

HIST099: TWENTIETH-CENTURY US WORKING LIVES

Main Second Session (July 11, 2022 – August 12, 2022)

Monday through Thursday, 10:50am-12:45pm

Location: Reiss 284

Instructor: Joel Berger

Office: ICC 600

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 1pm-2pm, and by appointment.

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Course Description

This course examines the changing meaning of work and the changing lives of workers over the course of U.S. history, focusing specifically on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Its purpose is to equip us to better grasp and grapple with the issues that define work and workers' lives in 2022 by providing deep historical context for understanding these issues. It is an adaptation of Professor Joseph A. McCartin's History 099 course "U.S. Working Lives," which covers workers and work in the U.S. from the nation's beginning to the present.

The course provides an opportunity for students to use many different kinds of sources to explore some of the main issues concerning the history of work and working people in America: literature, film, oral history, government documents, newspapers, and more. It is offered in the format of HIST 099, which fulfills a General Education requirement.

The general aim of the HIST 099 Gen Ed is to introduce students to various elements of historical work and thinking, within the context of looking at a particular historical period, event, or theme in some depth. Though lectures and discussion will focus on particular topics, there will also be class exercises, assignments, and readings that allow us to explore how historians identify, define, and employ primary sources of all types, how we can analyze those sources and formulate questions based on them, how we engage with the work of other scholars, and how we reconstruct various elements of the human experience in particular times and places.

We will do that by focusing on the history of work in the United States, a time and place that invites us to examine the intersection of large historical forces and individual agency, to consider the ways in which change and continuity shape formative historical moments, and to think about the links between past and present.

Course Goals

The general learning goals of this course correspond to those of the Georgetown University Department of History, whose goals are that students:

- gain a better appreciation of the nature and practice of history as a discipline, and as the study, based on evidence, of human experiences, interactions, and relationships as they change over time;
- learn to appreciate that history does not consist of a simple succession of self-evident facts, and that evidence-based interpretation and analysis are central to all historical work;
- hone their reading, writing, and oral communication skills;
- develop their ability to think historically, that is to situate events and developments in their historical context for the purpose of critical analysis;

- expand their ability to engage with complex causal analysis, and to articulate arguments that integrate supporting evidence and analytical commentary;
- appreciate the differentness of the past and the distinctiveness and richness of diverse societies and cultures, and learn to view the world from perspectives other than their own.

The specific learning goals of this course flow from the purpose of the HIST 099 Gen Ed Requirement as outlined above.

Course Readings

This course has no textbook. All of the readings for this course will be available online through Canvas.

A good background resource for the course is Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph A. McCartin's *Labor in America: A History*, [available online through Lauinger](#).

Course Requirements and Grading

Each student will be expected to attend lectures and labs, complete labs in a timely manner, participate actively in class discussions on the assigned readings, and complete a range of writing assignments.

Weighting of Assignments

Final grades will be weighted as follows:

Participation in Discussions/Labs	25%
Lab reports (four 500-word papers, and peer edits of a classmate's paper)	50%
One Final Paper (6-8 pp.)	25%

Letter grades in this course will have the following numerical equivalents: A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (67-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63); and F (59 and below). Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for every day that they are late.

Failure to complete any assigned paper will result in a failing grade for the course. Cases of [plagiarism](#) will be referred to [Georgetown University Honors Council](#) and could result in failure and expulsion.

And a note on class participation: your participation grade will be based on your contribution to classroom discussion and activities. It is important for everyone to attend all class sessions and demonstrate proficiency in oral discussion. Decent attendance and friendly silence during class will earn you a "B-." To earn a better grade requires careful listening and thoughtful verbal contributions that leave room for others to participate as well.

Assignment Descriptions

LAB REPORTS (four 500-word papers due by 10:50am each Thursday; one set of peer edits)

You will work in lab groups of two-three students each to focus on the skills and tools of the historian.

Lab groups will complete brief reports together, and will be given time in class each Wednesday to grapple with different types of primary sources and write up a brief report, due the following day before class.

The lab on Wednesday, August 10 (the final lab of the semester) involves peer edits of the rough draft of a classmate's final paper. You will submit documentation of completing the peer edits for lab credit that week.

FINAL PAPER (6-8 pp. due Friday, August 12)

Drawing upon any of the readings, lectures, labs, site visits and discussion materials we have considered over the course of this session, write a paper that focuses on a single theme regarding U.S. working lives and uses that theme to trace an arc of change and/or persistence over time from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, developing an argument around the importance of that theme.

We will employ a number of checkpoints throughout the session to ensure you're on the right track with the paper:

- Choose topic by **Thursday, July 28**
- Develop thesis statement and introduction by **Thursday, August 4** (bring to class)
- Bring full rough draft to class on **Wednesday, August 10**
- Final draft due **Friday, August 12 at 5pm**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact me as soon as possible, partly so we make all arrangements right from the outset, and partly so you know how glad I am that you are here.

Title IX Syllabus Statement (endorsed by Faculty Senate)

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/resourcecenter>.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: confidential email sarp@georgetown.edu

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202.687.6985 or after hours, call (833) 960-3006 to reach Fonemed, a telehealth service; individuals may ask for the on-call CAPS clinician

More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the [Sexual Misconduct Website](#).

(Above statement and TIX faculty resources found at: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help/guidance-for-faculty-and-staff-on-how-to-support-students/>)

Title IX Pregnancy Modifications and Adjustments

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant students. At any point throughout their pregnancy students may request adjustments/modifications based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication or medical need. Students may also request accommodations following labor and delivery based on a complication or medical need.

SCS students must complete the [Pregnancy Adjustment Request Form](https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/) (<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/>) and submit it to the SCS Deputy Title IX Coordinator at titleixscs@georgetown.edu. Upon receiving the completed form, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the requested adjustments and implementation process.

More information about pregnancy modifications can be found on the [Title IX at Georgetown University Website](#).

CLASS SCHEDULE:

NOTE: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Monday, July 11 – Course Introduction and Instructor/Student Introductions/Go Over Syllabus
Lecture 1 – Work and Workers in America – Beginnings - 1900

Tuesday, July 12 – Lecture 2 – Work and Workers in the Progressive Era and World War I/Work and Workers in the 1920s

Wednesday, July 13 – Lab 1 – Labor and the Law

Analyzing early twentieth-century Supreme Court cases affecting work and workers ([*Lochner v. New York* \(1905\)](#)); [*Muller v. Oregon* \(1908\)](#)); [*Adair v. United States* \(1908\)](#)); [*Duplex Printing Press v. Deering* \(1921\)](#)); [*Truax v. Corrigan* \(1921\)](#)); [*Adkins v. Children's Hospital* \(1923\)](#))

Thursday, July 14 – Discussion 1 – Workers and their Lives at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Readings:

[*The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told By Themselves*](#), ed. Hamilton Holt (New York: James Pott & Co., 1906), p. vii, and Chapters I, II, III, XVI, and one other of your own choosing that looks interesting to you.

Talitha LeFlouria, “The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Cuts the Cordwood: Exploring Black Women’s Lives and Labor in Georgia’s Convict Camps, 1865 –1917,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 8, no. 3 (2011): 47-63.

[Camella Teoli testifies about the 1912 Lawrence Textile Strike](#)

Lewis Hine [child labor photographs](#)

Photos from Kevin Boyle and Victoria Getis, *Muddy Boots and Ragged Aprons: Images of Working-Class Detroit, 1900-1930*

Monday, July 18 – Lecture 3 – Origins and Impact of the Great Depression on Workers/Workers’ Responses to the Great Depression/New Deal and Birth of Industrial Unionism

Tuesday, July 19 – Public History - Museum Visit TBD

Wednesday, July 20 – Lab 2 – Workers’ Oral Histories

Analyzing oral histories of workers during the Depression and from the birth of the UAW/CIO (see oral histories from UAW worker/organizers [here](#) and [here](#)) and oral histories from the [Southern Oral History Project](#)

Thursday, July 21 – Discussion 2 - Rank and File Labor Activism in the 1930s/Introducing the final paper

Dollinger, *History is a Weapon*

View these two documentary efforts: [With Babies and Banners](#) and [Mean Things Happening](#) OR [A Job at Ford's](#)

Monday, July 25 – Lecture 4 – Work and Workers in World War II and Postwar America/Civil Rights, Women’s Rights and the Workplace

Tuesday, July 26 – Film – [*Struggles in Steel*](#)

After brief intermission: discussion about film in lab groups; discussion about film in whole group

Wednesday, July 27 – Lab 3 – Using Different Types of Primary Sources to Analyze a Movement

Analyzing [multimedia primary sources from Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike of 1968](#)

Thursday, July 28 – Discussion 3 – Work and Workers in Postwar America: A Panoramic View/Check-in re: final paper topic

Readings:

Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), Excerpt

Zeline Richard, Black Detroit schoolteacher and union activist, [oral history](#)

Monday, August 1 – Lecture 5 – Civil Rights, Women’s Rights and the Workplace (cont.)/“Turnabout Years” – 1968-1988

Tuesday, August 2 – Film [*The Willmar 8*](#) (film)

[*Willmar 8 Revisited*](#) (film)

Wednesday, August 3 – Lab 4 - Excluded Workers and the Limits of the Rights Revolution – Evaluating Worker-Produced Newspapers

Exploring the experience of immigrant farm workers through a farm workers’ union newspaper, [*El Malcriado*](#)

Thursday, August 4 – Discussion 4 – “Turnabout Years”/Check-in re: final paper thesis statement and introduction

Readings/Items to Discuss:

Joseph A. McCartin, ““A Wagner Act for Public Employees: Labor’s Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism, 1970-1976””

[Kim Phillips-Fein on *The Dig* podcast](#) with Daniel Denvir discussing her book *Fear City: New York’s Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*

Monday, August 8 – Lecture 6 – Labor Enters the 21st Century/The Past and Future of Workers

Tuesday, August 9 – Archives Visit TBD

Wednesday, August 10 – Lab 5 – Peer editing of final papers

Thursday, August 11 – Discussion 5 - Essential and Expendable Workers/Course Wrap-up and Reflection

Documents to Discuss:

Wells, [*The Uber Workplace in Washington, DC*](#)

[Video - Uber Man Tampa, "How to Organize and Sort Amazon Flex Packages"](#)

Two short articles on Essential Workers

[Marge Piercy poem, "To Be of Use"](#)

FINAL PAPERS DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 12 at 5PM