

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Fall Semester, 1990

History 571

Mr. Hollingsworth

WORK AND SKILLS IN THE UNITED STATES
SINCE THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This course will concentrate on the working class in the United States since the latter part of the nineteenth century. The emphasis will focus on how the level of skills, worker autonomy over work tasks, and worker control over the design and conceptualization of production have changed since the late nineteenth century. The course will be sensitive to how differences in work varied from industry to industry, by gender, and by race.

Most of the emphasis in the course will be on reading the literature on working class history, for which there is an excellent and exciting literature. Mr. Hollingsworth is presently conducting research on this work in American, Japanese, and German history, and he will in class try to explain why the history of the American working class is different from that in various other countries.

Readings:

There are two types of readings. Books which each student should purchase at the University Bookstore and a packet of "photocopied" materials which are available at one of the photocopy shops near campus. The location will be announced in class.

Each week the required readings will serve as the focus of class discussions. It is each student's responsibility to do the readings carefully and critically and to be prepared to discuss the issues raised by them.

Class Discussions:

Each week at least two, hopefully three, students will "volunteer" to lead the class discussions. In preparation for these discussions, the "volunteers" should meet outside of class and plan for some of the key issues which will be discussed. In class, the "volunteers" should be prepared to play an important role in steering the week's discussion in class.

The "volunteers" will also prepare five or six well worded questions or issues that they will have developed as a result of their planning. The questions should be duplicated and made available, ideally by noon of Monday but no later than Tuesday noon prior to Wednesday's class meeting.

Each student should plan to engage in this "volunteer" type activity at least twice during the semester.

Written Work:

There will be no examination in this course. However, each student is to write two papers. These papers are to be critical reviews of books or literature which confront major problems or questions posed by the course. The model for these papers will be essays which appear in either The New York Review of Books or Reviews in American History. All paper topics must be approved in advance by Mr. Hollingsworth. Students very early in the course should become familiar with The New York Review of Books and Reviews in American History.

Policy on Deadlines and Incompletes:

A seminar involves collective effort. It works well only if everyone works together and if all participants collaborate, on time and in tandem. In a lecture course, if you ease up or do not do the work, you injure only yourself. In a seminar, however, if you ease up or do not cooperate with the entire class, you injure the quality of the entire class. Hence, it is necessary that you fulfill all assignments on time.

Attendance at seminar sessions is obligatory, illness or family emergency being the only valid excuse for an absence. In case of illness, please phone the secretary of the History Department to inform us of your absence.

All written assignments must be completed by the dates noted above. Incompletes will not be given except under unusual and verifiable circumstances (serious medical problems or family emergencies).

It is expected that students can and will express their ideas in clear, simple English prose. Students having difficulty in doing that or having uncertain writing skills, should make use of office hours to discuss their difficulties. Also, students are encouraged to make use of the Campus Writing Lab.

Office hours are held for your benefit. Please make use of them, not just in the first and the last weeks of the term.

Students who do not have a good background in American History should buy a used college textbook or borrow one from the library. Any textbook will do, but I will recommend the following: Norton, Chaudacoff, et. al., A People and A Nation (Houghton, Mifflin Co.), and Blum et. al., The National Experience (Harcourt, Brace).

Grading Policy:

20 percent	General involvement (attendance and class participation in discussions).
20 percent:	Based on contribution from leadership from supplementary readings during the two occasions described above.
60 percent:	Based on each of the two papers.

Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

September 5:	Introduction: Discussion of course mechanics
September 12:	Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, <u>The Second Industrial Divide</u> , Chapters 1-6. *
September 19:	Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, <u>The Second Industrial Divide</u> , Chapters 7-11.
September 26:	Dan Clawson, <u>Bureaucracy and the Labor Process</u> *
October 3:	Trends in De-skilling. Readings by Stone, Braverman and others in reading packet.
October 10:	Margo Anderson Conk, <u>The United States Census and Labor Force Change</u> , Mr. Hollingsworth will place this book on reserve.

- October 17: Bruce Laurie, Artisans into Workers, * Mr. Hollingsworth may assign additional materials for this session.
- October 24: Daniel Nelson, Managers and Workers *
- October 31: David Noble, America by Design, * and other essays
- November 7: Richard Edwards, Contested Terrain *
- November 14: Sanford Jacoby, Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unions, Unions and the Transformation of Work in American Industry 1990-1945 *
- November 21: No Class
- November 28: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present *
- December 5: Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States *
- December 12: Michael Dertouzos, et. al., Made in America: Regaining the Productive Edge *

* You are advised to purchase these books at the University Bookstore.