Who or what is the U.S. working-class? Who can and should write working-class literature? What is the relationship of class to sexuality, race, gender and culture? Can the working class make a social revolution? These questions will provoke, animate and inspire our semester-long exploration of the long if often neglected tradition of working-class literature. We will begin by comparing 19th century slave narratives and industrial literature as a measure of capitalism’s ‘rise,’ the role of the transatlantic slave trade in it, and the emergence of what Rebecca Harding Davis strangely called a new ‘race’ of human subjects: the working-class. From there we will chart the role of literary texts and movements like realism and naturalism in representing social class and working-class life. Much of the course will be devoted to political and aesthetic debates about working-class (or what became to be known in the 1930s as proletarian) literature inspired by such world-changing events as Reconstruction, the Russian Revolution, Great African American Migration, Depression and Wars, while charting the relationship of literary texts and events to historic working-class struggles like labor strikes, industrial accidents and the fight for sexual equality. We will also explore how working class perspective has shaped contemporary ethnic literatures (Asian American, African American, Chicano/a).

Course Requirements:

Teach for a Day:
20 percent of final grade

Each of you will be responsible for teaching a one hour seminar lesson during the term on a topic/reading of your choosing. See sign-up sheet. The objective of this assignment is for you to sharpen your teaching skills by illuminating key issues, problems and ideas in our readings. You must organize a carefully planned teaching lesson using at least *two* readings from the day’s seminar. Your teaching should include at least one handout and may use other supplements from other media. Your teaching will be evaluated on the following criteria:
---level of preparation
---quality of handout and supplemental materials
---degree of interaction with the rest of class
---how well you open up critical issues, themes and ideas in the reading for discussion

Annotated Bibliography:
Due Week XIII
20 percent of grade

An annotated bibliography is a list of secondary scholarly materials with a brief, one paragraph description of the contents. Your task is to gather 10 secondary scholarly sources organized around one theme or issue related to the general topic of working-class literature. You must provide a full scholarly citation of each source and an annotation. You must provide one hard copy of the assignment to me on the due date and send your completed bibliography to everyone else in the seminar by e-mail on the due date. For examples of an annotated bibliography see the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website: 
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/  For this assignment you may use either MLA or APA format.

Mid-term Essay
Due Week IX
20 percent of final grade:

In Week IX, after Fall Break, you must submit an 8-10 page essay on a topic, theme or problem of your choosing. The essay should address at least *one* issue or theme to emerge from our reading from the first half of the course. The essay should attempt to locate the problem or theme within the scope of the class. The essay’s thesis should present an argument, or interpretation, of the topic. That is, the essay should not be descriptive. By week six, you must hand in to me a 250 word abstract describing the paper. The abstract should explain why you think the ‘problem’ in the essay is worth examining and what your proposed ‘solution’ to the problem is. In other words, what is the value of the argument you want to make for other scholars thinking about this issue.

Research Requirements:

You must use a minimum of six secondary sources for the mid-term essay. Please use either APA or MLA format for citation and Works Cited.
The essay grade will be penalized 5 points for each date late.

**Final Essay:**

**Final essay is due the last day of class Dec. 14th**

**40 percent of final grade.**

The Final essay for the course should be a **20-25 page paper**. The final paper may be completely different in topic and thesis than the mid-term, or it may be an extension and elaboration of that paper. The essay should provide a deeper, more complex and more detailed argument than the mid-term. Important to the paper is not simply ‘length’ but the development and sustainment of a strong, clear thesis.

You must use a minimum of **15 secondary sources** for the paper. The final essay may be in either MLA or APA format.

**Course Schedule:**

**Week I Aug. 24th**  **Introduction:** Why study the working class and working-class literature?

**Week II Aug. 31st**  **Slavery and the Making of the Working Class:** Frederick Douglass. *The Autobiography*. Read **Sharon Smith** Introduction and Part I (all); Read from **OXFORD** John Greenleaf Whittier “The Ship-Builders” pp. 86-87; Maria W. Stewart “Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall Boston, September 21, 1832” and W.E.B. Du Bois “The Sorrow Songs” and “Sorrow Songs and Spirituals” (all).

**Week III:** Sept. 7 Labor Day. No Class.

**Week IV:** Sept. 14th **Independent Research Day.**

**Week V Sept. 21** “some new race of Hottentots.” Rebecca Harding-Davis *Life in the Iron Mills*. Available full text in OXFORD., pp. 113-137. Read also in OXFORD “The Lowell Mill Girls” (all); I.G. Blanchard “Eight Hours,” Lucy Parsons “To Tramps” and “Songs of the Knights of Labor” (all).

**Week VI Sept. 28th:**  **The Materiality of Historical Materialism.** Upton Sinclair *The Jungle*. Read **Sharon Smith** Ch. 3. Read from **OXFORD**: Eugene V. Debs, “How I Became a Socialist” and “Statement to the Court” pp. 204, 207; From The Little Red Song Book “Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World,” “The Tramp” and “Solidarity Forever” pp. 294-296; Carl Sandburg “Chicago” pp. 310.
**Week VII Oct. 5th**  Gender and the Working Class International. Agnes Smedley *Daughter of Earth*. From OXFORD "The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, March 25, 1911" (all) pp. 249-261; Mother Jones “The March of the Mill Children” 284; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn “Joe Hill—Martyred Troubadour of Labor” p. 290; Claude McKay “If We Must Die” p. 345; Bartolomo Vanzetti “Last Speech to the Court” p. 354; John Reed “War in Patterson” p. 271; Langston Hughes “Johannesburg Mines” p. 371.

**Week VIII: Oct. 12th** Fall Break. No Class.


**Week X: Oct. 26th** Representing Class and The Woman Question. Tillie Olsen *Yonnondio*. From OXFORD Genevieve Taggard “At Last the Women Are Moving” p. 376; “I Am A Woman Worker”: A Scrapbook of Autobiographies from the Summer Schools for Women Workers” (all) pp. 419-422; Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel *A Primer for Buford* (all), pp. 534-538.


**Week XII: Nov. 9th** Revolutions in Documentary Form. Richard Wright’s *Twelve Million Black Voices*. Read Sharon Smith Ch. 5. From OXFORD Tillie Olsen “I Want You Women Up North to Know” pp. 461-464 and Muriel Rukeyser from *The Book of the Dead* (all), pp. 475-486; Zora Neale Hurston “”Polk County Blues” p. 515-523.

**Week XIII: Nov. 16th** Naturalism, Proletarianism and Black Domesticity/Domestic. Ann Petry’s *The Street*. Read Sharon Smith Ch. 6; from OXFORD Alice Childress “Like One of the Family” and “Sometimes I Feel So Sorry” pp. 611-614. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE!

**Week XIV: Nov. 23rd** The Class Subtext of Multicultural Literature. Sandra Cisneros’s House on Mango Street. Read Sharon Smith Ch. 7; From OXFORD Tomas Rivera from *y no se lo trago la tierra/And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*, pp. 679-687; Simon J. Ortiz (all) pp. 706-709; Gloria Anzaldua pp. 710-712; Jimmy Santiago Baca (all) pp. 846-850.

**Week XV: Nov. 30th** Queering Class/Queering Race. Leslie Feinberg *Stone Butch Blues*. Read Sharon Smith Ch. 8.

Final Exam Week: Monday Dec. 14th. FINAL PAPERS DUE. Prepare a 10 minute report on your final research essay. The report will be informal and non evaluative. We'll have this class over dinner. Restaurant of our choosing.