This course will explore the history of work, workers, and working class culture in America from the founding of the first colonies to the beginning of the twentieth century. We will focus on how working men and women have constantly strived to make sense of the profound socio-economic and technological changes taking place in this period. We will discuss a wide variety of issues including: workers' organizations and unions, radicalism and working class political culture, the effects of immigration and urbanization on American workers, and the significance of race and gender on workers' solidarity.

The following books are required reading for the course; they are available for purchase in the University Bookstore and are on reserve in Room 1191, College Library, Helen C. White Hall.

Jeremy Brecher Strike
Thomas Dublin Farm to Factory: The Mill Experience and Women's Lives
Foster Rhea Dulles and Melvyn Dubofsky Labor in America
Jacqueline Jones Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present
Alice Kessler-Harris Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States

In addition, there will be a packet of photocopies for you to purchase at Kinkos (620 University Avenue). Copies will also be on reserve at the College Library. These readings will be marked by the letter "P."

There will be two papers and a final exam in this course. Each paper will be approximately 6-8 pages long. The first paper will be due on Thursday October 6th, and the second will be due on Thursday November 10th. Paper topics will be distributed in advance. The final exam format will be discussed in class. Papers are to be turned in the day they are due in class at the beginning of the lecture; there will be no extensions for late papers.
September 6

Introduction: Work and Workers in America

September 8

Early Labor Problems and the "Protestant Work Ethnic"
reading: Edmund Morgan, "The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607-1618" (p)

September 13

A World of Slaves, Servants, Artisans and Farmers: Labor in Colonial America
reading: Foster Rhea Dulles and Melvyn Dubofsky, Labor in America, chapter 1
: Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work chapter 1

September 15

American Workers, the Revolution, and the Constitution
reading: Alfred E. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hughes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the Revolution" (p)
: "Grand Federal Procession, Philadelphia, July 4, 1788" (p)

September 20

Masters, Journeymen, and the Transformation of the Urban Working Class
reading: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 2
: "Trial of the Philadelphia Tailors, 1827" (p)
: "Trial of the Thompsonville Weavers, 1834" (p)

September 22

The Development of Labor Politics
reading: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 3
: Locofocos and the New York Flour Riot of 1837 (p)

September 27

The Beginnings of the Trade Union Movement
reading: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 4
: Trades Union of Philadelphia (2 documents) (p)

September 29

Industrialization
reading: Kessler-Harris, chapter 2
: Thomas Dublin, Farm to Factory, pp. 1-36
: Essay by T.W. Dyott, Philadelphia, 1833 (p)
: poem; "The Factory Bell" (p)

October 4

Workers and the Mechanized Factory System
reading: Dublin, pp. 39-191
: Kessler-Harris, pp. 59-68

October 6

Paper Due

reading: Kessler-Harris, pp. 45-58, 68-72
: Mary Blewett, "The Sexual Division of Labor and the Artisan Tradition in Early Industrial Capitalism" (p)
October 11  Working Class Ethics in Antebellum America  
reading: Eric Foner, Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War, pp. 57-76 (p)

October 13  Poor Whites and Black Slaves: Labor in the Antebellum South  
reading: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, chapter 1

October 18  The Union and Unionism: White Workers and the Civil War  
reading: David Montgomery, Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872, pp. 90-113 (p)  
: Dulles and Dubofsky, pp. 95-107  
: National Labor Union: Address (p)

October 20  Emancipation and the Black Worker  
reading: Jones, chapters 2 and 3  
: Black National Labor Union: Resolutions (p)

October 25  The Labor Uprising of 1877  
reading: Jeremy Brecher, Strike, chapter 1  
: Letter describing the Strike of 1877 (p)

October 27  The Knights of Labor  
reading: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 8  
: Knights of Labor: Terrance Powderly (p)

November 1  The Growth of an Immigrant Labor Force  
reading: John Cumbler, "Migration, Class Formation, and Class Consciousness: The American Experience" (p)

November 3  Anarchism and Socialism  
reading: Hartmut Keil, "German Working-Class Radicalism in the United States from the 1870s to World War I" (p)  
: Richard Schneirov, "Free Thought and Socialism in the Czech Community in Chicago, 1875-1887" (p)  
: International Working People's Association, Manifesto, 1883 (p)

November 8  The Crusade for the Eight Hour Day  
reading: Brecher, chapter 2

November 10  Trade Unions and the American Federation of Labor  
reading: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 9  
: Kessler-Harris, chapter 4  
: A.F. of L.: An Appeal (p)

November 15  Clerks and the Changing Nature of Clerical Work  
reading: Margery Davies, "Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: The Feminization of the Clerical Labor Force" (p)

November 17  Salesworkers and the Commercial Revolution  
reading: Susan P. Benson, "'The Customer Ain't God': The Work Culture of Department-Store Saleswomen, 1890-1940" (p)
November 22  Race, Regionalism and American Workers in the Late Nineteenth Century
reading: Ralph Mann, "Community Change and Caucasian Attitudes Toward the Chinese: The Case of Two California Mining Towns, 1850-1870" (p)

November 24  THANKSGIVING

November 29  Machine in the Garden: Farm Labor and the Mechanization of Agriculture
reading: Nancy Osterud, "'She Helped Me Hay It as Good as a Man': Relations Among Men and Women in an Agricultural Community" (p)

December 1  Urban Workers, Urban Development and Urban Politics
reading: Kessler-Harris, chapter 5
: Jones, chapter 4

December 6  Mass Culture and the Struggles Over Working Class Leisure
reading: Roy Rosenzweig, "Middle Class Parks and Working Class Play: The Struggle over Recreational Space in Worcester, Massachusetts, 1870-1910" (p)
: Kathy Peiss, "Gender Relations and Working Class Leisure: New York City, 1880-1920" (p)

December 8  Crises of the 1890s
reading: Alexander Keyssar, "Unemployment and the Labor Movement in Massachusetts, 1870-1911" (p)

December 13  The Great Strikes: Homestead and Pullman
reading: Brecher, chapter 3
: Dulles and Dubofsky, chapter 10
: Samuel Gomper, "The Strike and Its Lessons" (p)

December 15  Labor and the Emergence of American Imperialism
reading: William Whittaker, "Samuel Gompers, Anti-Imperialist" (p)