

AML 6017—Representations of Labor in 19th and Early 20th c. American Literature



Prof. S. A. Smith

University Term Professor, 2018-20

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Fall 2020/M 6-8 (12:50-3:50—Canvas-based) Class #23280

Office Hours: By Zoom appointment, W 1:00-4:00, or by another arrangement.

As the “face” of labor in [the late 19th and early 20th century](#) was changing with respect to the influx of [European and Chinese immigrants](#), the [Great Migration](#) of former slaves to the North, the use of [child-labor](#) and the introduction of women into the paid work force, arguments about labor grew contentious and violent, as the relationship between labor and culture also grew volatile. As the United States shifted from a once-primarily agricultural and familial-based economy to a mobile and industrial one, how work was performed, by whom and for what compensation—if any—were at the heart of much public and political discussion: a situation similar to the clear shift in the late 20th to the mid-21st c. as labor is increasingly tied to digital modalities and a dispersed working environment. How class boundaries were understood and depicted, how friable those boundaries became, or alternatively how rigid, will be part of our examination.

Using a mixture of traditional and virtual pedagogical practices, this course will examine how American authors of the late 19th to early 20th c. responded to the changing nature of labor, and to the public wrangling over issues of work and how work was understood (or not) by authors such as Jacobs, Hawthorne, Melville, Davis and Crane, and we will be linking those responses and/or representations to current issues and arguments about labor in a global market impacted by the 2019 Covid pandemic, world-wide political, cultural and financial volatility and the massive inequities sponsored by late-stage capitalism.

Required Readings: first, a word about these texts: given that most students now use Kindles and such, I’ve given up trying to get us all “on the same page” even if I still think this is the most effective way to read any text together. When there is a free online edition of the text, I’ve supplied a link, but all of these texts should also be available in paperback editions. Generally speaking, I prefer Penguin, unless a Penguin is not available.

[Declaration of the Sentiments and Rights of Women](#) (1848)

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie, Girl of the Streets* (1893) ISBN 9781593082482 (B&N Publishers)

Davis, Rebecca Harding. *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861) ISBN 9780312133603

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) ISBN 9780140390285 (Penguin)

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) ISBN 0674447468 (Harvard)

James, Henry. *The American* (1877) ISBN 014039009 (Penguin)

Le Blanc, Paul. *A Short History of the U.S. Working Class* ISBN 9781608466252 (Haymarket)

Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. [The Communist Manifesto](#) (1848) ISBN 014020915 (Penguin)

Melville, Herman. “Bartleby the Scrivener”(1853) and “The Paradise of Bachelors/Tartarus of Maids” (1855) in *Billy Budd, Bartleby and Other Stories* ISBN 9780143107606

Malkiel, Teresa. *Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1910) ISBN 9780875461687

Smith, Stephanie. “Scab” chp. 4 of *Household Words* (hand-out)

Wharton, Edith. *Custom of the Country* (1913) ISBN 978-1979032339 (Penguin)

Weber, Katherine. [Triangle: A Novel \(2007\) ISBN 037428142](#)

A Few Recommended Secondary Materials:

Baxandall, Rosalyn Fraad and Gordon, Linda. *America's Working Women*.

Cummins, Maria. *The Lamplighter*.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Women and Economics and Human Work*.

Goldman, Emma. *The Traffic in Women*.

Jones, Jacqueline. *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor*.

Sidel, Ruth. *Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America*.

Online Resources

[Lower East Side Tenement Museum](#)

[1911: A Visual Trip Through NYC](#)

Requirements: Final grades will be assigned according to the following numerical breakdown: class participation, which will include all assigned asynchronous course work; 40%; mid-term project 30% and a final project 30%.

1. Class participation: As much as possible, this class should belong to you, by which I mean active, responsible engagement with the material. You will agree to work through the assigned coursework, with due respect to yourself, me and your classmates.

- a. If you know that you have a chronic condition, and are likely to miss significant class work, please avail yourself of the Disability Resource Center.
- b. You will agree to have **prepared** whatever the day's assignment is. Just logging in hours does not constitute good participation.
- c. By taking this class, you are agreeing to making your voice heard in any mode of discussion sessions we shall be having.

2. Mid-Term Project: See Canvas

3. Final: See Canvas

And now for the obligatory UF materials:

[Academic Honesty Policy](#): UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge that states, “[w]e, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

[Plagiarism](#): I regret having to remind you that plagiarism is a serious offense. All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines, which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017).

Civility: I regret having to state this, but please do not be cruel, rude, or dismissive either to me, or to your fellow students, and please follow these polite netiquette rules:

1. Please dress as if you were going to come into a F2F course.
2. Remember, we can see each other...let's try not to embarrass ourselves, please.
3. If possible, either use headphones, or try for a quiet environment.
4. If you need to leave the class for any reason, please turn off your video and email me a reason for your absence.

In addition, it is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of [Florida Student Conduct Code](#).

The Disability Resource Center: The Dean of Student's Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs.

Counseling and Wellness Center open to students for mental health issues.

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing [online evaluations](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. [Summary results](#) of these assessments are available to students.

Student Complaint Process: There is a formal UF process for the resolution of student complaints.

Final Grade Appeals: If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Kenneth Kidd Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

Grading Scale A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Schedule of Course Work

The following schedule is a working plan. If it becomes necessary to alter the schedule for whatever reason, I will try to give ample warning.

Week 1

M. August 31—Zoom meeting, synchronous. Please turn on your camera if you can.

Introductory matters, the syllabus, and I'd like to begin to schedule individual meetings, in 'office hours', to begin to get to know you, as early as possible.

HMW: Read [*The Communist Manifesto*](#) and [*Declaration of the Sentiments and Rights of Women*](#) and the first two chapters of *Short History*. Given that we won't be meeting on Labor Day, please also start reading *The Blithedale Romance* (at least the first 100 pages).

Week 2

M. Sept. 7—Labor Day, Holiday. How fitting!

Week 3. How (not) To Work: Modes of Labor in Antebellum America

M. Sept. 14—1848: Revolution and *The Blithedale Romance*

HMW: Read Melville "Bartleby" and "Paradise/Tartarus" as well as Chp.3 of *Short History*

Week 4

M. Sept. 21—Melville on the Problems of Industrialized Labor

HMW: Read *Incidents* and Chp. 4 of *Short History*

Week 5

M. Sept. 28—Unpaid and Extorted Labor: *Incidents* and Civil Unrest

HMW: Read *Iron Mills* and Chapter 5 of *Short History*

Week 6

M. Oct. 5—Art, Labor and the Death of the Soul: *Iron Mills*

HMW: Read *The American* and Chp. 6 of *Short History*

Week 7 What the War Wrought: Postbellum Images

M. Oct. 12—Class, Cash, Culture and *The American*

HMW: Read *Custom of the Country*

Week 8 (mid-term)

M. Oct. 19—Class, Cash and Culture: Wharton's Take in the *Custom of the Country*

Week 9

M. Oct. 26—Custom, con't.

HMW: Read *Diary of A Shirt-Waist Worker* along with Chp. 7 of *Short History*, and handout, "Scab"

Week 10

M. Nov. 2—Women and Labor: The 'Hand'maiden's Revolt

HMW: Read *Maggie*

Week 11

M. Nov. 9—Hookers, Street Walkers and the Hidden Labor of Sex

HMW: Read the novel *Triangle*, over our "long" holiday

Week 12

M. Nov.16—Virtual Field Trip to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (starts on Zoom at 1:00)

Week 13 _____ Holiday

M. Nov. 23—Thanksgiving week

Week 14 _____

M. Nov. 30—Triangle: The Legacy of the Past.

Week 15 _____

M. Dec. 7—Wrap-up.