



# CENTER FOR WORKING-CLASS STUDIES AT YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY



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### English

#### Working-Class Studies in the Writing Classroom

The CWCS has been working with YSU's Composition Program for several years, offering resources and encouragement as faculty develop first-year writing courses that focus on writing about the local community and writing about work. The assignments and resources here were designed by faculty teaching those sections. Since most of our students come from the local area, and many are first-generation college students, these assignments encourage them to connect their own histories and experiences with their course work.

- [Sample Assignments and Classroom Activities](#)
- [Sample Assignment Sequence with Syllabus](#)
- [Samples of Student Work](#)

#### English 1590: Introduction to Literature: Working (Sherry Linkon)

This course, for non-majors, explores ideas about "good work," how work shapes the lives of individuals and communities, and how writers have used work as a theme in 20th-century American literature. Texts include *Death of a Salesman* (Miller), *Player Piano* (Vonnegut), *Miss Giardino* (Bryant), and the anthology by Paul Lauter and Ann Fitzgerald, *Literature, Class, and Culture*.

#### English 6923: Working-Class Literature (Sherry Linkon)

This graduate course explores the definition of working-class literature; the stories that working-class writers offer about work, culture, and politics; how issues of class intersect with other "categories" of identity (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, place); and strategies for studying and teaching working-class literature. Working-Class Literature is occasionally offered as an on-line course, available to students around the US. To register, contact [Sherry Linkon](#).

### American Studies

#### American Studies 3701/Labor Studies 3740: Working in Youngstown (Sherry Linkon & John Russo)

"Working in Youngstown" is an interdisciplinary, team-taught course that combines three primary focuses – history of work in the U.S., history of work in the Youngstown area, and images of work, most of them with a local connection. The goal of the course is to help students learn to think critically about work, especially about issues of conflict, identity, and experience. Students are invited to make personal connections to the course themes, through work history papers that usually focus on their own families, informal writing, and a final project in which they create part of an [on-line exhibit](#) about working-class culture in Youngstown.

#### American Studies 5850: Class and Culture (Sherry Linkon)

This interdisciplinary course includes critical discussions about the multiple meanings of class; models for studying class that combine history, sociology, and cultural representations; and strategies for studying the intersections between class, gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. Students reflect on their own experiences with social class and analyze a variety of academic, popular, artistic, and social texts related to class in America.

#### American Studies 6970: American Studies 6970: Teaching Working-Class Studies (Sherry Linkon)





This course is designed for K-12 and college teachers interested in exploring how class shapes students' educational experiences and developing strategies for teaching working-class studies. Emphasis on hands-on, inquiry-based learning about class, work, and community.

**Learning Interdisciplinarity: A Course Portfolio**

This [on-line portfolio](#) provides commentary on the course design, an annotated syllabus, and samples of students' work, along with Linkon's analysis of students' learning in the course.

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## Labor Studies

**Labor Studies 3740: Seminar: The Future of Work (John Russo)**

As a multidisciplinary study, this course explores demographic, socio-economic, multicultural, ethical, religious, technological, media, and literary perspectives on work, with an emphasis on how work is changing. Readings included works by Jeremy Rifkin, George Lipsitz, and the AFL-CIO, as well as a collection of poetry, *For a Living*, edited by Peter Oresick and Nicholas Coles. Faculty and community members from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, the Bureau of Employment Services, YSU's Poetry Center, and the American Studies Program provided guest lectures.

**Management 5845: Work in America (John Russo)**

Work In America is an interdisciplinary course designed to examine the work experience and the changing characteristics, expectations and representations of work. This will include the exploration of demographic, technological, socio-economic, multi-culture, ethical, popular and poetic perspectives.

