

Introduction to Labor Studies

HSTCMP 249/ POL S 249/ SOC 266: Winter Quarter, 2015

Course Instructor: Trevor Griffey, PhD, trevorg@uw.edu

Course Instructor Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:45-11:45am, Smith 103-B

Discussion Section Instructors and Course Graders:

Sections AA & AB: Bryan Wilcox, bmwilcox@uw.edu

Sections AC & AD: Stephanie Stanley, stephs23@uw.edu

Course Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-10:20am, HCK 132

Discussion Section Meetings:

AA: T/Th, 9:30-10:20am, DEN 313

AC: T/Th, 11:30am-12:20pm, SIG 230

AB: T/Th, 10:30-11:20am, SWS 038

AD: T/Th, 12:30-1:20pm, DEN 213

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Labor Studies provides students with an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of class formation, class consciousness and class politics. It serves as a gateway to the Labor Studies minor at the UW, and contributes to the Political Economy program of the Political Science major. Students interested in labor studies are encouraged to take this course as part of a sequence with HSTAA 353: U.S. Labor History in Spring quarter, 2015.

Labor Studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that seeks to explain the development and reproduction of social classes through the analysis of three distinct but intersecting categories of social life: economics, politics and culture.

This course will approach the study of social class by analyzing the bargaining power of wage laborers in the era of neoliberal globalization (1970s-present). Students will identify some of the social forces that have caused the most important institutions for developing working people's power in the 19th and 20th centuries—labor unions, labor parties, and welfare states—to decline over the last 40 years. They will also explore how the contemporary labor movements in the U.S. and around the world have sought to develop new forms of economic and political power and develop alternatives to neoliberal globalization.

REQUIRED READING—BOOKS (At UW Bookstore and UW Library Reserve)

- Beverly Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Corrine Gorla, ed., *Invisible Hands: Voices from the Global Economy* (McSweeney's, 2014)
- Jake Rosenfeld, *What Unions No Longer Do* (Harvard University Press, 2014) (also available as [ebook](#) via UW-Library online catalog)

REQUIRED ARTICLES (Available at course page via canvas.uw.edu)

- Keywords: Eric Lott on “Class”, Raymond Williams on “Labor” and “Hegemony”
- “The Lives of iSlaves”: [Report](#) from SACOM (2014)

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will write three papers as part of their work in the course. Paper assignment descriptions and requirements will be posted on canvas.uw.edu.

Paper 1: Provide a 3-4 page analytical review of *Forces of Labor* that summarizes the book’s argument and critically assesses how it tries to prove that argument.

- Due Thursday, Jan. 22 in section: Draft introductory paragraph
- Due Monday, Jan. 26 in class: Paper on *Forces of Labor* (3-4 pages)

Paper 2: Provide an edited transcript of a 1 hour interview with someone about his or her relationship to work, accompanied by a 1-2 page introduction.

- Due Thursday, Feb. 12 in section: Draft introductory paragraph
- Due Tuesday, Feb. 17 in section: Edited interview (1-2 page preface plus edited interview transcript)

Final Paper: Provide a critical reflection on labor movement responses to austerity politics in the U.S. since 2006, based *either* in independent research on a particular topic *or* a critical reflection upon service learning work related to labor studies.

- Due Thursday, Mar. 12 in section: Draft introductory paragraph
- Due Tuesday, Mar. 17 at 5pm via Canvas: Final paper (8-13 pages)

FINAL PAPER—SERVICE LEARNING OPTION

Students are encouraged to do service learning with the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the UW or with a labor advocacy organization in the Seattle area as part of their Introduction to Labor Studies coursework.

Students who opt for this option will have no assigned reading to complete during the final two weeks of the quarter.

The process requires:

- 1) Signing up for a service learning appointment with the Carlson Leadership and Public Service Center by Wednesday, Jan. 14
- 2) Working roughly 30-35 hours with a labor organization over the quarter
- 3) Writing 3 1-page logs and descriptions of your service work
- 4) Writing a 8-13 page paper that summarizes and analyzes the service learning experience in relation to the book, *What Unions No Longer Do*

FINAL PAPER—ACADEMIC PAPER OPTION

Students who do not opt to participate in service learning with a labor organization are required to complete an academic paper that analyzes one of the following U.S. labor movement responses to austerity politics:

- 1) Immigrant rights activism since 2006;
- 2) Campaigns for labor law reform since 2008;
- 3) Wisconsin public sector employees 2010-present;
- 4) Chicago K-12 teacher union organizing since 2009;
- 5) Fast-food worker organizing since 2010;

The paper question is (subject to minor revision before Feb. 17): what effect has the decline of the labor movement in the U.S. had upon U.S. society, and what strategies have contemporary labor activists developed in response to these changes?

The first part of the student's answer should draw upon Jake Rosenfeld's book, *What Unions No Longer Do*. The second part of the answer should draw upon and show familiarity with the arguments of the following texts, supplemented as needed by contemporary journalism available online.

- 1) Immigrant rights: Articles available on Canvas
- 2) Labor law reform: Articles available on Canvas, and Richard D. Kahlenberg and Moshe Marvit, *Why Labor Organizing Should Be a Civil Right: Rebuilding a Middle-Class Democracy by Enhancing Worker Voice* (Century Foundation, 2012), available on reserve at UW Library
- 3) Wisconsin labor activism: Michael Yates, ed. *Wisconsin Uprising: Labor Fights Back* (Monthly Review Press, 2012), available as [ebook](#) via UW Library
- 4) K-12 Teacher Activism: Jane Slaughter et al, *How to jump-start your union: lessons from the Chicago teachers* (Labor Notes, 2014), available for purchase via the "Store" at LaborNotes.org, and on reserve at UW Library
- 5) Fast-Food Worker Organizing: Articles available on Canvas

DISCUSSION SECTION

Discussion section is an essential element of the course. Only a small part of section will review material discussed in lecture. The primary work of discussion section is to identify arguments in assigned readings, evaluate how authors prove their arguments, and test those arguments by applying them to different scenarios. Success in section requires both consistent preparation (regularly attending course lectures and completing assigned reading) and participation (contributing informed questions or comments during class).

GRADES

Discussion section instructors will grade all students' work. The course instructor will only review grades assigned by section instructors *after* a student has met in person with his or her section instructor to discuss the grade and failed to reach an agreement over the degree to which the student's work fulfilled the assignment.

Students who receive lower than a 3.0 on their first paper may submit a revised paper, along with the original, to their section instructor within two weeks of receipt of their paper grade. Revisions must substantively respond to instructor comments to receive a revised grade. The maximum final revised grade is a 3.4.

Students' course grades will be made up of the following components:

- Book review paper intro: 1%
- Book review paper: 24%
- Interview paper intro: 1%
- Interview paper: 14%
- Final paper intro: 1%
- Final paper: 34%
- In-class guest speaker worksheets: 5% (1% each, submitted at end of class)
- Discussion section participation: 20%

COURSE OUTLINE (WITH DEADLINES FOR READING & ASSIGNMENTS)

UNIT 1: GLOBAL LABOR STUDIES

Week 1: Introduction to Labor Studies

- Jan. 5: Introductions
- Jan. 6 (section): Williams and Lott keywords on "class" (canvas.uw.edu)
- Jan. 7: Studying Class Formations
- Jan. 8 (section): *Forces of Labor*, Intro, Chap. 1, Appendix A (pp. 1-40, 181-99)

Week 2: Class Struggle and Modes of Production

- Jan. 12: Automation and Relocation
- Jan. 13 (section): *Forces of Labor*, Chap. 2 (pp. 41-74)
- Jan. 14: Contingent and Informal Economies
- Jan. 15 (section): *Forces of Labor*, Chap. 3 (pp. 75-123)

Week 3: Neoliberal Globalization

- Jan. 19: MLK HOLIDAY, NO CLASS
- Jan. 20 (section): *Forces of Labor*, Chaps. 4 & 5 (pp. 124-79)
- Jan. 21: Rise and Decline of the Welfare State
- Jan. 22 (section): Draft Introductory Paragraphs Due; Service learning work log/ description due for service learning students

Book Review Paper Due: Monday, Jan. 26 at the beginning of class

Week 4: Worker Testimony and Global Solidarity

- Jan. 26: Guest Speaker: Pui Kwan Liang, SACOM
- Jan. 27 (section): *Invisible Hands*, Intro (pp. 12-28); Keyword: Williams on "hegemony" (canvas.uw.edu)
- Jan. 28: Politics of Worker Testimony; Guest Speaker: Corinne Goria
- Jan. 29 (section): *Invisible Hands*, Electronics (pp. 289-340, 363-65); "The Lives of iSlaves" (canvas.uw.edu)

Week 5: Apparel Industry and Supply Chain Politics

- Feb. 2: Politics of Global Supply Chains
- Feb. 3 (section): *Invisible Hands*, Apparel (pp. 29-34, 353-55, 366-86)
- Feb. 4: Guest Speakers: United Students Against Sweatshops/ Alta Gracia
- Feb. 5 (section): *Invisible Hands*, Apparel (pp. 35-106)

Week 6: U.S. Worker Struggles as Human Rights Struggles

- Feb. 9: Citizenship and Work
- Feb. 10 (section): *Invisible Hands*, Agriculture (pp. 107-90, 355-57)
- Feb. 11: Guest Speakers: Sakuma Farmworkers
- Feb. 12 (section): Draft Introductory Paragraphs Due; Service learning work log/ description due for service learning students

Interview Paper Due: Tuesday, Feb. 17 in section

UNIT 2: U.S. LABOR STUDIES

Week 7: Neoliberalism and U.S. Labor Studies

- Feb. 16: PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY, NO CLASS
- Feb. 17 (section): No reading required
- Feb. 18: Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order
- Feb. 19 (section): *What Unions No Longer Do*, Intro and Chaps. 1-4 (pp. 1-99)

Week 8: The Death of the U.S. "Working Class"?

- Feb. 23: Working Class Culture Wars
- Feb. 24 (section): *What Unions No Longer Do*, Chaps. 5-6 (pp. 100-58)
- Feb. 25: Guest Speaker: Jake Rosenfeld
- Feb. 26 (section): *What Unions No Longer Do*, Chaps. 7-8 (pp. 159-200)

Week 9: Reinventing the U.S. Labor Movement

- Mar. 2: Social Justice Unionism, 1970s-2001
- Mar. 3 (section): Discuss Service Learning Topics
- Mar. 4: Worker Struggles Against Austerity, 2006-Present
- Mar. 5 (section): Discuss Research Paper Topics; Service learning work log/ description due for service learning students

Week 10: Labor Studies in the 21st Century

- Mar. 9: Labor Movements and the Environmental Crisis
- Mar. 10 (section): Draft Service Learning Intro Paragraphs due
- Mar. 11: Labor Studies and the Economic Crisis
- Mar. 12 (section): Draft Research Paper Intro Paragraphs Due

Final Paper Due Tuesday, March 18 at 1pm via Canvas

CHANGES TO THE COURSE SCHEDULE

Small changes in the course schedule are possible. In the event that changes are necessary, the course instructor will announce the changes in class, via the class email list serv, and via Canvas.

INCOMPLETES

UW rules state that “an incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks at the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

It is important to cite all the sources that you draw from for your academic writing. Sources that provide information, including sources that you summarize, should be cited. Text that you did not write yourself must be placed in quotation marks and should be cited. We will discuss how to properly cite sources in class. If you have questions about how to cite sources for your work, please contact the faculty before the assignment is due.

Students who present information or language written by others without attribution are presenting others’ intellectual work as their own. This is academic dishonesty (or plagiarism), and violates the UW Student Code. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the UW Student Code, and will be held responsible for any such violations *whether they were intentional or not*.

CREATING A RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Diverse backgrounds, embodiments and experiences are essential to critical thinking at the heart of university education. Students and faculty at UW Bothell are expected to:

- respect individual differences which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender presentation, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status.
- engage respectfully in discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations, and artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values.

Students seeking support around these issues can find more information and resources at <https://www.washington.edu/diversity/>

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING ACCESS TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Students are expected to regularly check their UW email accounts. Students who prefer to receive email to their personal accounts can set their UW account to forward messages.

Lecture powerpoint slides and some required readings will be posted to the course's page on canvas.uw.edu. Visit the course's Canvas page ahead of time to ensure that it is working for you before assigned reading is due.

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

Students may use computers and tablets in class exclusively for classroom related activities— primarily taking notes and accessing assigned reading. Using these devices for purposes unrelated to classroom activity during class is disrespectful to fellow students and faculty, and undermines the learning environment. *Students are expected to put away and turn off all cell phones during class.*

ACCESS AND ACCOMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this can include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 011 Mary Gates Hall; uwdrs@uw.edu; 206-543-8924; <https://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Class may be canceled due to weather. You are encouraged to sign up for the UW Alert System to find out whether campus operations are closed: <https://www.washington.edu/alert/index.php>. If you want to learn if the campus is closed due to inclement weather, you can also call the Campus Information Hotline at 206-UWS-INFO (206-897-4636) or check the main web page at uw.edu.