

How do ideologies of gender intersect with issues of labor in the United States? How has a discourse of domesticity been used to both limit women's participation in the workforce and to gain rights for women workers? How have working-class women's struggles for rights *as* workers in the 19th and 20th centuries impacted contemporary conceptions of both work and women? How do large-scale economic shifts impact both men and women's conceptions of self and create opportunities for the emergence of novel (often radical) identities?

In this course we will consider these questions through an examination of the strategic uses of gender ideology to limit, advance, or contest the status and conditions of working women and men in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. We will also examine the conceptions of race and sexuality that these strategies relied on or enabled. In the second half of the course, we will consider the legacies of these struggles and their impact on more contemporary debates including second-wave liberal and radical feminist critiques of housework, the feminist fight for pay equity and an end to sex-segregation in the workforce, the "welfare reform" debates, the "backlash" culture of the 1980s and 1990s, the increasing "feminization" of the American workforce and its impact on both male and female workers, and the role of gender in a global economy that increasingly relies on a transnational workforce. We will end with a consideration of current feminist labor activism both at home and abroad. In addition to histories, we will read autobiographies, ethnographies, short stories, and manifestos and watch several documentaries.

Texts

John Bowe et al., eds., *Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs*

Ellen Dubois ed., *Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in Women's History*

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*

Ehrenreich & Hochschild, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*

Sara Evans, *Born For Liberty*

Jane Collins, *Threads: Gender, Labor and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*

Ben Hamper, *Rivthead: Tales From the Assembly Line*

David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*

Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late-Twentieth-Century America*

Teaching Method: Lecture and Discussion

Evaluation Method: 2 short (1-3 page) response papers, in-class mid-term, take-home final, and (optional) group research project.

Amy Partridge
TTH 12:30-1:50 +
Fri Discussion

