ENG 2009-004: Labor, Class, Power

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

With particular attention to slavery and the Great Depression as important historical moments, this course will examine intersections of the conditions under which we work, our identity, and our relationship to the larger world. Our texts will include autobiography (Douglass, Jacobs, Swados), fiction (Steinbeck, Wright), film (John Ford), non-fiction (Ehrenreich, Agee), photography (Evans, Lange), and poetry (Reznikoff). We will approach the materials through close readings and eclectic discussion.

TEXTS
Agee, *Let us Now Praise Famous Men*
Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*
Gates, *Slave Narratives*
Kozol, *Death at an Early Age*
Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*
Wright, *Native Son*

Packet of supplementary readings

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION

Regular attendance and participation. (20 points) Since we only meet once a week, it is especially important for you to stay on top of things, and to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. You are allowed one absence, and I will lower your final grade by one letter for each additional absence.

N.B. Participation implies being prepared for class. *I will give occasional reading quizzes, unannounced exams, and short assignments* that will factor into this part of your grade

Mid-term and final examinations (30 points each)

Class presentation(s) (20 points)
SCHEDULE

August
23 Introductory
30 Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

September
6  Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*
13 Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*
20 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
27 Kozol, *Death at an Early Age*; hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (reserve, packet)

October
4  11 Student presentations; Midterm.
18 Swados, *The American Writer and the Great Depression* (reserve, packet)
25 Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*

November
1 Steinbeck, cont’d.
8 Agee, *Let us Now Praise Famous Men*
18 Wright, *Native Son*
[22 Thanksgiving Recess]
29 Wright, *Native Son*

December 6
Student presentations; conclusions.