



## **Dangerous Work: Occupational Safety and Health and its History**

Spring Quarter, 2012, Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m, Seminar II A1105

Faculty: Nancy Anderson [Anderson@evergreen.edu](mailto:Anderson@evergreen.edu) Sem II B 3102 and

Sarah Ryan, 867-6720, [ryans@evergreen.edu](mailto:ryans@evergreen.edu) Sem II B 3112

How have workers, employers, and policy makers dealt with dangerous work, historically and in the present? Why do we have laws and institutions designed to control hazardous and dangerous work and compensate workers who are injured, or their families when they're killed? This program will look at the history of occupational safety and health efforts in the U.S., focusing on two key periods: the Progressive era of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the late 1960s, with the founding of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. We will study the development of laws regulating occupational health and safety and look at landmark cases and events that promoted legal protections for working people. We'll look into the systematic disparities and inequalities in exposure to dangerous work. We will consider the Washington State context, as student projects focus on workplace health and safety issues in our state. Students will learn basic techniques of data interpretation related to studies of occupational health and safety. The class will attend and present their projects at the Pacific Northwest Labor History Conference May 19 in Tacoma.

Students registered for 12 credits will participate in the weekly symposium "The Occupy Movement: Uprisings at Home and Abroad". Topics and readings will address the national and regional Occupy movements; popular economics, the global debt crisis and neoliberalism; ecological sustainability; public and social health; communities of color and migrant labor; global solidarity from Egypt to Venezuela; the security state; cooperatives and food sovereignty; art and the Occupy movement. Students will complete some short related assignments. **NOTE: The first meeting of the Occupy Symposium will be before the first Dangerous Work Saturday class. It will be Thursday, April 5 in Lecture Hall 1. All 12-credit students must attend.**

Students registered for 16 credits will devote at least 20 hours per week to an internship in the field of occupational safety and health. Students interested in internships must set up their own internships and consult with faculty before the start of class.

**Books: (all available in the bookstore, Open Reserve in the library, and through Summit)**

Radium Girls: Women and Industrial Health Reform, 1910-1935, by Claudia Clark, University of North Carolina Press, 1997  
A Job To Die For: Why So Many Americans are Killed, Injured or Made Ill at Work and What to Do About It, by Lisa Cullen, Common Courage Press, 2002

The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor: The Life and Times of Tony Mazzocchi, by Les Leopold, Chelsea Green, 2007

Draft Spring Schedule – some changes will occur!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Reading completed</u>	<u>What's due?</u>
Week One: April 7	Introductions, program overview, covenants. Workshop: What we know about dangerous work and how we know it. Film: <i>Can't Take No More</i> , distributed by OSHA in 1980 and suppressed in 1981.	Introduction to <u>Radium Girls</u> and Chapter 1 of <u>A Job To Die For</u>	A current Evergreen library card and a useable e-mail account.
Week Two: April 14	Form project groups, research workshop. Film: <i>The Triangle Fire</i> , Seminar on <u>Radium Girls</u> Lecture: Key concepts of public health & occupational health and safety (Nancy)	First half of <u>Radium Girls</u>	Seminar 1-pager
Week Three: April 21	Film: <i>Those Who Know Don't Tell</i> , Seminar on <u>Radium Girls</u> , group research on projects. Guest, Steve Garey, United Steelworkers Union	Second half of <u>Radium Girls</u>	Essay #1
Week Four: April 28	Seminar on <u>A Job To Die For</u> . Film: <i>Silkwood</i> . Lectures: What is social class and why does it matter? (Sarah) What is lead and why does it matter? (Nancy) Group work on projects	<u>A Job To Die For</u>	Seminar 1-pager and separate notes with project connections.
Week Five: May 5	Guest presentation by Lin Nelson and Anne Fischel on Asarco and worker health from Washington State to Cananea, Mexico. Film: <i>Cuts</i> . Project work.	Chapter from The Working Class Majority; Other TBA	
Week Six: May 12	Seminar on Working Class Majority chapter and 1 <sup>st</sup> half of The Man Who Hated Work; Prepare posters for conference display.	<u>The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor</u> , 1 <sup>st</sup> half	
Week Seven: May 19	Pacific Northwest Labor History Conference at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma	<u>The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor</u> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Projects!
Week Eight: May 26	No Class – Memorial Day Weekend		

Week Nine: June 2	Conference debrief, seminar on articles, 3-dimensional vignettes of individual experiences with Dangerous Work. Film: <i>Unnatural Causes</i>	Articles on Job Intensification & Occupational Health	Essay 2
Week Ten: June 7	Poster session, Intern presentations.		Portfolios, projects, and draft self evaluation
Evaluation Week	Student/faculty evaluations by appointment		Faculty evaluation, Final draft of self evaluation

### **Dangerous Work groups projects, Spring 2012**

The group will focus on a particular injury or illness in a particular occupational group or industry. For instance, you might look at cancers in firefighters or carpal tunnel syndrome in the meat packing industry, or injuries and deaths in oil refineries. There are many possibilities, and we hope that some of our class members will propose projects based on their own experience. We'll organize groups during week 2, so people should come with ideas to promote.

The assignment is to study the three aspects of this problem listed below and prepare a poster summarizing and illustrating your findings for display and conversation at the Pacific Northwest Labor History Conference in Tacoma, May 19. The whole program will attend the conference.

Your project should address:

**Historical background:** When did this problem, illness, or disaster gain public attention? How have workers in this industry attempted to respond to this or similar hazards? How have employers responded? You'll contextualize this with labor and occupational history of these or similar workers.

**Pathology and Epidemiology :** Describe the injury, illness, or disease process. Include information on the frequency of this problem, duration, and any subpopulations at particular risk. How is the problem treated? What are the outcomes of treatment in terms of persistent illness, disability, and/or shortened lifespan? What forms of prevention can eliminate the occurrence of this problem?

**Strategy:** What work rules or social policies have workers attempted to change in response to this illness or injury? Address both onsite policies and labor contract elements as well as federal and state policies that can either prevent the occurrence of this problem or compensate workers who are affected?

Are there any current controversies, new directions that are currently in development in response to this problem?

### \*\*\*BONUS POINTS: COMPARE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN THE US TO THOSE IN ONE OTHER COUNTRY WITH RESPECT TO YOUR CHOSEN ISSUE

Each person on the team will keep an annotated bibliography of your contributions to the project. At the end of the quarter, you will write a short paragraph about your own contribution to the project that those of each of your team members.

#### **Seminar one-pager**

These are due at the beginning of every seminar, unless a more substantial essay is also due that day. These should be focused on the readings for that particular seminar. Bring these with you in printed form. Turn them in to your faculty at the end of the seminar and post them in the assignments folder on the moodle. (you can even do this after seminar if you change your mind about what you wrote).

1. Write one paragraph, in which you state in your own words, the author's main argument or purpose.
2. What passage best articulates this argument? Type this passage out in your paper.
3. What two questions, about this reading, would you like to address in seminar?

#### **Essays**

Each of these papers should be a minimum of 500 words in length (about 2 full pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 point font) but no more than 750 words in length. In Microsoft Word software, you can obtain a word count by opening the File menu, clicking on Properties, and then clicking the Statistics tab. Essays must include at least one *properly cited* quotation from an assigned class reading (either MLA, APA, or Chicago/Turabian formats for citations and references). Furthermore, all papers must have a creative title (note: "Essay Assignment #1" or "Comparison Essay" aren't creative titles; try for something more imaginative and interesting).

Excellent papers will not only meet the length requirement, but will be free of grammar and spelling errors, maintain a tone appropriate to the mode of writing being practiced, and have a coherent structure that leads the reader from an engaging introduction with a clear thesis, through a focused yet well developed body, to a meaningful and interesting conclusion.

Essay 1: There are a number of major conflicts revealed during the course of identifying the occupational conditions associated with exposure to radium in Radium Girls. Identify one of the major conflicts and discuss, with specific references from the text, how this conflict plays out in the story of these workers and subsequent generations of workers.

Essay 2: Tony Mazzochi developed an attitude towards labor rights based on his political experience, class background, and his overarching commitment to social justice. How do you think his overall ideology affected his strategy related to issues of dangerous work? Channeling his approach for your project, how would he have addressed the particular issue that your project encompassed?