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


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*


November 2  Clawson, chs. 4-7


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)