

History 408
Fall, 2012
Tues. & Thurs., 4:00-5:15
1217 Mosse Humanities Building

Professor Camille Guérin-Gonzales
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-3:00
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American Labor History, 1900-Present

This course surveys the history of working people in the United States in the 20th and 21st century, focusing on the historical meanings of work and working-class culture. We will look at the ways in which a variety of scholars and “organic intellectuals” have drawn upon the methods and practices of labor history, social history, economic history, and cultural studies to examine the lives of working women and men. Throughout the course, we will be examining relations of power by looking closely at ideas about race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. We will be especially concerned with how these ideas have shaped working-class lives, informed class relations, and organized communities of solidarity. Some of the questions we will address are: What is unique about US labor history and what is part of a shared international history of workers? How have processes of cultural fusion and cultural fragmentation operated to unite and divide workers? In what ways does an interrogation of the politics of space (place, location, landscape, architecture, environment, home, neighborhood, city, region, and territory) help us to understand working-class cultures? Questions about American Exceptionalism and the American Dream; community and solidarity; class formation and social identity; and the relationship between working-class strategies of resistance and the everyday lives of working people will be the focus of our course readings, films, discussions, and research projects during the semester.

Course Requirements

1. General

Class Participation. The success of the course depends upon your contribution to the creation of a community of scholars dedicated to cooperative learning. Thus, class participation includes: attending all class meetings, completing all reading and writing assignments in preparation for class discussions, viewing all films, and engaging in lively and respectful dialogue with one another.

Laptops and Notetaking. The use of laptop computers or other screen-based devices is *not* permitted during lecture (including when films are screened). Please take notes by hand.

2. Writing and Research

Film Critique. You will write one 3-page (approximately 900 words) essay discussing how one of the following pairs of films represents labor history. *Select **one** due date and write an essay on a pair of films listed for that date (must be a designated pair, don't mix and match films on your own):*

- Oct. 18 :** *Gandy Dancers & Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance*
- Oct. 25:** *Triangle & Uprising of '34*
- Nov. 15:** *Free a Man to Fight & Uprising of '34*
- Nov. 29 :** *Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance & Chavez Ravine*
- Dec. 6:** *Sir! No Sir! & Free a Man to Fight **OR** Chavez Ravine & San Francisco State*
- Dec. 13:** *Made in L.A. & Triangle **OR** Made in L.A. & Uprising of '34*

Extra Credit: You may write 3-page essays on additional groups of films to earn extra credit toward your final grade in the course. *These must be submitted by the due dates listed.*

2. Writing and Research (cont.)

Working-Class History Project. You will complete a two-part Research and Writing Project on one of the following three themes addressed in the three assigned monographs:

1. Class vs. racial solidarity David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*
2. Struggle for control over the workplace David Montgomery, *Workers' Control*
3. Gender equality in the workplace Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense & a Little Fire*

Part One. A three-page proposal (approximately 900 words) in which you: a) identify the argument the author of the monograph makes about the theme you have selected; b) offer two specific examples of the theme in the monograph; c) identify two primary and two secondary sources the author of the monograph used to support his/her argument; d) pose a question based on the theme you have selected that you will address in your research paper; e) identify particular course materials (readings, films, music, and lectures) that will help you address your main research question; and f) identify primary sources you plan to use and offer a description of their location and accessibility.

Part One Due Thursday, November 1

Part Two. A six-eight page essay (approximately 1,800-2,400 words) expanding on the argument you posed in your three-page proposal. Your essay must a) identify a question important to history about your selected theme; b) suggest an answer to your question (this is your major argument); c) provide evidence and examples that support your answer/argument, including both primary and secondary sources; and d) integrate your answer/argument and evidence into a coherent, persuasive conclusion. One of your primary sources must focus on your own community, however you define it. A detailed research and writing guide will be distributed in class.

Part Two Due Tuesday, December 11

3. Examinations

Midterm Examination. There will be an in-class midterm examination Tuesday, Oct. 16, consisting of one long essay question and four short identification questions.

Final Examination. The final examination will cover material since the midterm. This will be an in-class examination on Tuesday, Dec. 18, 5:05-7:05, consisting of one long essay question, one short essay question, and four short identification questions.

Grade Distribution:

Class Participation	20%
Film Critique	10%
Midterm Examination	20%
Research Project	25%
Final Examination	25%

Readings*

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, 711 State Street, and are on reserve in Helen C. White College Library. Journal articles and essays are on the Learn @ UW site for this course.

Required Readings:

Monographs & Document Collection

David Roediger. *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the Working Class*, rev. ed. London: Verso Press, 2007. (Note: ACLS Humanities E-Book available on the UW Library website).

Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, eds. *American Labor: A Documentary Collection*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

David Montgomery. *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles*. New York: Cambridge, 1979.

Annelise Orleck. *Common Sense & a Little Fire: Women and Working Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. (Note: EBSCOhost eBook available on the UW Library website).

Nelson Lichtenstein. *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Pamphlets

Frances Fox Piven. *Lessons for our Struggle*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012.

Dana Frank. *Women Strikers Occupy Chain Stores, Win Big*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012.

Mike Davis. *Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012.

Articles

Articles listed in the syllabus are available on the Learn @ UW site for our course.

Style Books

Kate L. Turabian, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

William Strunk, E. B. White, and Maira Kalman. *The Elements of Style Illustrated*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

Calendar and Assignments

Week 1 Labor History and Historical Meanings of Work

Sept. 4 & 6

Readings

David Brody, "Reconciling the Old Labor History and the New," *Pacific Historical Review* 62, no. 1 (February 1993): 1-18. Available on the Learn @ UW site for our course.

Frances Fox Piven, *Lessons for our Struggle*, pp. 1-30

Film Clip & Reading Discussion: We Are Wisconsin: This is What Democracy Looks Like (2012)
David Brody article & Frances Fox Piven essays (cited above)

Labor Day, September 3

Week 2 The Agrarian Dream and Wage Slavery

Sept. 11 & 13

Readings (complete all readings by Tuesday of each week, before class)

David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 1-64.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor: A Documentary Collection*, pp. 1-42

Week 3 Freedom and "Free Labor"

Sept. 18 & 20

Readings

David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 65-163.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 43-87

Rosh Hashanah, Sept. 17-18

Week 4 Workers' Control of the Workplace

Sept. 25 & 27

Readings

David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 165-190.

David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, pp. 1-90.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 89-137.

Film: Gandy Dancers

Week 5 "Bread and Roses"

Oct. 2 & 4

Readings

David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, pp. 91-137.

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense & a Little Fire*, pp. 1-113.

Film: Triangle: Remembering the Fire

Week 6 Race, Riots, and Community

Oct. 9 & 11

Readings

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense & a Little Fire*, pp. 115-203.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 139-176.

Film: Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance

Week 7 Mass Culture & Working-Class Communities

Oct. 16 & 18

Tuesday **Midterm Examination**

Reading (complete by Thursday, Oct. 18)

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense & a Little Fire*, pp. 205-315.

Film: Uprising of '34 (4:00-5:30; 85 minutes long)

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Gandy Dancers & Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance*

Week 8 Adrift: Utopian Radicalism & the New Deal

Oct. 23 & 25

Readings

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, pp. 1-53.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 176-194.

David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, pp. 139-152.

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Triangle & Uprising of '34*

Eid al Adha, Oct. 26

Week 9 Workers' Common Ground

Oct. 30 & Nov. 1

Thursday **Part One of Research Project due**

Readings

Dana Frank, *Women Strikes Occupy Chain Store, Win Big*, pp. 1-61.

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, pp. 54-97.

David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, pp. 153-175.

Week 10 ““There’s Work to be Done and a War to be Won”

Nov. 6 & 8

Readings

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, pp. 97-177.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 194-217.

Film: Free a Man to Fight

Week 11 Rainbow at Midnight: Rising Fears & the Politics of Exclusion

Nov. 13 & 15

Readings

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, pp. 178-276.

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 217-227.

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Free a Man to Fight & Uprising of '34*

Week 12 Geographies of Class and Culture

Nov. 20 & 22

Readings

Melvyn Dubofsky & Joseph A. McCartin, *American Labor*, pp. 227-255.

Frank Wilkinson, “Revisiting the ‘McCarthy’ Era,” *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*
33 (January, 2000): 681-698.

Film: Chavez Ravine

Thanksgiving, Nov. 22

Week 13 The Politics of Working-Class Resistance

Nov. 27 & 29

Readings

James Lewes, "Envisioning Resistance: The GI Underground Press During the Vietnam War," *Media History* 7, no. 2 (2001): 137-150.

Peter Levy, "Labor and the New Left: The Early Years, 1960-1963," *Labor History* 31, no. 3 (1990): 298-321

Films: *San Francisco State*
Sir! No Sir!

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance & Chavez Ravine*

Week 14 "Which Side Are You On?"

Dec. 4 & 6

Readings

Jane Collins, "Mapping a Global Labor Market: Gender and Skill in the Globalizing Garment Industry," *Gender and Society* 16, no. 6 (December 2002): 921-940.

Film: *Made in L.A.*

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Sir! No Sir! & Free a Man to Fight*
OR *Chavez Ravine & San Francisco State*

Week 15 "We Shall Overcome" & New Communities of Solidarity

Dec. 11 & 13

Tuesday

Working-Class History Research Paper Due* at 1:00 p.m.

**Submit Part One with Part Two of your paper.*

***No late papers accepted for any reason other than a documented religious or health excuse. No exceptions, including computer & transportation problems.**

Thursday

Readings (Complete by Thursday, before class)

Joseph A. McCartin, "Bringing the State's Workers In," *Labor History* 47, no. 1 (February 2006): 73-94.

Jane Collins, "Theorizing Wisconsin's 2011 Protests: Community-Based Unionism Confronts Accumulation by Dispossession," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 1 (February 2012): 6-20.

Christine Garbough, "Folklore and Performing Political Protest: Calls of Conscience at the 2011 Wisconsin Labor Protests," *Western Folklore* 70, nos. 3-4 (Summer 2011): 337-370.

Mike Davis, *Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible*, pp. 1-36

Film Clip: *We Are Wisconsin: This is What Democracy Looks Like* (2012)

Due Thursday: Film Critique of *Made in L.A. & Triangle* **OR** *Made in L.A. & Uprising of '34*

Week 16 Final Examination

Dec. 18

5:05-7:05 p.m. (room assigned by Registrar in mid-November)