

Seminar in Labor History
Workers of Empire: Great Britain and the United States

Course Syllabus
History 875
Spring, 2006

Thursdays 4:10 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Room 314 Morrill Hall

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Office hours: Thursday 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description

This seminar in labor history focuses on relations involving workers and the largest empires of the 19th and 20th centuries, Great Britain and the United States.

In late March, a small group of history graduate students from Växjö University in Sweden, accompanied by their instructor, Professor Lars Olsson, will be joining the seminar.

The course has two central objectives. The first is to gain familiarity with influential theory and literature addressing a range of issues pertaining to workers and the British and U.S. empires in a comparative framework: theories involving the interrelationship of class, race and gender; the labor process; the transition from slavery to wage labor; community and workers; labor organizing, collective action and individual agency; informal and formal mechanisms of migration, working-class consciousness and identity, working class culture, gender and families; colonial, neo-colonial and post-colonial labor.

The second objective is to write history individually and collectively.

Grading

- 1) Class participation and attendance (40%). Students are expected to attend all classes, make two formal presentations; and read and write short reviews (about 2 pages) of required reading assignments.
- 2) Formal essays (60%). Each formal essay will be an original work, based on based on appropriate secondary and published primary materials, and include footnotes and bibliographic citations following Turabian.

- a) Individual essay (40%). This first essay will examine a topic of comparative history pertaining to workers in the British and U.S. imperial framework during the 19th and early 20th centuries (through approximately World War I). This 15-20 page essay (including footnotes and bibliography) is due on March 20.
- b) Collective essay (20%). This essay will be written with a team of 2-3 class members on a topic pertaining to workers and the U.S. and/or British imperial framework since the early 20th century. The 8-12 page essay is due on April 27.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking credit for ideas and/or writings of another. It is never acceptable. Please ask the instructor if you have any doubts.

Date* *Topic and Reading Assignments

January 12 **Introduction**

January 19 **Empire, Slavery and “Whiteness”**

Robin Blackburn. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*. London & New York: Verso, 2000. (original 1988)
Introduction and chapters 1-4.

Eric Arnesen. “Whiteness and the Historians’ Imagination.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60:1 (Fall 2001): 3-32.

Barbara J. Fields. “Whiteness, Racism, and Identity.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60:1 (Fall 2001): 48-56.

January 26 **Overthrow of Slavery**

Blackburn. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*. Chapters 5-Conclusion.

Individual Essay: two-paragraph description of research project

February 2 **The Transition to Wage Labor: Gender and the “Middle Passage”**

Verene Shepherd. *Maharani’s Misery: Narratives of a Passage*

from India to the Caribbean. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002. (LC F2391 E2)

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor." *Signs* 18 (Autumn 1992): 1-42.

Evelyn Hu De-Hart, "Chinese Coolie Labour in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: Free Labour or Neo-slavery?" In *The Wages of Slavery*, pp. 68-86. Ed.

Individual Essay: One page bibliography

February 9 **Caribbean Indentured Workers**

Choose one (but not both) of the following books:

- 1) Walton Look Lai. *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- 2) Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Individual Essay: 3 page outline of research project, plus updated bibliography

February 16 **California Agricultural Workers, 18th and 19th centuries**

Richard Steven Street. *Beasts of the Field: a Narrative of California Farm Workers, 1769-1913*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. Chapters 1-16

February 23 **California Agriculture, Turn of the 20th Century**

Street, *Beasts*, Chapters 17-24

Essay: 5 page annotated outline, plus updated bibliography of research project

March 2 **Puerto Rico, Cuba and the U.S.**

Ramón Grosfoguel. *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Kelvin Santiago-Valles. “‘Higher Womanhood’ Among the ‘Lower Races’: Julia McNair Henry in Puerto Rico and the ‘Burdens’ of 1898.” *Radical History Review* 73 (1999): 47-73.

Joseph Bedford. “Samuel Gompers and the Caribbean: The AFL, Cuba, and Puerto Rico 1898-1906.” *Labor’s Heritage* 6:4 (1995): 4-25.

Lillian Guerra. “Perceiving Populism: United States Imperialism and the Paradox of Labour Struggle in Cuba, 1906-1909.” *Journal of Caribbean History* (Barbados) 37:1 (2003): 45-69.

Gabriel Villaronga. “From Turmoil to Turning Point: Political Change and the Sugar Strike of 1942.” In Gabriel Villaronga, *Toward a Discourse of Consent: Mass Mobilization and Colonial Politics in Puerto Rico, 1932-1948*, pp. 91-135. Westport, CN: Praeger, 2004.

March 9 Spring Research Trip

March 16 **Hawaiian Plantation Workers**

Masayo Umezawa Duus. *The Japanese Conspiracy: The Oahu Sugar Strike of 1920*. Trans by Beth Cary and adapted by Peter Duus. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Moon-Kie Jung, “Interracialism: The Ideological Transformation of Hawaii’s Working Class.” *American Sociological Review* 68 (June 2003): 373-400.

Individual Essay: Completed rough draft due

March 23 **Arizona Copper Mining Communities**

Linda Gordon. *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Individual Essay: Final draft due

March 30 **South African Agricultural Communities**

Group A

Merle Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910-1986*. London: Wildwood House 1986, Chapters 1-4

Martin J. Murray, "The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Critique of the 'Social History' Perspective". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), 645-665 (www.jstor.org/)

Tim Keegan, "The Origins of Agrarian capitalism in South Africa: A Reply". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), 666-684 (www.jstor.org/)

Group B

Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. 1996. Chapter 1

Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. 1996. Chapters 2-9

William Beinart, "Transkeian Migrant Workers and Youth labour on the Natal Sugar Estates 1918-1948". *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 32, No 1 (1991), 41-63 (www.jstor.org/)

April 6 **South African Mining Communities**

Merle Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910-1986*. London: Wildwood House 1986, Chapters 5-6

And either of the following:

Peter Carstens. *In the Company of Diamonds: DeBeers, Kleinzee, and the Control of a Town*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001.

T. Dunbar Moodie with Vivienne Ndatshe, *Going for Gold. Men, Mines and Migration*. Los Angeles. University of California Press 1994

April 13 **Apartheid: Race and Class**

Merle Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910-1986*. London: Wildwood House 1986, Chapters 7-10

And either of the following:

Peter Alexander. *Workers, War & the Origins of Apartheid: Labour and Politics in South Africa, 1939-48*. Oxford & Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000. LC DT1928)

Alan Lester, *From Colonization to Democracy. A New Historical Geography of South Africa*. New York: I B Tauris Publishers 1998

April 20

Braceros, Guest Workers, and Migration Networks

Linda C. Majka, and Theo J. Majka. "The State as Labor Contractor: The Bracero Era." In: Linda C. and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, pp. 136-166 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).

Joon K. Kim. "The Political Economy of the Mexican Farm Labor Program, 1942-64." *Aztlán* 29:2 (Fall 2004): 13-53.

Cindy Hahamovitch. "Creating the Perfect Immigrants: Guestworkers of the World in Historical Perspective." *Labor History* (Great Britain) 44:1 (2003): 69-94.

Tamar Diana Wilson. "Wage-Labor Migration and Class in Jalisco and the United States." *Latin American Perspectives* 31:5 (September 2004): 100-117.

Michael Burawoy, "The Functions and Reproduction of Migrant Labor: Comparative Material from Southern Africa and the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 81 (1978): 1050-1086.

April 27

Collective paper presentations