In 1950, Broadway producers took a little known story from a collection of Damon Runyon’s called, “The Oldest Established Crap Game in New York City,” and make it into the hit, “Guys and Dolls.” The stories Runyon told captured the working class culture that gave the city its character. It occurred to me in organizing this class that our theme comes from these people, who they were and what they dreamed. Our focus is the history of the lives and activities of working people in the United States as they sought social justice in the fastest growing capitalist economy in the world. I include all workers: women, children, all races, all ethnicities. It is a history also of the ruling classes and middle classes, the relations they built as they controlled the destinies of so many. We will look at the cities of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles and at company towns, coal mining towns and rural villages. We will examine the issues of social control, deskilling, deindustrialization and racism. We will explore popular culture---music, drinking habits, movies and television; also, anarchism, socialism, communism and consumerism.

Originally this course was designed to consider the cutting edge of the “new” social history from the Colonial Era to the present. The course considered issues of power through the lens of class, race and gender. More focused on cities, most of our workers came from the hinterlands of Ireland, England, Europe and Africa. We begin with a nod to the 18th century and then move quickly through the nineteenth century and cover many topics in the 20th, but don’t look for strict chronology in anyone week.

Background Reading:

For some of you it’s been a long time since any US history course and while the course is somewhat chronological, it is a long way from a survey in any sense. For this reason it may be helpful to look over one of the following, or to keep it by you, when you are looking for coherence.

Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*. A determinedly anti-whig history of the United States written from the bottom up to illustrate an America of struggle and resistance. Unfortunately, Zinn's heroes win more battles against fixed odds than in a Tom Mix western but it's a good read.
Also, if you care to have an overview of American Labor History please read:

Priscilla Murolo and A. B. Chitty, *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend.*
Eric Arnesen, Julie Greene, and Bruce Laurie *Labor histories: class, politics, and the working-class experience*

**Required Readings:**

You won’t have to purchase all of these but these texts will comprise the common readings. All books should be: in the book story, on reserve and occasionally outside of my office door.

**THE SUCCESS OF THE SEMINAR DEPENDS UPON THE QUALITY OF THE DISCUSSIONS. ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ADVANCE OF EACH SESSION. REGULAR, INFORMED PARTICIPATION IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST AND WILL INFLUENCE YOUR FINAL GRADE. I EXPECT YOU TO READ ALL OF THE LISTED READINGS EVEN WHILE YOU ARE WRITING A PAPER. THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT HAS A NO TOLERANCE RULE ON ATTENDANCE, MISSING A CLASS WILL LOWER YOUR GRADE.**

Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th Century Neighborhood that invented tap dance, stole elections, and became the World’s Most Notorious Slum*
Walter Licht, *Industrializing America*
Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*
William Cronin, *Nature’s Metropolis*
Eric Arnesen, *The Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*
Charles Fishman, *The Wal-Mart Effect*
Bruce Watson, *Mills, Migrants and the Struggle for the American Dream*
Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York*
Thomas Segrue, *The Origins of the Urban Class*
Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*
Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*

**Discussion:** 20%

**Summary Papers:** (3) Three pages that summarize the additional readings for the week (30%)

**Seminar Papers:** (3) Five to Seven pages to discuss the literature summarized below (50%)

**Final Examination:** Both honors and regular students have to take the honors examination. For the purposes of the two credits in this class it will count as the total grade for the second credit.

**Seminar Papers:** Seminar papers are 3-5 pages long, you should plan your three seminar papers well in advance. You are expected to cover between three and five
monographs in one paper, unless you are adding several articles in lieu of one the published books. Seminar papers should have a title, a bibliography and end notes. (Author, Title of Book, pages) There is a specific order you should consider as you prepare for your paper. First you need to find the right readings for your topic. All topics are listed under the weeks you are writing in the bibliographic section of this syllabus. However, you are encouraged to carve out your own topic and reading list for the appropriate week and period. Once you have your topic you must choose your readings carefully. For each monograph find an appropriate book review (see titles of Journals below) and attach your copy of the book review (use JSTOR) to the seminar paper when you hand in your hard copy.

A seminar paper should state the major thesis of each book, give a general idea of the content of the book and offer a critical analysis of the book. The paper should have an overall theme and relate to the general readings in the seminar. You should begin by gathering the major reviews of the book. The Journals most appropriate in this class are: Journal of American History, American Historical Review, Review of Reviews American History, Social History, Urban History, International Working Class History, Labor History, Feminist Studies, Signs, Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Journal of Negro History, Radical History Review. (There are others but this is a main list) Reviews ought to be included in your Annotated Bibliography. Once you have read the reviews, you should have a better idea of a theme to develop for class. Write down these ideas before you begin reading. Skim read each book first, you should be able to pull the thesis of the book from the introduction and or first chapter and the final chapter, you should have an overview of the content from the Table of Contents, and you may have more ideas about the themes from this initial reading: write all of this down and begin to organize an outline of the paper.

With the thesis in mind, the theme you want to follow in front of you and the general class reading in mind, select several chapters you wish to read for the focus of your paper. Take notes on these chapters, read as much as you need to answer these questions: did the author prove his/her point? Does the author offer enough explanations of his/her ideas? Is the book well organized? Is the introduction written in such a way as to offer the thesis of the book, or were you searching for it? What about the evidence? What kind of evidence did the author choose? Where were the sources? Was s/he able to get all the information s/he needed? How much did s/he rely on oral history, Statistics, diaries, letters, official papers, court records, day books, logs, journals, church records, newspapers, insurance records, tax records, maps, census materials, special archives and manuscript collections? What secondary sources were most influential to this writer? Was the evidence sufficient, extensive or meager? Most importantly, was the evidence convincing, why or why not? What were the strongest pieces of evidence for this writer, the weakest? Was there sufficient evidence for the conclusions? What about the conclusion, did the author summarize his/her conclusions? Did s/he prove the points s/he hoped to in the introduction? Were the reviewers correct in their analysis of the book or did they miss or misrepresent things? How would you characterize the book you have read? To help you with this analysis of the book, reread the book by examining the introduction, conclusion and then skim read (first or so paragraph and last or so
paragraph of every chapter) Did you pick the best chapters and best examples from those
chapters? Were there illustrations, graphs charts? Were they helpful? Once these
questions are answered you need to understand where your readings fit with the overall
literature, what important themes and directions characterize the literature?

Write

Once you have gathered your notes, reexamine your theme and begin
writing, leave yourself plenty of time for revision. Make sure your introduction is strong
and contains the major issues you intend to discuss in the order you intend to discuss
them and why it is relevant to the topic. Make the conclusion broader than the
introduction, make it suggestive, connect it to the larger themes in social history. Come
up with a clever title that at a glance gives the reader a very good idea of what is coming.
If you need help with your writing I highly recommend Stephen King’s On Writing.
Papers are due on Blackboard six hours before the seminar, a hard copy of the paper with
the book reviews is due in my office at 9 am Tuesday or Thursday Morning. Late or
incomplete papers are not considered honors work in this class. Often it means that the
seminar will take much longer to complete and you will not be contributing to the
seminar. This lack of regard will be incorporated in your grade. If you are asked to
rewrite a paper you should do so immediately and plan to have it done within two weeks.
An entire grade will be subtracted for late, incomplete work.

Distribute

I require one hard copy of your paper in my mailbox at 4 pm on Tuesdays;
you may email your paper to the rest of the seminar. If you start your paper well in
advance you should not have a problem with the deadline; a good seminar depends upon
responsible participants. Absences and late papers are not tolerable. Many students seem
to read the seminar papers casually and carelessly. Class participation is not mere
attendance. The quality of your comments in class will determine the outcome of your
grade for the course.

EVERY PAPER HAS A DISCUSSANT, SOMEONE WHO READS THE PAPER AND
INTRODUCES IT TO THE SEMINAR ON THE DAY WE DISCUSS THE PAPER, IF
YOU GIVE THE PAPER ONE WEEK, THE NEXT WEEK YOU ARE A
DISCUSSANT. THE WRITER GETS TIME TO MAKE AN INTRODUCTION BUT
THE REST OF THE CLASS IS DISCUSSION OF THE PAPER.

JANUARY 24

Week 1   GUYS AND DOLLS

JANUARY 31

Week 2   CITIES IN THE 19TH CENTURY
Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points*

Additional Readings:
Chris Stansill, *City of Women*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*,
Sean Wilentz, *Chant Democratic*

Early Industrialism
Working Class Formation
Republicanism
Mobs, Race and Violence
Urbanization

**FEBRUARY 7**
**WEEK 3**  
**INDUSTRIALIZATION**

Walter Licht, *Industrializing America*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham*, 38, 53
Chris Stansill, *City of Women*, Pt 3 & 4
Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers, Intro, 1 & 2*

Early Industrialism
Women’s Work: Industrial, Domestic
Working Class Formation
Work and Community
Company Towns

**FEBRUARY 14**
**WEEK 4**  
**RACE AND CLASS FORMATION**

Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham*, 41, 43, 44, 55, 56.
Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm so Long*, 5, 6, 7, 8

Coal Miners
Hardrock Miners
Urban Mobility and Ethnics
Social Mobility and Migration
Ideology of Working Class Movements

**FEBRUARY 21**
**THE MOVE OFF THE LAND**
WEEK 5

William Cronin, *Nature’s Metropolis*
Bruce Laurie, *Arisan*, ch. 5-7
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham, 41,43,44,55,56.*
Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Affair: Ch. 1,2,6-8.*

Early Working Class Movements: The Knights of Labor
The Haymarket Tragedy
Agrarian Revolt: The Economics of Farm Life
The Crisis of the 1890’s
Frontier and Borders
Agrarian Labor and the Industrialization of the Land

FEBRUARY 28 POPULAR CULTURE
WEEK 6
Eric Arnesen, *The Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham, 64.*

Jazz
Ethnicity and Acculturation
Black Migration
Crime
Baseball
Amusements and Movies

MARCH 7 MONOPOLY CAPITALISM
WEEK 7
Charles Fisman, *The WalMart Effect*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham, 67*
James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle, ch 1, intro*

Monopoly Capital, Trusts, Big Business
Nativist Movements
Consumer Culture: Department Stores
The Business of Consumption, Advertising
Steel and Industrialism
Women and Labor
Schooling and Politics

SPRING BREAK
MARCH 21 IMMIGRANTS IN THE MILLS
WEEK 9
Bruce Watson, *Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream*
Edward G. Burrows and Mike Wallace *Gotham*, 63.

Immigrants and Ethnicity
Fragmentation and Immigration
Organizing, DeSkilling and Industrialism
Working Class Leisure
Neighborhoods
Urban and Ethnic Families
Steel and Early Industrial Unions
Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism
Poverty and Unemployment

MARCH 28 DAMES AND FLICKS
WEEK 10
Additional Readings:
David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*
Anne Vincent Fabian, *Card Sharps*

Socialism, Anarchism
Telephone Workers, Typewriters and New Labor
Working Class Leisure
Working in the War
Women and Labor
Cities/Race Riots
Commercialism and Leisure

APRIL 4 ORGANIZED!
WEEK 11
Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*
Liz Cohen, *The Making of the New Deal*
Rod Zeigler, *The CIO 1935-55*

The Rise of the CIO
The Communist Party
Cities in the Great Depression
Workers on the Waterfront
Labor and the New Deal
Hollywood in the 30’s
Unemployment
Cities in the Great Depression

APRIL 11  CITY LIFE IN THE 20TH CENTURY
WEEK 12

Josh Freeman, *Working Class New York*

Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work*

African Americans in War Work
Labor During War
Gender and the Family
Movies
Baseball
Beats and Red Terrors
Corporate Culture and the Class Divide

APRIL 18  SUBURBS
WEEK 13

Thomas Segrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*

Additional Reading:
Robin Kelly, *Race Rebels*

Suburbanization
Culture in the Cold War
Blue Collar Communities
Automobiles, Tourism
Television
Blue Collar Workers and the Cold War
Elvis and Rock and Roll

APRIL 25  FEAR AND FANTASY IN LA
WEEK 14

Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*
Stephen Ross, *Working Class Hollywood*
Hollywood
New Immigrants
Labor and Globalism
Workers in the Sunbelt
LA and Urbanism
Youth Culture

MAY 2
WEEK 15

Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*

Additional Readings:
William Pritchett, *Brownsville*
Michael Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights*

White Collar Workers
Race and Racial Conflict
Civil Rights in the South
Old Left, New Left
Music