment: Final Version of Writing Assignment 2

Unit 13: WORKING PEOPLE & WORLD WAR II (1939 to 1946)

Monday, Dec. 5 to Sunday, Dec. 11

Reading:

- WBA? Chapter 10
- "The Michigan CIO Debates the No-Strike Pledge" (1943) - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5147/>

Video Clips: "Manpower Needs in World War II" and "Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II."

→Assignment: Group Forum Discussion

Unit 14: THE STATUS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR II

Monday, Dec. 12 to Wednesday, Dec. 14

Reading:

- Lichtenstein, “From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining,” in a *Contest of Ideas: Capital, Politics, and Labor*, pp. 79-99, (2013). Originally published in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, (1989).

Unit 15: Final Assignment

Thursday, Dec. 15 to Wednesday, Dec. 21

→Assignment: Writing Assignment 3

GRADING CRITERIA AND COMPONENTS

Grading Criteria:

A	90-100%	900 to 1000 points
B+	85-90%	850 to 899 points
B	80-85%	800 to 849 points
C+	75-80%	750 to 799 points
C	70-75%	700 to 749 points
D	60-69%	600 to 699 points
F	59% and below	0 to 599 points

Grading Components:

Grades are based on the following components:

#1 – Forum Discussions: Units 3, 8, 9, & 13

20% of the grade

Each forum discussion = 50 points. 4 x 50 = **200** points

#2 – Peer Review/Edit of another Student’s Writing Assignment: Units 2, 5 & 11

15% of the grade

Each peer review = 50 points. 3 x 50 = **150** points

#3 – Writing Assignments: Units 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, & Final Assignment

65% of the grade

Unit 1 - Response Paper = 50 points

Unit 4 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 1 = 50 points

Unit 6 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 1 = 150 points

Unit 10 - First Draft of Writing Assignment 2 = 50 points

Unit 12 – Final Version of Writing Assignment 2 – 150 points

Final Assignment = 200 points.

Total = **650** points

Please note:

All late papers will be downgraded one letter grade (e.g. A →B)