

History 428
American Workers in the Industrial Age
Fall 2004

Professor Steven Reich
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Office Hours: MW 9:30–12:00

Introduction This course will provide advanced undergraduate students with an introduction to some of the key issues and debates in the history of American workers during the United States' industrial era. The course will examine in depth five different but related workplaces: the needle trades in New York City's Lower East Side, the Packinghouses of Chicago, the coal mines of West Virginia, the steel mills of Pittsburgh and Braddock, Pennsylvania, and the cotton textile mills of the New South. We will explore these places and the people who inhabited them through a variety of sources, including historical scholarship, literature, film, oral history, memoir, journalism, and other sources contemporary to the period.

Course Objectives The course is designed to achieve five major objectives. **Content:** Students will gain a familiarity with the major events, themes, personalities and issues in American labor history. **Chronology:** Students will understand the importance of change and continuity over time, including the importance of cause and effect in history and the significance of historical context. **Collection:** Students will know how to collect historical evidence using bibliographic materials available in printed, electronic and computerized formats. **Analysis:** Students will understand the different methods employed by historians in approaching evidence and how historical perspectives have changed over time. Central to the analysis of evidence is its critical evaluation, including: thesis, sources, conclusions, perspective, bias and reliability. **Synthesis:** As the culmination of the critical thinking process, students will be able to produce a final written and/or oral synthesis of evidence with a thesis and conclusion based on a responsible use of that evidence.

Reading List The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. All books are required reading.

William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*. Introduction by Nicholas Lemann. New York: Anchor Books, 1993. ISBN 0385425422. (Available in the bookstore as a course packet prepared by the JMU Copy Center).

Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976. ISBN 0822952734.

Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995. ISBN 0801482682.

David Corbin. *The West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology*. Martinsburg, WV: Appalachian Editions, 1998. ISBN 0962748609

Denise Giardina, *Storming Heaven: A Novel*. New York: Ivy Books, 1987. ISBN 080410297X

Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990. ISBN 0801497590

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al. *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1987. ISBN 0807848794

Grace Lumpkin, *To Make My Bread*. Introduction by Suzanne Sowinska. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996. ISBN 0252065018.

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. Norton Critical Editions. Clare Virginia Eby, Editor. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003. ISBN 039397779X

Class Format This is a reading *intensive* seminar. I place a premium on developing intense, analytical, lively (and fun) discussions. Hence, completion of each day's reading assignment is essential to the class's success. Each week you will be responsible for knowing and discussing on average about 200 pages. For readings drawn from outside the required books, I have indicated on the syllabus those articles and chapters that you can access through Blackboard or download through JSTOR. I have also included full bibliographic information for all the readings on the syllabus so that you can retrieve the journals off the shelf and make your own photocopies, or in cases in which the library does not own a copy, order the article through interlibrary loan. Some of the material is also on reserve.

One of the principle goals of this seminar is to provide students with the opportunity to develop and advance their skills as effective speakers and debaters. We will accomplish this through a class-discussion format. Therefore, completion of all assigned readings, full attendance, and participation in every discussion are essential. If I determine that students are not completing the assigned reading, I reserve the right to initiate pop quizzes or other daily writing assignments.

Assignments There are no exams in this class. Instead you will have four papers based on the required reading, a discussion-leading exercise, and a semester-long research paper.

Unit Papers There will be one paper assignment for each unit of the course. These papers will be four to five pages in length and ask you to develop a critical analysis or comparison of the works that we have read for the unit. Each student must complete the paper for units one and five. Students must complete two additional unit papers. Topics will be announced well in advance of the due date, giving you ample time to complete the assignments. All papers are due on the date indicated in the syllabus.

Discussion Leading Each student is required to lead one class discussion. Discussants are expected to focus classroom discussion by highlighting the themes of the day's readings, raising analytical and comparative problems, and posing questions for debate. Students are expected to shape the conversation as they see fit, regularly challenging the assertions of the readings, of the instructor, and of each other. Discussion leaders should meet with me in advance to review the readings and to set an agenda for class. I have provided guidelines for conducting an effective class discussion on Blackboard.

Research Paper In lieu of a final exam, each student will complete a focused research paper of about 10–12 pages in length. The paper will take as its starting point a labor history Web site of your choice. You will then conduct an extended analysis of that topic through the primary sources available on that Web site. You are expected to inform your analysis with additional reading in other secondary and primary sources that you collect. I shall circulate a list of labor history Web sites by September 8. Your research must then adhere to the following schedule:

- September 22 Submit your topic for approval. You must identify the Web site that you will use, define a preliminary focus of your topic, and list four specific historical questions you intend to explore.
- October 13 First Status Report due, including a statement of the paper's focus and an annotated bibliography of relevant additional readings and sources. Students will then meet with me during the week of October 18 to review the First Status Report.
- November 12 Second Status Report due, including a thesis statement and draft of the opening paragraph. Students will then meet with me during the week of November 15 to review the Second Status Report.
- December 6 Research Paper due at 4:00 in Cleveland 307

Attendance Policy, Make-ups, and Late Work

Attendance Attendance at every class is expected. Without attending, you cannot participate in class dialogue and hence earn a class participation grade. Class discussion generates ideas and insights that will be critical for writing successful unit papers. Unexcused absences are thus not tolerated. Failure to attend class means failure in course. This course also follows the College of Arts and Letters first-week attendance policy, which is described on the history department's web page (<http://www.jmu.edu/history/>)

Make-ups and Extensions Papers are due in class on the day indicated in the syllabus. A late paper will be penalized ONE FULL GRADE for each calendar day that it is overdue without an approved extension. Extensions on papers and arrangements for make-up midterms will be granted only with my prior approval or in the event of a verifiable emergency. If you develop an extended illness during the semester that forces you to miss class for more than one week, please inform me as soon as possible. In such cases, we will develop a mutually agreeable and realistic make-up schedule.

Evaluation Your final grade will be broken down as follows

Unit Paper One	10 percent
Unit Paper Two, Three, and Four (choose two @ 12.5 percent each)	25 percent
Unit Paper Five	20 percent
Research Paper	25 percent
Discussion Leading	10 percent
Class Participation	10 percent

Class participation will be evaluated on the following criteria:

A-range: You are always in class and show evidence of having completed the assignment and thought about it ahead of time. You listen well, and you regularly add thoughtful comments and questions to discussion.

B-range: You are almost always in class, and you participate in an informed manner.

C-range: You come to class regularly, but rarely contribute. Or you are active in discussions, but come to class only irregularly. Or you participate, but it is clear that you have not done the reading or thought much about it before class.

D-range: You attend irregularly, and you show signs of not having done or not having thought about the assignment before class.

E: You miss many classes, speak rarely when you are there, and you show no signs of having done the reading.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93–100	C+	78–79
A-	90–92	C	73–77
B+	88–89	C-	70–72
B	83–87	D	60–69
B-	80–82	F	0–59

For more information on the grading guidelines for this course, please consult the History Department web page (<http://www.jmu.edu/history/>)

Withdrawals A statement about the procedures for withdrawing from this course will be posted to Blackboard by the end of the first week of the semester.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code You are expected to adhere fully to the JMU Honor Code for all work performed in this class. The penalty for cheating on quizzes and midterms or turning in a plagiarized paper is F in course in addition to any other penalties that the university and the Honor Council may impose. You are responsible for knowing and understanding what constitutes a violation of the JMU Honor Code. If you have questions, visit the JMU Honor System web site at: <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/>. If you need further clarification as you are working on an assignment, please do not hesitate to consult with me.

All work that you submit for a grade in this class must contain the following pledge followed by your signature: “This work complies with the JMU Honor Code.”

Statement on Academic Freedom: This class will be conducted under the aegis of the AAUP 1940 statement of Academic Freedom, the essence and spirit of which is affirmed in the current JMU Faculty Handbook. For more, visit the history department web page, <http://www.jmu.edu/history/>

****NOTE****

This syllabus is subject to change with notice. You are responsible for all announcements made either in class or posted on the Blackboard page for this course.

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Class Calendar

August 23 Introduction

Unit One Immigrant Women and the Needle Trades on the Lower East Side of Manhattan

- August 25 Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 1–49
Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, ix–xxii, 9–65
- August 27 Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, 69–145
- August 30 Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 90–166
- September 1 Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, 149–207
Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 50–89
- September 3 Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, 211–313
- September 6 Film: *Hester Street*
Abraham Cahan, “A Sweatshop Romance” (BB)
Recommended: Abraham Cahan, *Yekl* (BB), the novella on which the film *Hester Street* is based
- September 8 Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 167–206
- September 10 Richard A. Greenwald, “‘The Burning Building at 23 Washington Place’: The Triangle Fire, Workers and Reformers in Progressive Era New York,” *New York History* 83, no. 1 (2002): 55–91 (BB)
Web Resources on the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire

Unit Two Life and Labor in the Jungle: Chicago and the Meatpacking Industry

- September 13 Contemporary Perspectives on the Meatpacking Industry in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 357–387
Jimmy Skaggs, “Market Conditions and the Beef Trust,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 428–31
William Cronon, “The Packing Industry in the Ecosystem,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 465–75

UNIT ONE PAPER DUE

- September 15 Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 1–63
 J. C. Kennedy, “Immigrant Wages and Family Budgets,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 396–407
 Sophonisba P. Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, “Housing and Living Conditions in Chicago, Ill.: Back of the Yards,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 407–15
- September 17 Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 64–148
 James R. Barrett, “Packingtown’s Women Workers and Labor Resistance,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 441–45
 The Vice Commission of Chicago, “Immigrant Women and Prostitution,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 419–22
- September 20 Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 149–202
 Jon M. Kingsdale, “The ‘Poor Man’s Club’: Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 423–26
 Anonymous, “Slaughterhouse Humor,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 427
- September 22 Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 203–92
- September 24 Rick Halpern, “Racial and Ethnic Divisions in the Slaughterhouses,” in *The Jungle* [Norton Critical Edition], 431–41
 Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, “‘We Made a Religion of Unity’: Black and White Workers in Chicago’s Packinghouses” in *Meatpackers: An Oral History of Black Packinghouse Workers and Their Struggle for Racial and Economic Equality* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 27–64 (BB)
- RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSAL DUE**
- September 27 Film: *The Killing Floor*
 William Tuttle, “Contested Neighborhoods and Racial Violence: Prelude to the Chicago Riot of 1919” *Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 4 (1970): 266–88 (JSTOR)
 William M. Tuttle, Jr., “Labor Conflict and Racial Violence: The Black Worker in Chicago, 1864–1919” *Labor History* 10, no. 3 (1969): 408–32 (BB)

Unite Three Coal Mining in Appalachia and the West Virginia Mine Wars

- September 29 Barbara Freese, “Rise and Fall of King Coal,” in *Coal: A Human History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 129–61 (BB)
 David Alan Corbin, “Coal Is Our Existence,” in *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880–1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 1–24 (BB)
- October 1 Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780–1920* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 121–64 (BB)

Corbin, "Class over Caste: Interracial Solidarity in the Company Town," in *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 61–86
David Alan Corbin, *The West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology*, 1–10.

October 4 Corbin, *West Virginia Mine Wars*, 13–66

UNIT TWO PAPER DUE

October 6 Film: *Matewan*
Corbin, *West Virginia Mine Wars*, 71–78

October 8 Denise Giardina, *Storming Heaven*, 1–115

October 11 Giardina, *Storming Heaven*, 119–232
Corbin, *West Virginia Mine Wars*, 79–93

October 13 Giardina, *Storming Heaven*, 235–93
Corbin, *West Virginia Mine Wars*, 95–141

FIRST RESEARCH PAPER STATUS REPORT DUE

October 15 Fall Semester Holiday—No Class

**Unit Four
Race and Ethnicity in Steel**

October 18 Dennis Dickerson, *Out of the Crucible: Black Steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania, 1875–1980* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 27–84 (BB)
Abraham Epstein, *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh* (1918; reprint, New York: The Arno Press, 1969), 7–46 (BB)

UNIT THREE PAPER DUE

October 20 William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*, 1–74

October 22 Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*, 74–189

October 25 Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*, 191–281

October 27 Dickerson, *Out of the Crucible*, 85–100 (BB)
Mary Heaton Vorse, "Steel" (BB)
Vorse, "The Great Steel Strike" (BB)
Vorse, "Behind the Picket Line: The Story of a Slovak Steel Striker, How He Lives and Thinks," *Opportunity*, 21 January 21 1920, 107–09 (BB)

October 29 John A. Fitch, *The Steel Workers* (1911; reprint, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 9–21, 232–43
Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace*, Part One

November 1 Bell, *Out of this Furnace*, Part Two

November 3 Bell, *Out of this Furnace*, Part Three

November 5 Bell, *Out of this Furnace*, Part Four

Unite Five Cotton Textiles in the South

November 8 Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 3–43
Anne Viola Fries, Oral History, in Victoria Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls: Personal Histories of Womanhood and Poverty in the South* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 1986), 15–25 (BB)
Katie Geneva Cannon, Oral History, in Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*, 26–39 (BB)

UNIT FOUR PAPER DUE

November 10 Hall, *Like a Family*, 44–113
Bertha Miller, Oral History, in Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*, 46–50 (BB)
Bertha Awford Black, Oral History, in Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*, 61–65 (BB)

November 12 Hall, *Like a Family*, 114–80
Aliene Walser, Oral History, in Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*, 78–86 (BB)
Celeste King, Oral History, in Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*, 87–95 (BB)

SECOND RESEARCH PAPER STATUS REPORT DUE

November 15 Grace Lumpkin, *To Make My Bread* (pages TBA)

November 17 Lumpkin, *To Make My Bread* (pages TBA)

November 19 Hall, *Like a Family*, 183–236

November 22 Lumpkin, *To Make My Bread* (pages TBA)
Mary Heaton Vorse, “Gastonia” (BB)

November 29 Hall, *Like a Family*, 289–363

December 1 Film: *Uprising of ‘34*
Mary Heaton Vorse, “Textile Trouble” (BB)

December 3 Conclusion

UNIT FIVE PAPER DUE

December 6 No Final Exam. Research Paper Due at 4:00 PM