

**Department of Sociology
Dartmouth College
Winter 2021**

American Labor Relations (Sociology 70)

Professor: Marc Dixon
E-mail: marc.d.dixon@dartmouth.edu

Class Time: 1:10-2:15 EST, MWF¹
X-Hour: 1:40-2:30 EST, Tuesdays

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00, or by appointment.²

¹The course format is “remote with synchronous components.” We will meet most Mondays on Zoom, where I will introduce the week’s topic, key readings, and questions to work through. You will be responsible for submitting independent work on Wednesdays, and we will meet again on Zoom on Fridays for a seminar discussion. Class Zoom Link:

<https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/96091054660?pwd=WVd4cUFUYlVwN0JTWIB5SXh2M2J2UT09>

²Office hours are during our scheduled class time on Wednesday. This is set up for one-on-one meetings. If I am meeting with someone else, you will be placed into a "waiting room." Hang in there. I will get to you. Office Hours Zoom Link:

<https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/99560656332?pwd=ZzdNWGpUWk5wLy96eE9ySHo2c0VEQT09>

Course Description

This course covers labor organization and activism from the late 19th century to the present. We will examine critical moments in labor history, factors shaping union growth and decline, the changing relationship between organized labor and management and how each has sought to sway government and the public over time, and the implications of union decline for inequality, politics, and worker well-being. Readings and discussion will cover several cross-cutting issues including race, gender, ethnicity, and immigration.

Course Format

The course is organized by weekly modules. For each week, I will post readings, key points to consider, and other relevant learning materials on Canvas. We will meet most Mondays on Zoom, where I will introduce the week’s topic, key readings, and questions to work through. You will be responsible for submitting independent work on Wednesdays, and we will meet again on Zoom on Fridays for a seminar discussion. We will use the X-Hour if we need to reschedule group discussion or presentations. You are expected to complete the readings and to attend and participate in our Monday check-ins and Friday discussion. You will provide written check-ins every Wednesday.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop a historical knowledge of labor and labor movements, broadly defined, in the United States.
- Understand key developments in American labor relations and their lasting effects on work and inequality.
- Conduct original research on a labor topic of interest. This year students will work in groups to research a labor issue that has emerged and/or taken on new importance in the era of Covid-19.

Readings

There is no textbook for this class. All readings and course materials are posted on Canvas.

The following optional texts are available through Baker-Berry Library:

Dixon, Marc. 2020. *Heartland Blues*. Oxford University Press.
 Lichtenstein, Nelson. 2002. *State of the Union*. Princeton University Press.
 Loomis, Erik 2018. *A History of America in Ten Strikes*. The New Press.

Course Requirements & Grading

Participation (10%)

Weekly Writing (20%)

Seminar Discussion (20%)

Midterm Essay (25%)

Final project (25%)

Class Participation (10%): Enthusiastic and intellectually rigorous discussion is the core of any seminar. I expect you to attend our weekly class meetings, having done the reading ahead of time and ready to contribute. I recommend that you come to our class meetings armed with at least two written questions.

Weekly Writing (20%): Beginning in week two, you will submit weekly reflections on course readings every Wednesday by 8:00 AM EST. This will take a form known as QCCQ – quotation, concept, connection, question. You will select a (2-4 sentence) quotation from each reading that captures one of its main arguments; summarize, in your own words, the concept or idea the quotation captures; make a connection between this reading and another reading from the course, current events, or your personal experiences; and pose a critical thinking question for discussion. While it is good practice to complete a QCCQ reflection for each of the assigned readings, you are required to submit two of these reflections every Wednesday. As part of your QCCQ reflection, I want to know at least one thing you learned/found interesting about the topic and one thing you would like to know. Weekly writings should be about one single-spaced page and are graded on the following scale: 3=full credit; 2=partial credit; 0-1=unsatisfactory/did not turn in assignment. Entries are due by 8:00AM EST each Wednesday for readings cover that week. Late entries are automatically dropped by one point/category (e.g., moving from “partial credit” to “unsatisfactory”) and are not accepted if they are more than 24 hours past due.

The purpose of the reading questions are threefold: (1) to encourage the practice of active note-

taking and critically engaging with the readings; (2) to alert me if key points need to be clarified from the readings; and (3) to let me know that you have, in fact, done the reading. There are eight weekly writing submissions (each containing two QCCQ reflections) during the term.

Seminar Discussion (20%): Once during the quarter, you will be responsible for leading a seminar discussion with at least one other student on a particular reading(s) and course topic. The teams will have the responsibility of explaining and elaborating course material (theory, debate, reading, group of ideas, etc.), and then delving into a specific topic in greater detail. For example, if your group is presenting on the postwar decline in unionization, you may wish to provide data on union membership by industry or place over time in order to assess various explanations of union decline. The format for the presentation is a 10-15 minute talk on the topic, followed by a class discussion that you facilitate. There is flexibility in how to present. The key is to be effective, rigorous, and interesting. The final requirement for this assignment is that the group must submit a one-page single-spaced summary and analysis/critique of the day's assigned reading(s) and course topic (this should overlap with your presentation). I encourage teams to run ideas by me for their presentation.

Midterm Essay (25%): I will distribute guidelines for the essay on Monday, February 1 and it is due by 11:59PM EST on Monday, February 8. Late exams are automatically dropped one letter grade per day (e.g., from A- to B-).

Group Project (25%): Groups will research a labor issue that has emerged and/or taken on new importance in the era of Covid-19, write up their findings in a ten-page single-spaced paper, and give a short (no more than 5 minute) presentation on their topic in class on Wednesday, March 10. Papers are due by 11:59PM EST on 3/10. You have considerable leeway, but I want you to grapple with some concrete evidence on labor. I will discuss data sources and potential topics in week 2. Groups will submit project updates on Friday 1/29 and Friday 2/19. Late assignments are automatically dropped one letter grade per day (e.g., from A- to B-).

I use the following scale in assigning grades:

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 95%-100% A | 83%-86.9% B | 73%-76.9% C | Below 60% F |
| 90%-94.9% A- | 80%-82.9% B- | 70%-72.9% C- | |
| 87%-89.9% B+ | 77%-79.9% C+ | 60%-69.9% D | |

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Responsibility: Dartmouth College is a community of scholars and learners committed to academic and personal honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. All students should conduct themselves in accordance with the Dartmouth community standards, particularly the [academic honor principle](#). Cheating, plagiarism, use of the same work in multiple courses, and unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated. Minor violations of the honor principle may result in loss of credit or failure for a given piece of work or in the course. Major violations may result in suspension or expulsion from the College. Writing and research support are available through the [Institute for Writing and Rhetoric](#).

Class Conduct: All students are expected to have a voice in our class dialogue. Good class participation is about thinking carefully, listening, and posing questions to others as much as it is

about sharing your ideas. This requires us to be present, set aside distractions, and focus our attention on engaging with one another. The tone with which we engage one another is also extremely important and should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. Disrespectful behavior such as talking while others are talking, dominating the floor, or engaging in personal attacks will not be tolerated. You are expected to treat one another and me with respect at all times.

Accommodations: Students requiring academic accommodations, modifications, or auxiliary aids should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) at either Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu or 603-646-9900. Once your accommodations have been established with SAS, I encourage you to arrange a private meeting with me early in the term to discuss how I can best support you in the course.

Religious Observances: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Remote Access to Campus Resources: I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding aspect of your life. Many of you may be facing greater challenges than usual given the sudden changes to your living and learning environment, public health concerns, and a host of other factors (e.g., housing or food insecurity, new or changing caregiving responsibilities, visa and accessibility concerns, access to health and mental health support, and so on).

There are a number of campus resources available this term to support your needs. While the situation is constantly evolving, many offices are prepared to meet with you via phone or Zoom. For concerns about health and wellness, you may reach out to the [Dartmouth Health Service](#) (603-646-9400 or Secure Message in DartHub), [Counseling Services](#) (603-646-9442), and the [Student Wellness Center](#). For academic needs, you may contact your [undergraduate dean](#) (603-646-2243), [Student Accessibility Services](#) (603-646-9900), and the [Academic Skills Center](#) (603-646-2014). Students with concerns related to campus employment may connect with the [Student Employment Office](#) (603-646-3641). Those with visa-related concerns may reach out to the [Office of Visa and Immigration Services](#) (603-646-3474). I encourage you to take advantage of these resources, and to speak with me if you need support in the class.

Please note that faculty and staff are required by law to report certain matters to relevant parties on campus, including disclosures of sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, relationship and interpersonal violence, and stalking. You can find more information about confidential versus non-confidential resources and support options [here](#).

Course Schedule and Readings

This is an outline. I will occasionally update readings or place other documents and announcements on Canvas for your edification. It is your responsibility to check the course site at the beginning of each week.

Friday, 1/8—Introduction and Course Overview

Richard Freeman and James Medoff, *What Unions Do* (pp.1-25)

Steven Greenhouse, *Beaten Down, Worked Up* (3-20)

Due this Week: Introductions on Canvas by 11:59 PM EST on Friday, 1/8

Week 2: Slavery and Reconstruction

Monday 1/11—W.E.B Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (pp.1-31)

Erik Loomis, *Ten Strikes* (pp.29-48)

Wednesday 1/13—Chris Muller, “Freedom and Convict Leasing in the Postbellum South.”

Friday 1/15—David Wagner, *The Poorhouse* (pp.1-38)

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 1/13

Week 3: Gilded Age Labor Activism and Pushback

Monday 1/18—Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Wednesday 1/20-- Knights of Labor Preamble and Declaration of Principles

Erik Loomis, *Ten Strikes* (pp.49-69)

Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (pp. 72-100).

Samuel Gompers “The Political Policy of Organized Labor”

Friday 1/22—Larry Isaac, “To Counter the ‘Very Devil’ and More: The Making of Independent Capitalist Militia in the Gilded Age.”

Optional: Robert Goldstein, excerpt from *Political Repression in Modern America* (skim the intro, then read pp.23-60).

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 1/20

Week 4: The Progressive Era and Its Discontents

Monday 1/25—Howard Kimeldorf, “Worker Replacement Costs and Unionization.”

Larry Griffin et al., “Capitalist resistance to the organization of labor before the New Deal: Why? How? Success?”

Wednesday 1/27—Industrial Workers of the World, Preamble to the Constitution

Peter Cole, “Philadelphia’s Lords of the Docks: Interracial Unionism Wobbly-Style.”

Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (pp.170-200).

Optional: Melvyn Dubofsky, “The IWW at 100”

Friday 1/29—Cliff Brown and “Racial Conflict and Split Labor Markets”
 Salvatore Restifo, et al. “Segmented Assimilation, Split Labor Markets, and
 Racial/Ethnic Stratification: The Case of Early Twentieth Century New
 York.”
 Film Clip: Matewan

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 1/27
Group Project Update #1 by 11:59PM EST on Friday, 1/29

Week 5: The New Deal Upsurge

Monday 2/1— Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of The Union* (20-53)
 Vincent Roscigno and William Danaher, “Media and Mobilization”
 Transcript of the National Labor Relations Act

Wednesday 2/3—Barry Eidlin, “Why is There No Labor Party in the United States? Political
 Articulation and the Canadian Comparison, 1932-1948.”
 Sean Farhang and Ira Katznelson, “The Southern Imposition: Congress and
 Labor in the New Deal and Fair Deal.”

Friday 2/5—Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage* (15-40)
 Marc Dixon, “Limiting Labor.”

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 2/3

Week 6: A Postwar Consensus?

Monday 2/8—Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception* (pp.153-178)
 Marc Dixon, *Heartland Blues* (Chapters 1-2)

Wednesday 2/10—Judith Stepan Norris and Maurice Zeitlan, *Left Out* (pp.1-23; 266-96)
Optional: Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, “Opportunities Found and
 Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement.”

Friday 2/12—Elizabeth Fones-Wolfe, *Selling Free Enterprise* (pp.67-107)

Due this Week: Midterm Essay due by 11:59 PM EST on Monday, 2/8
QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 2/10

Week 7: The Civil Rights Moment

Monday 2/15—Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union* (pp. 178-211)
 Larry Isaac, “How the Civil Rights Movement Revitalized Labor Militancy.”

Wednesday 2/17—Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone* (skim pp.1-27; read all of pp.139-158)

Friday 2/19—William Danaher and Marc Dixon, “Framing the Field.”
 Film Clip: At the River I Stand
Optional: Marc Dixon, *Heartland Blues* (Chapter 6)

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 2/17
Group Project Update #2 by 11:59PM EST on Friday, 2/19

Week 8: Union Decline & Inequality

Monday 2/22—Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive* (pp.1-19;125-166)

Henry Farber and Bruce Western, “Accounting for the Decline of Unions in the Private Sector, 1973–1998.”

Daniel Tope and David Jacobs, “The Politics of Union Decline.”

Wednesday 2/24—Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld, “Unions, Norms, and the Rise in American Earnings Inequality.”

David Brady et al., “When Unionism Disappears.”

Friday 2/26—Richard Freeman et al., “How Does Declining Unionism Affect the American Middle Class and Intergenerational Mobility?”

Due this Week: QCCQ by 8:00AM EST on Wednesday, 2/24

Week 9: Contemporary Labor Issues

Monday 3/1—Teresa Mares, *Life on the Other Border* (Chapters 1 and 5).

Wednesday 3/3—Steven Vallas and Juliet Schor, “What Do Platforms Do? Understanding the Gig Economy.”

Friday 3/5—Joseph DiGrazia and Marc Dixon, “The Conservative Upsurge and Labor Policy in the States.”

James Feigenbaum et al., “From the Bargaining Table to the Ballot Box: Political Effects of Right to Work Laws.”

Due this Week: QCCQ by 7:00AM EST on Wednesday 3/3

Week 10: Work in the Age of Covid-19

Monday 3/8—Readings TBA

Wednesday 3/10—Final Class Meeting and Presentations

Due this Week: Final Projects by 11:59PM EST on Wednesday 3/10

