AMERICA WORKS
A LABOR HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
HIS 193 M | W | F 4:30-7:25
Instructor: Jonathan Strassfeld
Instructor: Jonathan Strassfeld  
Contact: jstrassf@ur.rochester.edu  
Office Hours: By Appointment Only

Course Description
"America Works" is a survey of American history that tracks the long struggle of working men and women in the United States, emphasizing the centrality of labor to America's development and national identity. We will investigate the conflicts through which race and class were defined on the American continent, highlighting the importance of slave labor to both the geographic expansion the American state and the creation of modern capitalism, and the centrality of unpaid women's labor in the domestic sphere. We will also study America's tumultuous transition from a society of independent producers to a society of wage earners, exploring the union and agrarian movements of the late 19th century, and examining the fate of their radical energies in the bourgeois-dominated progressive era and statist New Deal era. Finally, we will analyze the postwar period of global capitalism and deregulation to explain labor's declining power and pose the question: what's next for students in a 21st century American economy?

Required Texts
There are no required texts for this class. Most readings are available via Blackboard Course Reserves. Texts that cannot be accessed through Blackboard are available on 24 hour reserve at Rush Rhees. However, because reserve copies are limited, the following are suggested for purchase, and can be found at low cost online:

Carol Berkin, Revolutionary Mothers (Kindle version available)  
Paul Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium  
Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order

Grading
Grades for this course will be determined using the University of Rochester's grading scale:

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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73-76</td>
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<td>70-72</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
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<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>0-59</td>
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Attendance and Participation (25%): Students are expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your overall grade for the course. Because this class is a mixture of lecture, discussion, and in-class exercises, students must come ready to participate. Please come prepared to discuss assigned readings and share your insights, questions, and thoughts about them.

Quizzes (10% each = 40%): There will be a total of four quizzes over the course of this class, and will include all material (both class discussions and readings) covered during the week. Quizzes will be kept short, consisting of response questions, and a short essay.
Film Reviews (7.5% each = 15%): Students are responsible for writing 3-page reviews of two of the films that we will view in class. These should be completed at home, and address the work's merits both as film and historical interpretation. These can be completed and submitted at any time before the end of the course.

Presentation: (20%): At the end of the semester each student will be required to give an 8-10 minute presentation on the history of a period or concept related to the course. The topic should be selected by July 22 in consultation with the instructor.

Classroom Etiquette
This course is a seminar. Seminars operate best in a critical yet respectful environment. Differing opinions in classroom discussions are encouraged. If you happen to disagree with someone else's argument or opinion, please do so in a respectful and courteous manner. Persistent rude or insensitive comments will result in a deduction from your final grade for the course. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and will be reported to university officials for review and potential disciplinary action.

Academic Honesty
Students should fully familiarize themselves with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy: http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/index.html. I will enforce a zero tolerance policy on cheating and plagiarism. Students found giving or receiving unauthorized aid on an exam, or who commit plagiarism on writing assignments will fail the course - no questions asked. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse. Those unclear on what constitutes plagiarism and what requires citation should contact the instructors - they are more than happy to help - or consult the materials accompanying this syllabus.

Academic Assistance
The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL, 1-154 Dewey Hall, 585-275-9049) offers a variety of disability services for undergraduates and graduate students in Arts, Sciences & Engineering. These services aim to provide an inclusive experience and equal access to academic content and program requirements. They can help you to request needed accommodations for your success in this class. You can learn more at: http://www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/disability. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me as well.

Course Schedule (June 22 - August 5)

June 27: Introduction - What is Labor?

June 29: Colonial Labor
Reading: Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom (44-130) [R]

July 1: Revolutionary Labor
Reading: Edward Baptist, The Half Has Never Been Told (1-37) [BB]
Reading: Carol Berkin, Revolutionary Mothers (3-49) [R]
July 4: Independence Day: NO CLASS

July 6: American Slavery  
*Reading:* Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told* (75-145) [BB]  
*In Class Film:* 12 Years a Slave (First Half)

July 8: Republican America  
*Reading:* Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium* (1-14, 37-61, 79-94, 116-141) [R]  
*First Quiz*

July 11: Democratic America  
*Reading:* David Brody, "Time and Work During Early American Industrialism" [BB]  
*Reading:* Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic* (172-216) [BB]

July 13: Sectional Divide  
*Reading:* Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told* (216-260, 345-396) [BB]  
*In Class Film:* 12 Years a Slave (Second Half)

July 15: Reconstruction  
*Reading:* Edward Ayers, *The Promise of The New South* (133-159) [BB]  
*Reading:* Tera Hunter, *To ‘Joy My Freedom* (21-73) [BB]  
*Second Quiz*

July 18: Field Trip - Genesee Country Village  
*Reading:* Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture & Society In Industrializing America* (211-292) [R]

July 20: Industrial Unionism/Trade Unionism  
*Reading:* David Brody, *In Labor’s Cause* (43-80) [BB]  
*Reading:* David Montgomery, *Fall of The House of Labor* (58-111) [BB]  
*In Class Film:* The Molly Maguires

July 22: Populism  
*Reading:* Edward Ayers, *The Promise of The New South* (214-282) [BB]  
*Third Quiz*

July 25: Industrialization and The Gilded Age  
*Reading:* Sigfried Gideon, *Mechanization Takes Command* (77-79, 96-100) [BB]  
*Reading:* Herbert Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement" [BB]  
*Reading:* David Montgomery, *Fall of The House of Labor* (1-57) [BB]  
*In Class Film:* Modern Times
July 27: The Progressive Era
Reading: David Montgomery, *Fall of The House of Labor* (112-154) [BB]
Reading: Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (214-256) [BB]
Reading: Alan Derickson, "Making Human Junk: Child Labor as a Health Issue In the Progressive Era" [BB]

In Class Film: The Cry of Children

July 29: Women’s Work
Reading: Tera Hunter, *To ’Joy My Freedom* (74-97, 130-167) [BB]
Reading: Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* (34-55) [BB]

Fourth Quiz

August 1: The New Deal
Reading: David Thomas Ferguson, "The Coming of The New Deal" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order* (3-31) [R]
Reading: Steve Fraser, "The Labor Question" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order* (55-84) [R]
Reading: Alan Brinkley, "The New Deal and the Idea of the State" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order* (85-121) [R]

August 3: Postwar America
Reading: Elaine Tyler May, "Cold War - Warm Heart: Politics and the Family in Postwar America" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order* (153-181) [R]
Reading: Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of The New Deal Order* (185-205) [R]

In Class Film: Salt of The Earth

August 5: Global Capital
Reading: Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, *The Making of Global Capitalism* (67-107, 163-193) [BB]

Final Presentations