

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 1989-90

History 571

Seminar: Thursday 10 a.m - 12 noon

Professor Zonderman
5213 Humanities
263-1972/263-1800

Office Hours: Tues. 10 a.m. - 12 noon
Thurs. 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Undergraduate Studies in US History
American Workers and the Three Industrial Revolutions

This course will examine the interaction between workers and technological change in nineteenth and twentieth century America. The seminar will focus on three "industrial revolutions" in American history: the emergence of the mechanized factory system in the decades preceding the Civil War, the development of scientific management and the automated assembly line in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the transformation of the contemporary workplace through robotics and computers. Particular attention will be paid to historical patterns which develop over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and new challenges which emerge with new technologies.

This seminar is intended to be an in-depth exploration of technological change and American workers, it is not a general overview of American labor history. The focus remains on these three periods of dramatic change, though consideration will be given to other historical moments as well. The focus will also usually be on factory workers and factory work since these factories were the site of crucial technological transformations. Where possible, however, there will be discussion of new technology and work in the office, home, farm, etc. The essential goal of the course is to carefully analyze the major historical issues concerning how American workers perceived the transformation of the American workplace.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Each student will be required to attend seminar meetings regularly and to participate in class discussions. Each student will also be required to write three papers (each one approximately 7-10 pages in length); one paper on each of the three major sections of this course. Possible paper topics will be discussed in class.

(Note: All course books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore; they are also on reserve in Room 1191, College Library, Helen C. White Hall.)

September 7 Introduction to the Course

**The First Industrial Revolution: The Emergence of the Mechanized
Factory System in Antebellum America**

September 14 Merritt Roe Smith, Harpers Ferry Armory and the New
Technology, intro. and chs. 1-6

September 21 Smith, chs. 7-11

September 28 Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation
of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts,
1826-1860, chs. 1-6

October 5 Dublin, chs. 7-12

(PAPER DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 9TH)

**The Second Industrial Revolution: Scientific Management and the
Development of Automated Production in the Early Twentieth Century**

October 12 Frederick Taylor, The Principles of Scientific
Management

October 19 Hugh Aitken, Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal

October 26 Dan Clawson, Bureaucracy and the Labor Process:
The Transformation of U.S. Industry, 1860-1920,
chs. 1-3

November 2 Clawson, chs. 4-7

November 9 Stephen Meyer, The Five Dollar Day: Labor
Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor
Company, 1908-1921, chs. 1-4

November 16 Meyer, chs. 5-7

(PAPER DUE MONDAY NOVEMBER 20TH)

November 23 THANKSGIVING

**The Third Industrial Revolution: Computers and Robotics in the
Contemporary American Workplace**

November 30 David F. Noble, Forces of Production: A Social
History of Industrial Automation chs. 1-7

December 7 Noble, chs. 8-11 and epilogue

December 14 Robert Howard, Brave New Workplace

(PAPER DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 18TH)