FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

AMH 3500

Work and Workers in U.S. History

Semester

Meeting Times

Classroom

3 credit hours

Prof. Evan P. Bennett

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Office Hours:

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Work is fundamental to the experiences of most people. However, work is not trans- or ahistorical. Instead, the nature of the work, the arrangement of labor, and the experiences of those who do the work have all been historically contingent. So, too, have the political economy, social relations, and cultural constructions of labor. In other words, Americans have always worked, but not always in the same way. This course explores work as a historical development in American history, from the earliest days to the present.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to…

1. Identify major events and figures of American labor history.
2. Explain the historical development of work in the United States.
3. Collect and analyze primary sources related to the history of work and workers in the United States.
4. Write interpretive histories using primary and secondary sources.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**

Students are required to obtain their own copies of the following books for use this semester. All are available in the FAU Bookstore, although you are free to buy them wherever you can find them.

Priscilla Murolo and A.B. Chitty, *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States* (The New Press, 2001) ISBN: 978-1-56584-776-7

Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA’s Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (The New Press, 1999) ISBN: 978-1-56584-659-3

Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man’s Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton University Press, 2011) ISBN: 978-0691160153

**ASSESSMENTS**

*Attendance and Discussion*

Students are expected to attend every class meeting and participate in class discussion and activities. Roll will be taken each class meeting. Students are permitted two unexcused absences without penalty; each additional unexcused absence will result in a two-point-per-absence penalty on the final course grade.

The professor will use the following guidelines for assessing participation:

A-Range: Regular, thoughtful comments that add to the discussion

B-range: Less regular, thoughtful comments that add to the discussion

C-Range: Less regular, less thoughtful comments that add to the discussion

D-Range: Very limited comments and/or other participation

F-Range: You either were not in class or no one could tell you were

*Thoughtful comments are defined as those that evince careful reading and thought about the topic at hand, and propel the discussion further. Good questions, even if they seem simple, are also evidence of thoughtful participation. Being able to point to specific evidence is especially good evidence of thoughtful reading and, therefore, is encouraged. Humor is permitted, even encouraged, at appropriate times. Thoughtful discussion also makes room for disagreement without acrimony.*

*Book Outlines*

Students will write brief outlines of the assigned books which will be due when we discuss the books in class. Detailed instructions will be distributed the first week of classes.

*Papers*

Students will write three original papers this semester. The first is a two-page document analysis. The second is a three-page research report. The third is a six-page analytical paper based on primary sources. Details about each will be distributed during the semester.

**First Paper due xxx**

**Second Paper due xxx**

**Third Paper due xxx**

All papers will be submitted as hard copies in class and through Turnitin in Blackboard.   
**Under no circumstances will e-mail submissions be accepted.**

*Exam*

There will be one exam for this course. It will be administered during the final exam period. It will be an essay exam that covers the entire course.

**The Final Exam is on xxx**

**GRADES**

Attendance and Participation 15%

Book Outlines 25%

Paper 1 5%

Paper 2 15%

Paper 3 20%

Final Exam 20%

Total 100%

Following is the scale for determining final grades.

Grade A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F

Points 93+ 92-90 89-88 87-83 82-80 79-78 77-73 72-70 69-68 67-63 62-60 <60

Appropriate rounding will be considered when calculating grades.

*Grading Policy*

*I am more than willing to discuss your grade with you in person. However, any request for a grade change must be made in writing and include a detailed rationale of why the grade should be altered.*

Assignments may be turned in late only with documented proof of illness or university business. The same policy applies to quizzes and tests.

***I only rarely offer extra credit assignments and never create alternate/additional assignments, so please do not ask.***

COURSE POLICIES

1. Class Climate: I expect that students will create and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in which everyone’s ideas and questions can be heard.
2. Cell phones: Please silence cell phones when you enter the classroom. Please show common courtesy and do not send text messages or use Facebook or any other apps during the class.
3. Technology: Students are to use technology in the classroom only so far as its use relates to the class.
4. Tardiness: Students are expected to arrive on time for each class meeting. If you arrive late, please enter the room quietly. Chronic tardiness (as defined by the instructor) will result in a reduction in the final grade.
5. Seating: The instructor reserves the right to tell students where to sit.
6. Students enrolled in this class are required to have the computer technology necessary to complete any online course requirements. Ensuring sufficient computing capacity, Internet connectivity, and software compatibility are the responsibility of the student. Students are required to have access to an Internet browser capable of running Blackboard (check http://bb.fau.edu to make sure).
7. Communication: There are several ways we will communicate in this class.
   1. Announcements: The professor will communicate any important updates to the course through Blackboard’s Announcements tool. These will be visible on the course’s main page, and you will also receive an email in you FAU account.
   2. Email: Feel free to email me if you have any questions. Please allow 24 hours for a response, and do not expect a reply on weekends. Please use your best emailing skills when writing.
   3. Phone: I will be available by phone during office hours, provided I am not meeting with anyone at that moment. If you call and are turned over to voicemail, please leave a message with a contact number and a best time to call you back. My office number is 561-297-0008. You may also reach me through Skype: evan.bennett.history
8. Wikipedia: Wikipedia and other open source information sites are not reliable enough for scholarly research and are thus not appropriate for use as a source in a formal history paper. Students in need of general information are required to use a standard, reliable encyclopedia. The FAU Libraries maintain a subscription to Britannica Online, which provides full access to Encyclopaedia Britannica both on campus and off campus through Off Campus Connect.   
   In other words: WIKIPEDIA IS NOT PERMITTED FOR ANY ASSIGNMENT.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations to properly execute coursework due to a disability must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and follow all OSD procedures. More information can also be found at http://osd.fau.edu/

Academic Integrity: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>.

University Center for Excellence in Writing (UCEW): Students seeking to improve their writ-ing should avail themselves of all available resources. I am eager to discuss your writing with you in person during office hours and am willing to look over drafts provided you give me ample time to do so. You may also seek the assistance of the University Center for Excellence in Writ-ing (UCEW). Staffed by certified graduate student consultants, the UCEW’s Writing Center offers both online and in-person one-on-one consultation sessions. UCEW services are available on the Boca Raton, Davie, and Jupiter campuses. You must first register at their website in order to access their services. http://www.fau.edu/UCEW/WC/.

**Schedule – Semester 20xx**

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| Date | Title | Reading/Viewing for Class |
| 1/6 | Introductions | Syllabus |
| 1/8 | Work and Workers | Bertolt Brecht, “A Worker Reads History” |
| 1/13 | Work Before the Atlantic World | “In a Micmac Hunting Camp”; “The Iroquois Work Bee”; and “Fishing Frolics and Communal Corn in the Southeast” (Bb) |
| 1/15 | The Birth of the Plantation | Murolo and Chitty, 1-12  Robert Coopy’s Indenture (1619) (Bb)  Richard Frethorne’s Letter to His Parents (1623) (Bb) |
| 1/20 | No Class Meeting | *Watch “The Terrible Transformation” on Blackboard* |
| 1/22 | Gradations Freedom: Labor in Early America | Murolo and Chitty, 13-23  Documents on Female Servants |
| 1/27 | Revolutions in Labor | Murolo and Chitty, 24-51 |
| 1/29 | American Slavery, pt. 1 | Murolo and Chitty, 52-59 |
| 2/3 | American Slavery, pt. 2 | Franklin and Schweninger, “Dissidents in the Conscript Army" |
| 2/5 | The Development of Free Labor | Murolo and Chitty, 59-75 |
| 2/10 | The Politics of Free Labor | ***First Paper Due*** |
| 2/12 | A War for Labor | Murolo and Chitty, 75-92 |
| 2/17 | Reconstructing Free Labor | Murolo and Chitty, 92-109  View *Slavery By Another Name* (in Blackboard) |
| 2/19 | The Industrial Revolution | Murolo and Chitty, 110-120 |
| 2/24 | Working People’s America | Katzman and Tuttle, 3-92; 151-194 |
| 2/26 | Labor and Capital | Murolo and Chitty, 121-137  ***Second Paper Due*** |
| 3/3 | Spring Break |  |
| 3/5 | Spring Break |  |
| 3/10 | Labor and Progressivism | Murolo and Chitty, 138-145  Documents from *Muller v. Oregon* |
| 3/12 | Labor, Empire, and War | Murolo and Chitty, 145-173  Documents about workers and WWI |
| 3/17 | The Age of Big Business | Murolo and Chitty, 174-186 |
| 3/19 | Out of Work/Labor’s New Deal | Murolo and Chitty, 186-220  Cowie, 1-40 |
| 3/24 | World War II | Murolo and Chitty, 221-231 |
| 3/26 | The Age of Big Labor (part 1) | Murolo and Chitty, 231-245 Cowie, 41-72 |
| 3/31 | The Age of Big Labor (part 2) | ***Third Paper Due*** |
| 4/2 | The Sunbelt | Cowie, 73-99 |
| 4/7 | Globalization | Cowie, 100-201  ***Book Notes for* Capital Moves *Due*** |
| 4/9 | Breaking Labor | Murolo and Chitty, 276-307 |
| 4/14 | Wal-Mart Nation |  |
| 4/16 | Moveable Workers | Hahamovitch, 1-243  ***Book Notes for* No Man’s Land *Due*** |

**Final Exam: Date and Time**