

US Labor History

Fall, 2017, AMH 3500.53

Professor Paul Ortiz

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Tuesdays, 1:55 to 2:45; Thursdays, 1:55 to 3:50

Location: Keene-Flint, 119

"This is not the Republic I came to see. This is not the Republic of my imagination."

---Charles Dickens, American Notes (1842)

"Who put this great gulf between the American captain and the American sailor? Or is the captain a creature of like passions with ourselves? Or is he an infallible archangel, incapable of the shadow of error? Or has a sailor no mark of humanity, no attribute of manhood, that, bound hand and foot, he is cast into an American frigate shorn of all rights and defenses, while the notorious lawlessness of the commander has passed into a proverb familiar to [sailors]: *The Law was not made for the captain!*"

–Herman Melville, White Jacket, (1850)

Course Description: We will explore working class cultures and struggles in the development of the United States from the colonial period to the present. Emphasis is placed upon the diverse cultures and ideologies of working people as well as their efforts to organize in concert and to create free and independent labor organizations including trade unions, labor parties, and mutual aid societies.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes: Students will gain a basic understanding of the major problems of labor and working class history in the United States including struggles for economic security, democracy in the workplace, and grassroots efforts to reform American politics and economics. We will explore the development of slavery, free labor, Jim Crow, debt peonage, agricultural labor, the “Gig Economy” and other forms of labor that have been implemented between the 1700s to present.

Class sessions will begin with music and discussions of contemporary labor issues including workplace democracy and freedom using historical materials to base our discussion. We will study the centrality of working class history in the creation of what we now refer to as “American culture,” via protagonists in a variety of genres including American literary classics such as Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, & Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* among other novels. We will also learn about the importance of working class culture in the innovation of noted art forms such as jazz, blues, and folk by listening to representative musical recordings and oral testimonies from workers themselves.

Policy Regarding the Use of Electronic Equipment

You may not use your laptops or cell phones in this class, nor may you text. Students doing so will be marked absent.

Attendance Policy: Attendance will be taken every day of the semester. You are permitted unexcused two absences without penalty but on the third and each subsequent absence, your final grade for the course will be reduced by a third of a letter grade (i.e., from an A to an A- to a B+, etc.). A medical certificate is needed to excuse absence. If you miss a class you are responsible for getting notes and/or assignment instructions from one of your peers or instructor during regular office hours.

Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. For UF's honor code, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Current UF Grading Policy:

Review current UF Grading policy at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#grades>

Electronic Copies of Syllabus

May be found via the the home page of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, <http://oral.history.ufl.edu/>

COURSE FORMAT

Synthesis Essays: You will write four synthesis essays this semester that compare and contrast readings across weeks. Each essay will be 4 pages in length. Your first essay will focus on Rediker's, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* and will examine the impact of slavery on the lives of working people in colonial America. I am looking for serious engagement with the major themes and will give explicit instructions on each paper. Synthesis Essay due dates: Monday, September 9; Friday, October 4; Monday, October 28; Monday, November 18. All synthesis essays are due at my office at Pugh Hall, 2nd floor, Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, #245 at 7:00 p.m.

Exams: We will write two exams this term in the form of short essays. Both exams will be take-home essay exams. The mid-term will be due on Monday, 7pm, September 23. The final exam will be due Dec. 11.

Grading: Class participation, including discussion (20%); Mid-Term exam (20%) Synthesis Essays (40%); Final exam (20%).

Small Group Discussions and Contemporary Thought Pieces (CTP): We will often begin our class sessions with small group discussions to work on themes in the readings & preparation for lectures on the week's topics as well as your synthesis essays and exams. The idea behind the CTP readings is to connect the past with the present and to gain a greater understanding of how historical processes will impact the workplaces of the future. Please come to each class prepared to use the CTP's to engage on the major themes and keep in mind that class participation amounts to 20% of your overall grade.

Office Hours: I will be holding office hours this semester at my office at the Oral History Program, Pugh Hall, # 245, on Tuesdays, 12:00 to 1:30; Thursdays, 12:00 to 1:30. I am also available for meetings via appointment.

Email: Check your class email account on a regular basis for reading questions and periodic course updates.

Required Texts: (Available @ Library West: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/accesssupport/coursereserves>)

And UF Bookstore: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*; Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel*; Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America*; Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation; The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers*; Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983*

Syllabus & Reading List

WEEK OF AUGUST 22: WORKING CLASS NATION: INTRODUCTION TO CLASS

Tuesday: Introduction to course themes; small group discussions: *What is labor? What role does labor play in a democratic society? What do “Constitutional protections” look like in the workplace? What are the connections between labor and politics?*

Thursday: *Syllabus review* **Reading Discussion:**

Introduction to US Labor History

Paul Ortiz, “Charging Through the Archway of History: Immigrants and African-Americans Unite to Transform the Face of Labor and the Power of Community,” *Truthout.org*, February 16, 2013. <http://www.truthout.org/opinion/item/14540-charging-through-the-archway-of-history-immigrants-and-african-americans-unite-to-transform-the-face-of-labor-and-the-power-of-community>

Contemporary Thought Piece (CTP): Katie Wells, et. al., “The Work Lives of Uber Drivers: Worse than you Think,” *Labor Online*, August 8, 2017, <https://www.lawcha.org/2017/08/08/work-lives-uber-drivers-worse-think/>

WEEK OF AUGUST 29: SLAVERY AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAS

Tuesday: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 1-2

Contemporary Thought Piece (CTP): Caitlin Rosenthal, “Plantations Practiced Modern Management,” *Harvard Business Review*, Sept. 2013, <https://hbr.org/2013/09/plantations-practiced-modern-management>

Thursday: Reading discussion: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 3-5

CTP: Coalition of Immokalee Workers, “Anti-Slavery Program,” 2012, <http://www.ciw-online.org/slavery/>

Multi-Media presentation: Slavery, Work, & The Birth of American culture

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5: TRADE, LABOR & THE MANY-HEADED HYDRA

Tuesday: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 6-8

Thursday: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, finish book.

CTP: William A. Darity, Jr., “For Reparations: A Conversation with William A. Darity, Jr.,” *The Next System Project*, March 20, 2017, <http://thenextsystem.org/for-reparations/>

Paul Ortiz, “Celebrating Slavery’s Abolition and America’s Survival,” *The Gainesville Sun*, June 12, 2016, <http://www.gainesville.com/opinion/20160612/paul-ortiz-celebrating-slaverys-abolition-and-americas-survival>

David Ellerman, “Against the Renting of Persons,” *The Straddler* (Winter, 2017), <http://www.thestraddler.com/201715/piece2.php>

Multi-Media presentation: The Many-Headed Hydra: Cultures of Resistance

WEEK OF SEPT 12: THE PROBLEM OF INEQUALITY IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

Monday, September 11, 1st synthesis essay due (Rediker)

Tuesday: Joshua R. Greenberg, “Trade Unions,” and “Working Men’s Party,” in: *Advocating the Man: Masculinity, Organized Labor, and the Household in New York, 1800-1840*, <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/greenberg/Chapter5JRG.html> and <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/greenberg/Chapter6JRG.html>

Thomas Skidmore, “The Rights of Man to Property,” (1829) available as PDF

Paul Ortiz, review of: Karren Orren, *Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States*.

CTP: Julia Wong, “Facebook Worker Living in Garage to Zuckerberg: Challenges are right outside your door,” *The Guardian*, July 24, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jul/24/facebook-cafeteria-workers-wages-zuckerberg-challenges>

Thursday: Charles Dickens, “Philadelphia and Its Solitary Prison,” and “Slavery,” in: *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) available as PDF

Documents: “The Bay State Strike: Movement Among the Women, The Female Strikers At Liberty Hall,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 1860, <http://www.nytimes.com/1860/02/29/news/bay-state-strike-movement-among-women-acts-proceedings-employers-workmen-ffmale.html?pagewanted=all>

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 19: THE REPUBLIC OF LABOR

Tuesday: Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel* (preface: introduction; chapters 1-3)

CTP: Rick Wartzman, “If Silicon Valley is the Knowledge Work Capital of the world, Why Does It Have so Many Lousy Jobs?” *The Sacramento Bee*, July 20, 2017, <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/california-forum/article162707983.html>

Mid-Term exam distributed. Theme: “Labor and the Making of the Early American Republic”

Thursday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 4-7)

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26: REVOLUTIONS IN STEEL AND AMERICAN POLITICS

Monday, September 25, Mid-Term exam due: 5. P.M., My Office, Pugh Hall.

Tuesday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 8-11)

CTP: “As Our Jobs Are Automated, Some Say We’ll Need a Guaranteed Basic Income,” National Public Radio, September 24, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/09/24/495186758/as-our-jobs-are-automated-some-say-we-well-need-a-guaranteed-basic-income> (Radio program)

Thursday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters, 12-13)

Documents: Documents: “Revolutionary Unionism - A Speech Delivered by Eugene V Debs in Chicago on November 25, 1905,” <http://www.iww.org/PDF/history/library/Debs/Debs7.pdf>

WEEK OF OCTOBER 3: DISENFRANCHISEMENT & THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF LABOR

Tuesday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 19-22)

CTP: Thom Hartmann, “A 21st-Century Form of Indentured Servitude,” *Salon.com*, http://www.salon.com/2017/07/24/a-21st-century-form-of-indentured-servitude-has-already-penetrated-deep-into-the-american-heartland_partner/

Thursday: Paul Ortiz, “Forgotten Workers of America: Racial Capitalism and the Working Class, 1890s to 1940s,” in: *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*, (Beacon: Forthcoming)

Documents: Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World, <http://www.iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml>

Friday, October 6: Synthesis Essay #2 on *The Battle for Homestead* due, 7 pm.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 10: THE OPEN SHOP IN THE ERA OF ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America* (Kracha’s story)

CTP: Rutger Bregman, “No, Wealth Isn’t Created at the Top: It is Merely Devoured There,” *The Guardian*, March 30, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/30/wealth-banks-google-facebook-society-economy-parasites>

Thursday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace (Mike Dobrejak’s story)*

Film: “Salt of the Earth”

Eugene Victor Debs, “Statement to the Court Upon Being Convicted of Violating the Sedition Act” (Opposing the US entry into World War I.) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1918/court.htm>

WEEK OF OCTOBER 17: MAKING A NEW DEAL & A NEW CITIZENSHIP

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace (Mary’s story)*

Film: “With Babies and Banners”

CTP Nick Hanauer, “A report that analyzed every minimum-wage hike since 1938 should put a bunch of nonsense ideas to rest,” *Business Insider: Markets*, May 6, 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/minimum-wage-effect-on-jobs-2016-5>

Thursday: Peter Rachleff, “Organizing ‘Wall to Wall’: The Independent Union of All Workers, 1933-37,” in Staughton Lynd, *We are All Leaders, The Alternative Unionism of the early 1930s.* 51-71 (ERES)

Staughton Lynd, Introduction, in Staughton Lynd, *We are All Leaders, The Alternative Unionism of the early 1930s*, 1-26 (ERES)

Multimedia Presentation: Labor & Culture in the Depression Years

The Steelworkers Declaration of Independence: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/133/>

WEEK OF OCTOBER 24: LABOR ON THE MARCH: THE AGE OF THE CIO

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace (Dobie’s story; afterward)*

James Green, “Democracy Comes to Little Siberia: Steel Worker Organizing in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, 1933-1937,” *Labor’s Heritage*, 5:3 (August 1993). [PDF to be sent]

CTP: Kevin D. Williamson, “Chaos in the Family, Chaos in the State: The White Working Class’s Dysfunction,” *National Review*, March 28, 2016, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/432876/donald-trump-white-working-class-dysfunction-real-opportunity-needed-not-trump>

Thursday: C.L.R. James, “The Struggle for Happiness,” in *American Civilization*, 165-198 (PDF to be sent)

C.L.R. James, “With the Sharecroppers,” (PDF to be sent)

WEEK OF OCTOBER 31: BLACK WORKERS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST JIM CROW

Monday, October 30: Synthesis essay 3 due: “Industrial Unionism: Gains & Losses)

Tuesday: Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation* (TBD)

CTP Michael Pierce, “The Origins of Right to Work: Vance Muse, Anti-Semitism, and the Maintenance of Jim Crow Labor Relations,” <https://www.lawcha.org/2017/01/12/origins-right-work-vance-muse-anti-semitism-maintenance-jim-crow-labor-relations/>

Thursday: Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation*; (TBD)

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 7: THE RISE OF THE UNITED FARM WORKERS

Tuesday: Reading discussion: *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers* (TBD)

Cesar Chavez, “The Organizer’s Tale,” *Ramparts* (July 1966) (Available, PDF) https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/DalzellArchive/RampartsMagazine/Cesar%20Chavez_001.pdf

CTP: “The Mondragon model: how a Basque cooperative defied Spain’s economic crisis,” *The Conversation*, October 18, 2012, <http://theconversation.com/the-mondragon-model-how-a-basque-cooperative-defied-spains-economic-crisis-10193>

Thursday: *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers*

Paul Ortiz, “Farm Worker Organizing in America: From Slavery to César Chávez and Beyond:” in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworker Lives, Labor, and Advocacy* (ERES)

Film: “Fight in the Fields”

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 14: IMMIGRATION, LABOR & POLITICS

Tuesday Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Paul Ortiz, “¡Si, Se Puede! Revisited: Latino/a Workers in the United States,” in *Social Work Practice with Latinos*, Eds., Richard Furman & Nalini Negi (ERES)

CTP: Keith A. Spencer, “There is No Reason Uber Should be a for-profit corporation,” *Salon*, July 2, 2017, <http://www.salon.com/2017/07/02/there-is-no-reason-uber-should-be-a-for-profit-corporation/>

Thursday: Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Film: “Made in LA”

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 21: COPPER CRUCIBLE IN ARIZONA

Monday, November 20: Synthesis essay 4: “Race, Labor & Immigration” due 7 pm, my office, Pugh Hall.

Tuesday: Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Thursday: NO CLASS!

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28: THE GIG ECONOMY: PREP FOR THE FINAL EXAM

Tuesday: Reading Discussion: Paul Ortiz, “El Gran Paro Estadounidense: The Rebirth of the American Working Class,” in: *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* (Forthcoming, Beacon)

Gabriel Winant, “The New Working Class,” *Dissent*, June 27, 2017,
https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/new-working-class-precarity-race-gender-democrats

Thursday: Reading Discussion: Bob Zieger, “Lessons of the Past—Words from Bob Zieger, Labor Historian,” *The Gainesville Iguana*, November 30, 2011.

<http://www.gainesvilleiguana.org/2011/articles/2011-articles/december-2011/lessons-of-the-past-words-from-bob-zieger-labor-historian/>

WEEK OF DECEMBER 5: WRAPPING IT UP: PREP FOR FINAL EXAM, CONT.

Tuesday: Last class, take-home final exams distributed.

FINAL EXAM WEEK:

Take-home exam due, Wednesday, December 13, 7 pm., my office, Pugh Hall. Final Exam Theme: *Studying Labor History in the 1983 Arizona Copper Strike*