

Strike! Resistance and Exploitation in Latin America

Historical Studies LNGC 1214, CRN 6539, Fall 2011

When: Tues/Thur 10-11:40am

Where: 6 East 16th St., room 1004

Professor Louise Walker

Office: 80 Fifth Ave., Room 522

Office hours sign up online via blackboard

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212-229-5376 ext.3023

Description

In this course, we study workers' struggles, triumphs and defeats in modern Latin America. Our sources include primary historical sources, life stories or testimonies, literature, historical scholarship, and motion-picture interpretations. Using these sources, we study workers' lives at work and at home in an array of settings, from fields to factories to hotels to university campuses.

This course has several interconnected goals. Most fundamentally, it guides you towards a deep understanding of strikes and labour history in Latin America. It also intends to develop your analytical skills, with emphasis on analysing evidence and building arguments. In particular, we work on improving your presentation and writing skills. The course also helps students to develop the basic skills that every historian needs to interpret the past. These skills include:

- the ability to identify with the diverse people we study, no matter how different their interests, views or lives may seem;
- the ability to take the short-range view of the historical moment in question and make sense of the long-term consequences of this moment (i.e. figure out what each one of us considers the "turning points" of history are over time);
- and the willingness to examine parallels between the past and present and seek to know how our own contemporary interests, identities or perspectives may influence our analysis of the past.

Grading There is no curve: everyone can earn an A.

A means excellent

B means good

C means satisfactory

D means unsat

Reading

Most of the readings are in the course pack, available at East Side Copy (15 East 13th Street). There is one required book: Marius, Richard. *A Short Guide to Writing History*. Longman Publishing, 2010.

***This syllabus might change over the course of the semester

Requirements

Detailed assignment instructions will be given in class & put on Blackboard

Class Participation: 30%

This seminar will only succeed if you complete all the reading and participate actively in class discussions. If you experience difficulty speaking up in class, please see me in my office hours during the first two weeks of the semester. Your class participation will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- evidence that you have read the week's readings through thoughtful commentary in class;
- engagement with your fellow classmates in discussion;
- connection of the topic with previous readings;
- and bringing your own regional or disciplinary focus to the discussion.

Primary Source Analysis: 5%

Short (2-3 page) analysis of the primary source: "Proletarian Woman will Make the Social Revolution." Due in class 27 Sept.

Secondary Source Reviews (2): 10%

Two short (2-3 page) reviews of assigned readings in weeks six and seven. Choose two out of the four days in weeks six and seven. Write a review of the assigned readings for each of the days you have chosen. Reviews due in class when we discuss the readings.

Art of Speaking: 10%

Several short (2 minute) presentations on assigned topics throughout the semester, with goal of improving public speaking.

Research presentations: 15%

Mid-way through the semester, students will do presentations on specific strikes. Presentations will be done in pairs or groups, and topics will be assigned in the second week of semester.

Research Essay: 30%

Research paper connected to your presentation topic. 8-10 pages. There will be a timetable for topic description, annotated bibliography, outline, and peer-editing.

Schedule

Week 1 Introductions

30 Aug Course Mechanics

1 Sept Banana Strike, Colombia 1928
García Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, chapter 15

Week 2 Bananas

6 Sept Banana Strike, Colombia 1928
LeGrand, "Colombian Bananas, Peasants, and Wage Workers," 191-214
Bucheli, "Labor Conflicts of the United Fruit Company in Magdalena in the 1920s," 118-136
Real, "Critical Reading"

8 Sept The United Fruit Company and the Good Neighbour Policy
Soluri, "Banana Cultures: Linking the Production and Consumption of Export Bananas," 48-79
Soluri, "The Lives and Time of Miss Chiquita," 161-191
Fallas, "The Great Atlantic Banana Plantation Strike of 1934," 76-82
Marius, *Short Guide*, 1-12

Week 3 Living and Organising in the Bolivian Tin Mines

13 Sept Living in the Bolivian Tin Mines
Barrios de Chungara, *Let Me Speak!* 9-44

15 Sept Organising in the Bolivian Tin Mines
Barrios de Chungara, *Let Me Speak!* 44-89
Thompson, "Preface," 3-7
Marius, *Short Guide*, 13-28

Week 4 On Strike in Chile's Copper & Coal Mines

20 Sept Strike at the El Teniente Copper Mine, 1919 Chile
Kluboch, "Morality and Good Habits: The Construction of Gender and Class in the Chilean Copper Mines, 1904-1951," 232-263

Kluboch, "Workers' Movements, Women's Mobilizations, and Labor Politics," 225-253

22 Sept Coal Miners Strike, 1947 Chile

Pavilack, *Mining for the Nation: The Politics of Chile's Coal Communities from the Popular Front to the Cold War*, 266-300

Marius, *Short Guide*, 29-50

Week 5 Urban Strikes

27 Sept Rent Strike, 1922-27 Mexico

Wood, "'The Proletarian Woman will Make the Social Revolution:' Female Participation in the Veracruz Rent Strike, 1922-1927," 151-64

Wood and Baer, "Strength in Numbers: Urban Rent Strikes and Political Transformation in the Americas, 1904-25," 862-84

Marius, *Short Guide*, 51-71

29 Sept Rosh Hashanah

Week 6 Urban Strikes

4 Oct General Strikes & Closed Shops

Rosenthal, "Streetcar Workers and the Transformation of Montevideo: The General Strike of May 1911," 471-94

Drinot, "Fighting for a Closed Shop: The 1931 Lima Bakery Workers' Strike," 249-78

6 Oct Middle Classes on Strike

Parker, "Employee Organization and the Birth of the Middle Class," 65-95

Milanesio, "Gender and Generation: The University Reform Movement in Argentina, 1918," 505-29

Marius, *Short Guide*, 72-103

Week 7 Textiles

11 Oct Rio Blanco, Mexico, 1907

Anderson, *"La Huelga de Río Blanco,"* 138-171

Gómez Galvarriato, "From Company Stores to Consumer's Cooperatives and the Worker's Bank in the Orizaba Valley Textile Mills," 1-31

Marius, *Short Guide*, 188-90

- 13 Oct Working and Striking in Medellín's Textile Mills, Colombia
- Farnsworth-Alvear, "Women, Men(?), and a Strike in the Colombian Mills," 87-109
- Farnsworth-Alvear, "Talking, Fighting, Flirting: Workers' Sociability in Medellín Textile Mills, 1935-1950," 147-75

Week 8 Organising in Terror

- 18 Oct Methodology discussion: Structure vs Feelings
- Viotti da Costa, "Experience versus Structures: New Tendencies in the History of Labor and the Working Class in Latin America – What do we Gain? What do we Lose?" 3-24
- 20 Oct Student Presentation: Coca-Cola in Guatemala, 1976-85

Week 9 Organising in a One-Party State

- 25 Oct Methodological discussion: Gender
- Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-18," 545-66
- 27 Oct Student Presentation: Railway strike in Mexico, 1958-59

Week 10 Organising Migrant Workers

- 1 Nov Methodological discussion: Oral History
- Winn, "Oral History and the Factory Study: New Approaches to Labor History," 130-40
- 3 Nov Student Presentation: César Chávez and the UFW, 1965 USA

Week 11 Organising the Labour Aristocracy

- 8 Nov Student Presentation: The Cordobazo, 1969 Argentina
- 10 Nov Library Workshop Session

Week 12 Representing Domestic Workers in the USA

- 15 Nov In-class screening & discussion of "Bread and Roses"
- 17 Nov In-class screening & discussion of "Bread and Roses"
- Marius, *Short Guide*, 104-30 & 143-67 (read now and we will discuss after Thanksgiving)

Week 13 Research Projects

22 Nov Individual conferences about research paper (sign up in advance)

24 Nov Thanksgiving

Week 14 What's at Stake in Writing Labour History?

29 Nov Writing about ideology

Wolfe, "Anarchist Ideology, Worker Practice: The 1917 General Strike and the Formation of São Paulo's Working Class," 809-46

"Factory Rules, 1924," 116-19

1 Dec Disagreement between Scholars

French, "Practice and Ideology: A Cautionary Note on the Historian's Craft," 847-55

Wolfe, "Response to John French," 856-58

Week 15 On Strike in Latin American Today

6 Dec Peer editing in class

Marius, *Short Guide*, 104-30 & 143-67

8 Dec Student Strike in Santiago de Chile

Week 16 Research Papers

Final papers due Mon 12 Dec, hard copy in my mailbox by 10am

Individual conferences on Tues 13 Dec