

History 355/LACIS 440
Work, Freedom and Democracy in the Americas, 1491-the Present
Fall 2014

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:45

Location: Humanities 2637

Professors:

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This course takes a broad view of the experiences, ideas and impact of working people in the Americas from the economic, cultural and biological ruptures caused by the first trans-Atlantic trade to the most recent phase of globalization in the 21st century. We will examine the re-orientation of American economies around exports to Europe, the increased reliance on slavery and other forms of forced labor, and how those developments shaped the democratic revolutions that erupted across the hemisphere in the 18th and 19th centuries. We will then explore the experiences of workers in those new democracies; including the relationship between forced and free labor, divisions along lines of race, ethnicity and gender, and the emergence of working-class political movements. Finally, we will study the emergence of welfare states in the 20th century and how they were challenged by the economic and political changes associated with globalization.

A central theme of the course is the shared and often interrelated experiences of working people in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean Basin. We will treat the Western Hemisphere as a region characterized both by distinct developmental trajectories and deep interactions among its many nations. An important feature of that common history is their origins in European expansion and conquest, and their integration into a larger Atlantic and global economy. The entire region has also been shaped profoundly by the United States, and its influence on economic growth, flows of trade and migration, and diplomatic relations throughout the Americas. Because of our long historical sweep, it is not possible to dwell for long on any one period, nation or topic. We have thus chosen a few exemplary cases that illustrate the broader story we are trying to tell.

Ethnic Studies Requirement: In keeping with UW's Descriptive Guidelines for Ethnic Studies Courses, we will devote at least 25% of the course to the experience and/or theoretical understanding of the means by which persistently marginalized groups in the United States negotiate the conditions of exclusion or marginalization. This includes Native Americans, immigrants and forced migrants from Africa, Asia and Europe, and immigrants and refugees from other parts of the Americas. Our goal is to highlight how the experiences of particular groups have been valued and devalued and how those differences have promulgated disparities in contemporary society. We also hope to promote a healthy skepticism toward knowledge claims, whether in media, political or popular representations or our own assumptions and preconceived notions as they relate to race and ethnicity. Therefore, successful participation in

this course will increase the ability to participate more effectively, respectfully and meaningfully in a multicultural society.

Requirements: Weekly assignments for this course include two 75-minute meetings, which will be divided between lecture and discussion, and 100-150 pages of reading. The purpose of discussion is to deepen and evaluate students' understanding of lecture and reading materials so it is critical that you complete the assigned reading before each class meeting.

Evaluation:

Participation (15%): This grade reflects your attendance, preparation and contribution to class discussions. To do well here, you will need to complete the assigned readings, take notes, and come to class prepared to ask questions and engage in discussion of the readings.

Five Response Essays (10%): Each student must choose five class periods in which they will participate in an online discussion of the assigned readings. To get credit for this discussion, you will need to post a short comment on Moodle before 1pm the day before class. Your comment can take the form of a question about or critique of the assigned readings, a response to a previous comment, or any other observation.

Outside Lecture (5%): Each student must attend at least one outside lecture or other event related to labor history, and turn in a 1 page description of the event and how it related to the course material. We will alert you to lectures during the semester, and students are encouraged to announce others in class.

Three Short Papers (45%): Each student must write a 5-6 page essay in response to three questions handed out during the semester. The questions will be based on assigned readings, lectures and class discussions, and will not require additional reading or research.

Final Exam (25%): The final exam will consist of two essay questions that will be handed out of the last day of class and collected on December 19. Each essay will be 5-6 pages.

Grading Scale: A (93-100); AB (88-92); B (83-87); BC (78-82); C (70-77); D (60-69); F, below 60

Reading: The following books are available for purchase at A Room of One's Own Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham St. (257-7888). All other readings will be posted on Moodle <https://courses.moodle.wisc.edu/>

Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Columbia and the Making of a Global Working Class* (Duke University Press, 2008)

Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Cornell, 1999)

Course Outline:

Session 1 (9/2): Introduction and Overview

Session 2 (9/4): Thinking about Work and Class

Reading:

Ira Berlin, "The Emergence of Atlantic Creoles in the Chesapeake," in *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Harvard University Press, 1998), 29-46.

Frank Bardacke, "The Work Itself," Chapter 2 of *Trampling Out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers*, pp. 30-42.

Greg Grandin, Chapters 13-15 of *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, pp.131-159.

Mac McClelland, "I Was a Warehouse Wage Slave," *Mother Jones*, March/April 2012:
<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/02/mac-mcclelland-free-online-shipping-warehouses-labor?page=1>

Session 3 (9/9): The Columbian Exchange

Reading:

Excerpts from "Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus," Introduction (89-91), skim account of voyage, Thursday and Friday, 11-12 of October (108-112), Monday, 12th of November (143-146)

Charles C. Mann, "1491," *The Atlantic* (March, 2002)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>

Session 4 (9/11): Colonial Labor Systems in Latin America

Reading:

David J. McCreery, *The Sweat of Their Brow: A History of Work in Latin America* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000), pp.9-70.

Session 5 (9/16): The British Colonial System

Reading:

Marcus Rediker, "Seaman as Man of the World: A Tour of the North Atlantic, c. 1740," in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 10-76

Session 6 (9/18): Labor, Race, and Revolution

Reading:

Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 181 (May-June, 1990), 95-118.

Robin Blackburn, "Racial Slavery and the Rise of the Plantation," chapter VIII of *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (Verso, 2010), pp.309-368.

Session 7 (9/23): Work and Democracy in the US

Reading:

Seth Rockman, "The Hard Work of Being Poor," in *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore*, 158-193.

Jeanne Boydston, "The Woman Who Wasn't There: Women's Market Labor and the Transition to Capitalism in the United States," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (Summer, 1996), 183-206.

Session 8 (9/25): Work and Democracy in Latin America

Reading:

Charles Bergquist, *Labor in Latin America: Comparative Essays on Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Colombia* (Stanford University Press, 1986), pp.20-47.

David J. McCreery, "Export Economies, 1850-1930," Chapter 4 of *The Sweat of Their Brow: A History of Work in Latin America* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000), pp.107-143.

Session 9 (9/30): Roads to Emancipation

Reading:

Eric Foner, "The Anatomy of Emancipation," in *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (LSU Press, 1983), 8-38.

Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3. (Sep., 2005), pp. 677-701.

Session 10 (10/2): Industry and Freedom

FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE

Reading:

Herbert G. Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Jun., 1973), pp. 531-588

Gunther Peck, "Reinventing Free Labor: Immigrant Padrones and Contract Laborers in North America, 1885-1925," *Journal of American History* 83 (December 1996), 848-871.

Session 11 (10/7): Labor and the "Social Question" in Latin America

Reading:

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, 1991), pp.59-79, 100-124.

Charles Bergquist, *Labor in Latin America: Comparative Essays on Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Colombia* (Stanford University Press, 1986), pp.47-70

Session 12 (10/9): Labor and the “Social Question” in the US

Reading:

Charles Bergquist, “The Social Origins of US Expansionism,” in *Labor and the Course of American Democracy: US History in Latin American Perspective* (Verso, 1996), pp.45-77.

James Green, “The Globalization of a Memory: The Enduring Remembrance of the Haymarket Martyrs around the World,” *Labor Winter 2005 2(4): 11-24*

Session 13 (10/14): US Expansion and the Search for Cheap Labor

Reading:

Julie Greene, Chapters 2 and 3 of *The Canal Builders: Making America’s Empire at the Panama Canal*, pp.75-158.

Session 14 (10/16): Boom and Bust in the Industrial Revolution

Reading:

Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Columbia and the Making of a Global Working Class* (Duke University Press, 2008), Introduction and Chapters 1-2 (1-92).

Session 15 (10/21): Depression and the Welfare State in the US

Reading:

Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Columbia and the Making of a Global Working Class* (Duke University Press, 2008), Chapters 3-4 (93-180)

Session 16 (10/23): Depression and Populism in Latin America

Reading:

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, 1991), pp.169-195, 202-250.

Session 17 (10/28): Postwar Latin America

Reading:

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, 1991), pp.360-402, 407-420

Ian Roxborough, “Labor Control and the Postwar Growth Model in Latin America,” in

David Rock, ed., *Latin America in the 1940s: War and Postwar Transitions*, pp.248-264.

Session 18 (10/30): The American Century

SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE

Reading:

Nelson Lichtenstein, "A Labor-Management Accord?" from *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 99-140.

Session 19 (11/4): Labor, Capital and the Economic Integration of North America

Film:

Harvest of Loneliness: The Bracero Program:

<http://harvestofloneliness.com/englishversion/english.html>]

Reading:

Mae M. Ngai, "Braceros, 'Wetbacks,' and the National Boundaries of Class," from *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton University Press, 2004), 127-166

Session 20 (11/6): The US and Latin America in the Postwar Era

Reading:

Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Columbia and the Making of a Global Working Class*, Chapter 6, pp.222-263.

Sessions 21 & 22 (11/11 & 11/13): Crisis and Instability in Latin America

Reading:

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, 1991), pp.506-570, 574-608.

Peter Winn, chapters 2, 5, and 12 of *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1986), pp.32-52, 79-91, 159-172

Session 23 (11/18): Neoliberalism in the US

Reading:

Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Cornell, 1999), pp.1-99

Session 24 (11/20): Neoliberalism in Latin America

Reading:

- Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Colombia and the Making of a Global Working Class* (Duke University Press, 2008), Chapter 5, pp.181-221.
- Maria Lorena Cook, *The Politics Of Labor Reform In Latin America: Between Flexibility and Rights* (Penn State, 2007), pp.29-58.

Session 25 (11/25): The North American Production System

Reading:

- Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Cornell, 1999), pp.100-126, 152-179.

Thanksgiving (11/27)

Session 26 (12/2): Workers Respond to Neoliberalism in the U.S.

THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE

Reading:

- Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Cornell, 1999), pp.180-201
- Dorothy Sue Cobble, "A Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm': Workplace Feminism and the Transformation of Women's Service Jobs in the 1970s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (October 1999): 23-44.

Session 27 (12/4): The Revival of US Labor?

Reading:

- Ruth Milkman, "Organizing the 'Unorganizable': Immigrant Unionization and the Labor Revitalization in the 1990s," from *LA Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 114-144

Sessions 28 and 29 (12/9 and 12/11): Workers respond to Neoliberalism in Latin America

Reading:

- Aviva Chomsky, *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Columbia and the Making of a Global Working Class* (Duke University Press, 2008), Chapter 7 and Conclusion, pp.264-304.
- Mark Anner, "Forging New Labor Activism in Global Commodity Chains in Latin America," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 72, (Fall, 2007), pp. 18-41.
- Graciela Bensusan and Kevin Middlebrook, *Organized Labour and Politics in Mexico: Changes, Continuities and Contradictions* (Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2012), Chapters 4-6, pp.50-104.
- Jeffrey Sluyter-Beltrao, *Rise and Decline of Brazil's New Unionism: The Politics of the Central Unica de Trabalhadores* (Peter Lang, 2010), Chapter 6, pp.393-433.

December 19: FINAL PAPER DUE