

History 4040: Working Class America
Spring, 2004
T/Th 2-3:15
Park 65

Using fiction and film as well as traditional texts, this course explores the history of working-class women and men in the United States, from the early 19th century to the present. The emphasis will be on the everyday lives of American laborers—what they did at work and at home, in the union hall, and on the picket line.

Professor Kathleen Clark
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:00 and by appointment
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Requirements:

1. Attendance. Attendance at all class meetings is both expected and required. Repeated absences will significantly affect your grade. I reserve the right to withdraw any student who accumulates more than three unexcused absences.
2. Participation. The format of this class is designed to generate thoughtful debate and discussion. Students are expected to have read material closely and to come to class prepared to share their questions, ideas, and opinions with others.
3. Reading. The goal is to read material closely and carefully, and to have completed all reading before class.
4. Writing.
 - A) In-class essays. Periodically, students will be required to write in-class essays in response to the reading for the day. Collectively, the in-class essays compose 10% of a student's grade.
 - B) Students are required to research and write one formal paper (10-12 pages) during the semester. Outside research of primary and secondary materials will be required.

I will provide additional instructions and help in developing a topic and proposal in the coming weeks.

The following due-dates apply for the research paper:

General topic: Due in class, **January 22**

Proposal and bibliography: Due in class, **February 12**

Outline: Due in class, **March 4**

5 pages: Due in class, **March 30**

Last day for rough draft (optional): **April 8**

Final paper: **Due by noon on Friday, April 30**

5. Exams. Midterm and final exams will require students to review, synthesize, and analyze material from readings, lectures, and discussions, and will consist of a combination of short-answer and essay questions. **In-class midterm: Tuesday, March 2. Final Exam TBA.**

Evaluation:

10% Attendance and Participation

10% In-class essays

40% Research paper

40% Midterm and Final

Assigned Books

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers*

LuAnn Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work*

Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone*

Ben Hamper, *Rivthead*

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

In addition, a packet of **required** readings is available at Bel-Jean Copy Center.

Assigned Films

Modern Times

The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter

Nine-to-Five

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Class Schedule

Thursday, January 8: Introduction

Tuesday, January 13: Artisans into Workers

Reading: “David Johnson Remembers Apprenticeship Life in the Artisan Shop;” Jessie Hutchinson, “Cordwainers’ Rallying Song;” “Journeyman Tailors Protest Wage Slavery” all in Packet

Thursday, January 15: Women’s Work

Reading: “A Reporter’s Account of Lynn Women’s Mass Meeting During the Great Strike;” “Amelia, A Woman Worker;” Harriet Hanson Robinson, “Lowell Textile Workers;” “Letters to the *Voice of Industry*;” all in packet

Tuesday, January 20: Slavery and Freedom in the Antebellum South

Reading: Timothy J. Lockley, “Spheres of Influence: Working White and Black Women in Antebellum Savannah;” “Slave Solomon Northrup’s View of Cotton Planting and Harvesting;” “Life Under the Lash;” all in packet.

Begin *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Thursday, January 22: The World that Slavery Made

Reading: Finish *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Research Topic Due at the Beginning of Class

Tuesday, January 27: Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men

Reading: “Frederick Douglass Confronts Working-Class Racism;” David Roediger, “White Artisans and the Solidarity of Race;” both in packet.

Thursday, January 29: Civil Wars

Reading: “Three Days of Terror;” “Healing Wounds;” both in packet.

Tuesday, February 3: Library Visit

No assigned reading

Thursday, February 5: Southern Ground

Reading: “African Americans During Reconstruction;” “White Southerners’ Reactions to Reconstruction;” “A Northern Unionist Lectures Ex-Slaves;” “We Demand Land;” “African-American Washerwomen Demand Higher Wages, 1866;” all in packet.

Tuesday, February 10: Rise of Capital

Reading: “Decline of the Independent Craftsman;” “Workers Prosper as Industry Grows;” “Frederick Winslow Taylor Explains;” all in packet.

Thursday, February 12: Organize!

“Labor’s Great Army;” “Samuel Gompers Defends the Right to Strike;” “Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World;” “An AFL View of Women Workers in Industry;” “Unionist Alice Henry Outlines Why Women Need Their Own Local Unions;” all in packet

1-page proposal + bibliography due at the beginning of class

Tuesday, February 17: Labor Wars

“Haymarket Anarchist;” “Freedom;” “Fitz John Porter Explains;” “George Pullman Defends” all in packet.

Begin: *Bread Givers*

Thursday, February 19: From Peasant to Proletarian

Reading: “Economist John R. Commons;” “Investigator John Fitch;” “California Employers;” “Chinaman, Laundryman;” “Letters to the Bintel Brief;” Herbert Gutman, “The Cultures of First-Generation Industrial Workers;” all in packet.

Continue: *Bread Givers*

Tuesday, February 24: Culture and Conflict

Reading: Finish *Bread Givers*

Thursday, February 26: In-class viewing, *Modern Times*

No assigned reading

Tuesday, March 2: **Midterm exam**

Thursday, March 4: Radicalism in the South and West

Reading: Handout

Research Paper Outline due at the beginning of class

****Get ahead: Begin *Mama Learned Us to Work***

MIDTERM BREAK

Tuesday, March 16: The Rise of Jim Crow

Reading: Ida B. Wells, “Nobody Believes the Old Threadbare Lies;” Mary Church Terrell, “What it Means to Be Colored in the Capital of the United States;” “Letters of the Great Migration;” all in packet.

Thursday, March 18: Southern Lives I

Mama Learned Us to Work (entire)

Tuesday, March 23: Southern Lives II

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “Disorderly Women” packet; Eric Frumin, “Massacre at Gauley Bridge,” handout.

Thursday, March 25: A New Deal for American Workers?
“Preamble of the National Labor Relations Act;” “Communist John Steuben;” “Mrs. Violet Baggett;” “A Union Man Gets His Job Back;” “Stanley Nowack Organizes a Slow-Down Strike” all in packet

Tuesday, March 30: Women and Work in World War II
Reading: Sara Evans, “Rosie the Riveter;” in packet.
In-class viewing and discussion, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*
First 5 pages of research paper due at the beginning of class

Thursday, April 1: White Collars, Pink Collars
Reading: Clara Lanza, “Women as Clerks in New York;” “White Collar Workers Organize;” “Fred Roman on the Life of an Accountant;” “Lee Radler Archacki Explains Why She Chose the Night Shift;” “Sex Discrimination in the Skies” all in packet

****Viewing of *Nine-to-Five* Monday, April 5, 7:00 pm, Media Center, Film Screening Room**

Tuesday, April 6: Nine-to-Five
No assigned reading. Watch *Nine-to-Five* before class
Get Ahead: Begin *If I Die in A Combat Zone*

Thursday, April 8: Vietnam I
Reading: Continue *If I Die in A Combat Zone*.
Last day to turn in rough draft

Tuesday, April 13: Vietnam II
Reading: Finish *If I Die in A Combat Zone*.

Thursday, April 15: Working Men
Reading: Begin *Rivethead*.

Tuesday, April 20: Hard Times I
Reading: “Management’s Weapon;” “A Unionist Blasts Overseas Office Work;” “Temp Blues;” all in packet; finish *Rivethead*.

Thursday, April 22: Hard Times II
Reading: “Sweatshop Workers Speak Out”
Begin: *Nickel and Dimed*.

Tuesday, April 27: A New Century
Reading: “John Sweeney’s Victory Speech;” “Queremos Jusicia!” “Big Win at UPS” “The AFL-CIO Defends Immigrant Workers;” “The Battle in Seattle” “Senseless in Seattle;” All in packet.
Finish *Nickel and Dimed*
Final paper due Friday, April 30, by noon.