



Urban Studies 239 (01, 51351) – Urban Labor & Labor Movements

Labor Studies 101W (01, 51157) – Introduction to Labor Studies

Day/Time: Wednesday – 6:30 – 9:20 PM

Building/Room: Rathaus Hall 209

Instructor: TBA

Course Description: This course introduces students to the nature of work and work organization in contemporary urban settings, with a nod to the past, present and future of work. We will cover such topics as the social organization of work, changes in the composition of the work force and the role of labor unions in creating a more just work place. We will explore the mechanics of exploitation in the workplace through case studies. How do hierarchies of race, class and gender play out in the workforce? We will also consider the way in which technology, globalization and financialization impact work and workers. In the last section of the course we look at new forms of worker empowerment and social organizing, the difference between traditional unions and urban social movements and finally, their potential to influence each other to show that, indeed “Another World is Possible.”

This course is intended to provide a broad conceptual overview of the study of labor, with the expectation that many students will continue on to more advanced and/or specialized study. The weekly reading assignments have been chosen to challenge students to think about labor in the context of a rapidly changing world, asking periodically: what is labor? how is labor valued, by whom and why?