U.S. Social Movements in the Twentieth Century: Labor & Working-Class Coalitions

This is an advanced readings seminar on the formation of labor and working-class coalitions in the 20th century. We will focus on when, how, and why organized labor and working-class communities joined forces with other communities to fight for a more socially just world. In the process, we will explore the multiple histories of individuals and collectivities that intersected and coalesced into broad-based movements of social transformation at particular historical moments. And we will examine the hopes and aspirations of members of collectivities, paying close attention to the ways in which differences defined by race, class, gender, sexuality, and national sovereignty shaped the imaginary of social justice movements—sometimes dividing them into single-issue movements and sometimes uniting them into broad-based coalitions. We also will explore how social contestation reinterpreted norms, created new meanings, and disrupted public-private and personal-political binaries to produce new spaces of hope and justice. And we will look at the ways in which communities of solidarity drew on particular social imaginaries to build and represent in physical form these new spaces of hope and justice. Finally, we will look closely at how individuals and collectivities incorporated these struggles of imagination and representation into their everyday, material lives.

Course Requirements

1. **General:**

   Faithful attendance and lively participation in discussions.

2. **Writing.** All writing projects must follow the Humanities Chicago/Turabian style.

   a. **Trends in Labor & Social Movement History review essay and presentation.**

   You will select and review one of the four journals listed below to gain a sense of the development of particular trends in labor and social movement historiography and the landmark articles associated with these trends. The essay should be 1,200-1,500 words in length (approximately four-five pages). Please submit a paper copy and place an electronic copy in a drop box on the Learn@UW site for this course. **Due April 4 at the beginning of class.**

   You will give a ten-minute presentation of your findings to the class.

   *Please adhere closely to the required length of both your report and presentation.*
b. Historiographical Essay.

You will write a historiographical essay that reviews scholarship on labor and social movement history related to your own research and/or teaching areas of expertise. (3,600-4,500 words in length, approximately twelve-fifteen pages).

Due Tuesday, May 15, 4:00, Mailbox 4018 Mosse Humanities Building.

Please adhere closely to the required paper length.

Grade Distribution:

- Class Participation & Discussion 40%
- Report & Presentation 25%
- Historiographical Essay 35%
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 & essays are on the Learn @ UW site for this course.


## Calendar and Reading Assignments

### Week 1
January 24  
Social Movements & the 1960s: Introduction

### Week 2
January 31  
**“Trends in Labor & Social Movement History”**

“The Laboring of American Working-Class Culture”

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

Week 7

“Forging Communities of Solidarity”

Week 8

Week 9

Week 10
March 28  Spring Break

Week 11
April 4  Trends in Labor & Social Movement History reviews and presentations.

Please submit a paper copy & place an electronic copy in a drop box on the Learn@UW site for this course.

Please limit presentations to ten minutes.
“Forging Communities of Solidarity”

**Week 12**
April 11  

**Week 13**
April 18  

**Week 14**
April 25  

**Week 15**
May 2  

**Week 16**
May 9  

**May 15**  
**Final Paper Due at 4:00 in Mailbox 4018 Mosse Humanities Building**

*late papers receive significantly reduced grades, no exceptions*