

Professor Julie Greene

History 460

Fall 2023

TLF 2108

Office: 2127 FSK, 5-4318

TR 11-12:15

Office hrs: TR 12:30-1:30

[jmg@umd.edu](mailto:jmg@umd.edu)

Or by Appointment

### **History of U.S. Labor and the Working Class**

Welcome to History 460! This course examines the history of work and working men and women in the United States under 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century capitalism. One of the most fascinating and important themes in U.S. history is the difference that class makes, and how that has changed over time. This includes such issues as the ways class is experienced by working people, how Americans discuss class experience, forms of exploitation based upon class (which in turn is interconnected with race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, skill level, etc.), and workers' fight for full rights in and beyond the workplace. This course will examine all these questions, tracing the history of workers and the labor movement amidst an evolving capitalist system. We will examine workers' role in movements for social justice, and look at the crucial question of when and how workers have been able to unite despite divisions based upon skill level, race, gender, etc.

This course is structured as a collaborative project in critical thinking, analysis, and knowledge production. Most days I will present a lecture, but we will also spend a good amount of time discussing and analyzing primary and secondary sources and films that explore the history of working people in the U.S. You will also write a research paper based on primary and secondary sources and take a midterm and final exam. History 460 will help you improve upon your skills in oral and written communication and in historical analysis. Since discussions will be central to our work together, I expect you to attend class regularly, participate in discussions, and come to class having read and contemplated all assigned materials.

I will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:30 p.m. If those times don't work for you, please feel free to contact me by phone or email to set up a different meeting time. My office is located at 2127 Francis Scott Key. Come in and discuss course readings or lectures with me at any time. And if you have any problems or issues

related to the course that require my attention, please see me as soon as possible. You may also contact me any time by email at [jmg@umd.edu](mailto:jmg@umd.edu), and I will aim to respond within 24 hours except over the weekend.

**Course Requirements** This course will require *sustained and significant* commitment of time and energy. You should plan on full engagement with every aspect of the course: reading of all required materials, viewing of required films, and regular and informed participation in discussions. You are expected to complete all assigned course readings and submit your responses to course readings and films by class time each week. Course grades will be based upon the following four elements:

**1: Class Participation and Writing Assignments (20%).** Class discussion and analysis of readings and films will be central to this course. You are required to engage in thoughtful and consistent class participation, based upon serious engagement with course readings, articulation of critical thoughts and ideas, and respectful attention to the ideas of your classmates. There will also be regular in-class writing assignments, and these will be considered in determining your participation grade as well.

Your participation grade is based not on attendance in class but on your ability to respond to questions asked by the professor, posing questions yourself, and participating in class discussions and in-class exercises. Thoughtful participation requires careful reading (or viewing) of the required materials, being attentive throughout class, and thinking creatively and clearly. Your participation grade will be based upon the following rubric:

**Excellent:** Comments and in-class writing reflect thoughtful and creative analysis and synthesis of course readings, films, and lectures; active and consistent participation; focused analysis; thoughtful responses to others' comments. Participation helps generate more sophisticated and collaborative knowledge production throughout the semester.  
Grade: A

**Good:** Comments and in-class writing demonstrate familiarity with course readings, films and lectures, with some analysis; contributes well to discussions, responds often to other students' comments in constructive way, offers suggestions that either respectfully reinforce or challenge others' ideas; participation is consistent and ongoing. Participation contributes to knowledge production of the class. Grade: B

**Adequate:** Offers some responses to questions and demonstrates straightforward knowledge of course materials; responds when called upon but does not initiate participation; sporadic participation. Grade: C

**Poor:** Participates in discussion only infrequently; responds when called upon but does not seem to have read course materials or viewed films; completes in-class writing assignments but they do not reflect knowledge of course materials; infrequent or unproductive collaboration with others due to unfamiliarity with course readings. Grade: D

**Non-Existent:** No participation in class discussions. Grade: F

**Research Paper (40%).** You will write a research paper based on primary and secondary sources. The paper will be 12-15 pages in length plus a bibliography. The guidelines will be handed out later, but the paper must present an argument, back that argument with evidence, and primary sources must be central to the paper. You will be required to do archival research for this project (at UMD archives, National Archives, or etc.), and master the existing historiography on your topic. I must approve your topic in advance; no papers will be accepted unless I have approved the topic. A paper proposal (3 pages in length) will be due on Nov. 3, 5 pm. You may turn in a draft of your paper for comments from me; it will be due Nov. 30. The research paper will be due 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 14. You will present your project to the class at the end of the semester. The paper proposal and oral presentation will each count for 5% of your grade; the final research paper will count for 30% of your grade.

**Two exams (20% each).** These will test your knowledge of U.S. working-class history and the required readings and films. Each will count for 20% of your course grade. The first exam will be held in-class on Oct. 12; the second exam, also in-class, will be held on Nov. 28.

#### **Required Books:**

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Major Problems in the History of American Workers* (listed as Boris below)

Thomas Bell, *Out of This Furnace*

Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide*

There may be additional readings, available either in Files on ELMS, or in Course Reserves at the library.

## **Course Outline** (subject to change as need arises):

### **Week 1**

Aug. 29: The Big Picture: Labor and Capitalism in U.S. History

Aug. 31: The View From Now: Inequality and Labor Uprisings in Contemporary US

Reading: Boris, pp. 7-17 (Essay by Barbara Ehrenreich in Chapter 1); Megan K. Stack, N ["Inside Starbucks' Dirty War"](#)[Links to an external site.](#) , NYT July 21, 2023; and Steven Fraser, [How American Universities Turned Red](#)[Links to an external site.](#), *Jacobin*

### **Week 2**

Sept. 5: Settler Colonialism and Coerced Labor in Early North America

Reading: Boris, Chapter 2.

Sept. 7: Republicanism, Wage Labor, and Race

Reading: Boris, Chapter 3. Focus on Documents 2, 3, 5, 6 and essays by Dawley and Roediger (pp 60-61 and 63-88)

### **Week 3**

Sept. 12: Slavery and the Transition to Free Labor

Reading: Boris pp 96-102 and 112-122 (Documents 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and essay by Foner)

Sept. 14: Industrializing America

Reading: Bell, pp 1-116

### **Week 4**

Sept. 19: The Great Upheavals of the Gilded Age

Reading: Boris, 124-62 (Chapter 5)

Sept. 21: Immigration and the Transformation of the Working Class

Reading: Boris, pp. 164-198 (Ch. 6); keep reading Bell!

#### **Week 4**

Sept. 26: Cultures of the Workplace

Reading: Boris, pp 200-233 (Chapter 7)

Sept. 28: Corporate Capitalism and Employers' Strategies

Reading: Bell, 119-224

#### **Week 5**

Oct. 3: Working People of the New Empire

Reading: Bell, 225-305

Oct. 5: Reform and Radicalism in the Progressive Era

Reading: Boris, 248-55 and 261-81

#### **Week 6**

Oct. 10: The Crisis of 1919 and the 1920s

Reading: Bell, 306-362

Oct. 12: **Exam #1**

#### **Week 7**

Oct. 17: The Great Depression

Reading: Boris, 282-325 (Chapter 9)

Oct. 19: CIO! CIO!

Reading: Bell, 362-424

#### **Week 8**

Oct. 24: Labor's War and Postwar Struggles

Reading: Boris, pp 327-359 (Chapter 10)

Oct. 26: The Treaty of Detroit and Decline of Social Unionism

Reading: Boris, pp 361-395 (Chapter 11)

## **Week 9**

Oct. 31: Mexican American Workers and the Fight for Justice

Reading: Boris, Chapter 11 (pp 361-94); and watch the film *Salt of the Earth*

Nov. 2: State and Capital in the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century

Windham, pp 1-27

**Research Paper Proposal Due Friday Nov. 3 by 5 p.m.**

## **Week 10**

Nov. 7: Workers and the Civil Rights Revolution

Reading: Windham, 28-56

Nov. 9: Rethinking the 1960s

Reading: Boris, Chapter 12 (397-430) ; View *At the River I Stand*

## **Week 11**

Nov. 14: Pink Collars and Hard Hats

Reading: Lane Windham, pp 57-106

Nov. 16: Global Capitalism and Migrant Labor

Reading: Boris, Chapter 14; Film, *Food Chains*; Windham, 107-27

## **Week 12**

Nov. 21: Neo-Liberalism, Precarious Labor, and the Gig Economy

Reading: Windham, 152-192; Boris Chapter 15 (selections)

Nov. 23: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

## **Week 13**

Nov. 28: **Exam #2**

Nov. 30: Research Presentations

**Optional Draft of Research Paper Due**

## **Week 14**

Dec. 5: Research Presentations

Dec. 7: Research Presentations and Class Wrap-Up!

**Final Paper Due: December 14, 3:30 p.m.**

## Course Policies:

*For a complete statement of course policies established by the University of Maryland, consult <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html> (Links to an external site.)*[Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

## Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications:

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Keep in mind that the pronouns someone uses are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [trans.umd.edu](https://trans.umd.edu)[Links to an external site.](#) to learn more.

Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

## Communication with Instructor:

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at [jmg@umd.edu](mailto:jmg@umd.edu). Please reach out about any personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours, except during the weekend.

ELMS: I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency

**Excused Absence.** You should inform me in advance of medically necessary absences and present a self-signed note documenting the date of the missed class and testifying to the need for the absence. This note must include an acknowledgement that (a) the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. The university's policies on medical and other absences can be found at: <http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Absence due to religious observance will not be penalized. However, it is your responsibility to notify me within the first three weeks of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the entire semester. The calendar of religious holidays can be found at: [http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend\\_student.html](http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html) - religious

Disability Support: The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with a documented disability should inform the instructor within the add/drop period if academic accommodations are needed. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), a division of the University Counseling Center, please call 301.314.7682, e-mail [dissup@umd.edu](mailto:dissup@umd.edu), or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

**Academic Integrity.** The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: <http://www.shc.umd.edu> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#). There will be no warning.

**Copyright notice:** Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted, and they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

This syllabus is subject to change. You will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect reading, assignments, etc.

Critical thinking, diversity, and tolerance. This class will teach and practice principles of critical thinking and our classroom dialogue will allow all of us to sharpen those related

skills. An inclusive environment in which everyone feels free and able to express themselves without fear of intolerance is essential to producing knowledge and achieving sophisticated critical thinking. The diversity students bring to this course is a strength and resource. We can and will disagree at times, particularly as this course will involve complicated issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship, but we should always do so with full respect for one another. If you ever feel uncomfortable because of something stated in or outside of the classroom, please contact me in person or via email.

Course evaluations are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. Your participation in this official system is critical to the success of the process, and all information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. (Instructors can only view group summaries of evaluations and cannot identify which submissions belong to which students.)

### Emergency Protocol

If the university is closed for an extended period of time, please check the course ELMS page and your email for information on how our course will proceed.

### Other Course Policies

For reasons of fairness all papers must be turned in on time. Except in cases of verifiable emergencies, *late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day.*

### Electronics and Classroom Atmosphere

For everyone to have a maximally stimulating and informative experience in the classroom, it is important that you avoid distracting or disruptive activities. Please use electronics only for note-taking or other classroom activities. *I reserve the right to ban all computers and phones from class if any student abuses them.*

### Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade
A	93 - 100

A-	90 - 92.99
B+	87 - 89.99
B	83 - 86.99
B-	80 - 82.99
C+	77 - 79.99
C	73 - 76.99
C-	70 - 72.99
D	60 - 66.99
F	0 - 59.99