

History 408
Fall 2009
Tues. & Thurs., 1:00-2:15
1651 Mosse Humanities Building

Professor Camille Guérin-Gonzales
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30-5:30
4119 Mosse Humanities Building
cgueringonza@wisc.edu, 263-1823

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 cultures. 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, 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 both films listed for that date:*

Oct. 22:	<i>Cradle Will Rock & Uprising of '34</i>
Nov. 5:	<i>Free a Man to Fight & Wage Slaves</i>
Nov. 19:	<i>Salt of the Earth & Uprising of '34</i>
Nov. 24:	<i>Cradle Will Rock & Sir! No Sir!</i>
Dec. 3:	<i>San Francisco State & Uprising of '34</i>
Dec. 10:	<i>Yuri Kochiyama & Sir! No Sir!</i>

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 Research Project. You will conduct in-depth research using archival materials housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society and write a two-part essay.

Due Tuesday, October 13:

Part One.

You will identify an archival collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society used in the book assigned for this course listed below, familiarize yourself with the contents of the archival collection, and write a 900-word essay (approximately three pages) describing the contents of the collection and offering a more detailed description of one box contained in the collection.

Peter B. Levy. *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Due Tuesday, December 15:

Revised Version of Part One & Part Two.

Part Two. You will write a 1,500-word essay (approximately five pages) explaining how the collection expanded your understanding of an event, issue, relationship, community, or institution that is addressed in your course readings. You must include examples and evidence from the collection (in the form of quotations or photocopied documents or photographs) to support your analysis. You will conclude your essay by suggesting or proposing future research projects based on the collection. Be insightful and brilliant.

Part One, Revised. Please submit a revised version of Part One as the introduction to Part Two of your working-class history project. Your final paper will be 2,400-words in length (approximately 8-pages).

3. Examinations.

Midterm Examination. There will be an in-class midterm examination Tuesday, October 27, 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 Friday, December 18, 7:45 to 9:45 a.m.

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. The Barbara Ehrenreich essay, "Down and Out in America: Barbara Ehrenreich Talks about Life as a Minimum Wage Employee," is on the Learn @ UW site for this course. Readings should be completed by Tuesday of each week.

Required Readings

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein. *Major Problems in the History of American Workers: Documents and Essays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

Lizabeth Cohen. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*. 2d ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Peter Levy. *The New Left and Labor in 1960s*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Annelise Orleck. *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006

Required 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. 3

*Note that *Readings must be completed by Tuesday of each week*

Week 2 The Agrarian Dream and Wage Slavery

Sept. 8 & 10

Readings

Barbara Ehrenreich, "Down and Out in America: Barbara Ehrenreich Talks about Life as a Minimum Wage Employee," *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 18, no. 10/11 (Jul., 2001), pp. 6-7. Available on the Learn @ UW site for our course.

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. v-xiv and 1-56.

Film: Wage Slaves: Not Getting By in America

Labor Day Sept. 7

Week 3 Freedom and “Free Labor”

Sept. 15 & 17

Readings

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 57-162.

Eid-al-Fitr Sept. 20

Rosh Hashanah Sept. 19-20

Week 4 The Making of the U.S. Working Class

Sept. 22 & 24

Readings

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 163-236.

Photograph Essay

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 237-247.

Research Instruction at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Harry Miller, Reference Archivist

Week 5 “Bread and Roses”: Workers’ Control of the Workplace

Sept. 29 & Oct. 1

Readings

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 248-281.

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 1-97.

Film: Cradle Will Rock (part one)

Yom Kippur Sept. 28

Week 6 Mass Culture & Working-Class Communities

Oct. 6 & 8

Readings

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 99-211.

Film: Cradle Will Rock (part two)

Week 7 Revolution or Reform?

Oct. 13 & 15

Tuesday Part One of Research Project due

Readings

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 213-289

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 282-326.

Film: Uprising of '34 (screening begins at 12:50; 85 minutes)

Week 8 **"Workers' Common Ground"**

Oct. 20 & 22

Readings

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 290-368.

Due Thursday

Film Critique of *Uprising of '34* & *Cradle Will Rock*

Week 9 **"There's Work to be Done and a War to be Won"**

Oct. 27 & 29

Tuesday **Midterm Examination**

Film: *Free a Man to Fight*

Week 10 **The Working Class & Hollywood During the Cold War**

Nov. 3 & 5

Readings

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 327-431.

Film: *Salt of the Earth (part one)*

Due Thursday

Film Critique of *Free a Man to Fight* & *Wage Slaves*

Week 11 **Working-Class Culture Wars**

Nov. 10 & 12

Readings

Peter Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*, pp. 1-107.

Film: *Salt of the Earth (part two)*

Week 12 **Working-Class Soldiers & the Vietnam War**

Nov. 17 & 19

Readings

Peter Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*, pp. 108-201.

Film (Tuesday): *Sir, No Sir!* (screening begins at 12:50; 84 minutes)

Due Thursday

Film Critique of *Salt of the Earth* & *Uprising of '34*

Week 13 “The War at Home”

Nov. 24 & 26

Readings

Annelise Orleck, *Storming Cesar’s Palace*, pp. 1-97

Film: San Francisco State; Film Clips: The War at Home

Due Tuesday:

Film Critique of *Cradle Will Rock & Sir! No Sir!*

Thanksgiving Nov. 26, Eid-al-Adha Nov. 27

Week 14 The Politics of Working-Class Resistance

Dec. 1 & 3

Readings

Annelise Orleck, *Storming Cesar’s Palace*, pp. 98-207.

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 432-459.

Film: Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice

Due Thursday:

Film Critique of *San Francisco State & Uprising of ‘34*

Week 15 “We Shall Overcome”: Building New Communities of Solidarity

Dec. 8 & 10

Readings

Annelise Orleck, *Storming Cesar’s Palace*, pp. 208-310.

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 459-472.

Due Thursday:

Film Critique of *Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice & Sir! No Sir!*

Week 16 Working-Class Communities in the 21st Century

Dec. 15

Reading & Discussion:

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 473-562.

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

**Submit a revised version of Part One as the introduction to Part Two of your paper. You should merge both into one polished research paper.*

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

Dec. 18 Final Examination, Friday, 7:45 a.m.-9:45 a.m.