COURSE GOALS
Check out any major newspaper in the U.S. Chances are there will be a daily business section with lots of business reporters talking about capital, capitalists, and capitalism. But try looking for a labor section or a labor reporter talking about labor, work, and unions. Likewise, television news always sets aside a few minutes for business news (usually about the stock market) but rarely makes regular time for labor news. It’s almost as if our culture has forgotten about, or takes for granted, the importance of labor in the production of goods and services. This course will try to balance our cultural and educational emphasis on finance, management, and capital with some attention to labor, work, and unions. We will focus on the United States but will also examine how the U.S. fits into a global context.

READINGS, ETC..
Jeremy Brecher, Strike (updated edition)
Freeman & Rogers, What Workers Want
Rose, Coalitions Across the Class Divide

There will also be handouts in class and some possible reserve room readings. In addition, we will be seeing a number of full-length movies which would best be viewed in a single sitting outside of class. I am also contemplating a field trip to a coal mine near Scranton after we discuss the logistics and its feasibility. Finally, I hope to have several guest speakers who have been active in the labor movement.

ASSIGNMENTS
A. There will be two take-home essays, one around mid-terms and one during finals. These will demand that you synthesize readings, class discussions, and personal experiences while addressing some important issue(s). Generally, these run about 5-7 pages. Each take home essay(s) will count approximately 30% toward your final grade.

B. You will be required to complete some sort of original research paper or project. These can take many forms. I will list three of these forms in the order of my current preference (for strictly pedagogical reasons, of course).

1. The class-as-a-whole project: We would all focus on one general topic with each individual (or perhaps small groups) concentrating on one specific aspect of this general topic. I have picked this topic but do not want to discuss it in such a public domain. We would each write up our own findings (even if working in a group) to protect against free riders and spend the last week of class AND the final exam period sharing what we have collectively learned. This will really be a hoot and I hope most if not all of you select this option.

2. The library research paper: Blah, blah, blah. Topics must be approved by me no later than Feb. 14 (kissy-wissy).

3. A project of some sort: This could entail an interesting oral history, or maybe some “service-learning” endeavor.
PARTICIPATION

Despite the non-small size of this alleged seminar (a “stretchout” of sorts), we should do our best to make this class seminar-like. That means you will have to do more work than you might be used to. It means that you must be prepared for class by keeping up with the readings. It means you must be engaged and alert so that you can have a meaningful dialogue with the rest of the class. I certainly can lecture, and I will lecture when it is appropriate, but I would rather not lecture all the time. Whaddayasay?

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I encourage you to work together when thinking about your essays or papers. Just be sure that the work you hand in is distinctively your own. For papers, please follow appropriate rules for avoiding plagiarism. I will administer the university’s “integrity oath” on the first day of class.

***********************

COURSE OUTLINE (yeah, right)

I. Labor and Capitalism (1/15-2/5)
   - class conflict and class struggle
   - labor theory of value
   - class consciousness and alienation
     F&R: all

II. The U.S. Labor Movement (2/7-3/2)
    - 19th century
    - early 20th century
    - post WWII
    - labor law: “moving the class struggle indoors”
     Brecher: all

III. Labor, Work, and Unions (3/12-4/11)
    - community and religion
    - gender
    - race & ethnicity
    - globalization, corporatization, and sweatshops

IV. Labor, Social Change, and Social Justice (4/18-5/2)
    Rose: all