



Advanced Certificate in Labor Studies

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The Program

The Advanced Certificate in Labor Studies serves the educational needs of seasoned labor leaders, professional union staff, as well as union members and activists who want to advance their careers and enhance their contributions to the labor movement.

The program is designed to develop skills and knowledge in the areas of history, organizing, leadership development, transnational labor issues, and public policy. It helps prepare students for careers in the areas of union organizing, public policy, social action research, and law.

Admissions Criteria

Candidates for admission to advanced certificate programs must possess a bachelor's degree with a 3.0 GPA or higher from an accredited undergraduate institution. A personal statement is also required.

Program Requirements

12 credits are required for the certificate.

Required Courses

Students must complete three credits (one course) from among the following Global Perspectives courses:

LABR 601 - Labor in the Era of Globalization (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course will examine the impact of the globalization of production on work itself, as well as on workers and international labor movements. It will present globalization as a central problem for both developed and developing economies and as a dilemma for U.S. workers and their unions. Students will analyze the history and function of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, including how these institutions influence the global flow of capital and labor, as well as goods and services. The course covers topics essential for understanding workers' issues and rights in contemporary economies, such as: the impact of global outsourcing; the rise in women workers around the world and the implications for gender issues; organizing in a multi-national context; increasing poverty and inequality; and the decreased regulatory powers of states relative to multinational corporations as a result of free-trade agreements and neo-liberal development policies. All topics will be infused with a historical perspective that traces the development of capitalism from its beginnings in nation-states to its current hegemony in the global marketplace. Students will study responses of the labor movement to capital flight and to the movement of jobs and production across national borders, including efforts at cross-border organizing. They will examine the extent and effectiveness of global labor strategies, and the potential of broad-based coalitions to protect workers' rights.

LABR 609 - Comparative Labor Movements (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course will examine labor movements in the advanced industrialized economies of Western Europe as well as in the industrializing economies of Latin America, Africa and Asia. The course will focus on differences and similarities among and between these labor movements and the U.S. labor movement in terms of union density, collective bargaining structure, and industrial relations at the plant level. Among the main topics addressed in this course is globalization and its impact on labor movements throughout the world. The course will address critical issues confronting labor movements in the industrializing economies, particularly the "Southern cone" (Chile, Argentina and Uruguay); Mexico; Brazil; South Africa; China; and India. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between unions and political



systems in the U.S. and other nations. The course will explore relationships between workers and works councils in Western Europe; the relationship between unions and political action; the challenges of immigration, diversity and declining union power globally; and strategies for revitalization of labor movements in the industrialized democracies. The course will also study labor movements under authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships, examining the role of unions in struggles for democracy.

LABR 614 - Labor and Immigration (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course explores the dynamics of immigration to the U.S., past and present, with a particular focus on its implications for the labor movement. The course covers a range of topics that are vital to understanding the impact of immigration on labor, such as: the “push” and “pull” factors that shape migration flows; the characteristics of the distinctive waves of migration to the U.S. over the past two centuries; the varying skill levels and world views of immigrants from different parts of the world; the historical and contemporary tensions between immigrants and U.S.-born workers; the role of immigrant social networks in chain migration and in immigrant labor organizing; changing notions of citizenship and the emergence of “illegal” immigration; the changing gender composition of the immigrant workforce; changing employer policies toward immigrant labor; the development of the modern immigrant rights movement; and the politics of the current immigration reform debate. Students will explore the ways in which the labor movement has responded to immigration in the past and currently, and examine the conditions under which efforts to organize immigrant workers have been successful and those under which they have failed. The growth of worker centers as alternative models for immigrant organizing will also be examined.

Elective Courses

Students must also complete nine credits (3 courses) from among the following courses:

LABR 603 - Labor-Management Relations (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course covers the development of labor relations in the United States, from the period preceding collective bargaining through the emergence of theories of management and corresponding stages of labor relations practice in the 20th century. The latter include: the rise of contract unions; industrial relations in an era of unionization and collective bargaining; the crisis resulting from increased competition and globalization; and the subsequent transformation of American labor-management relations. Students will develop a comparative perspective by studying labor-management relations across advanced capitalist economies. Finally, the course will examine the future of labor-management relations, exploring the extent to which they will be adversarial or cooperative, and considering alternative models of worker representation.

LABR 604 - Labor Law (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course examines the statutes, procedures, and legal remedies as interpreted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and courts concerning the unionization of employees; the collective bargaining process; and the relationship between workers and employers and between employees and their union. The course begins by examining the doctrines of labor law in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and continues with an exploration of the statutory bases of labor law. In subsequent sessions, case law concerning organizing and union recognition; unfair labor practices; collective bargaining; the right to strike and concerted action; arbitration; the duty of fair representation; and discrimination will be analyzed and discussed. Finally, the course will examine and evaluate various interpretations of the political/economic origins of modern labor law and its impact on unions and contemporary labor-management relations.

LABR 606 - Labor Studies Field Work/Internship (3 Credits)



CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES

Prerequisite: None

Students in this course will combine a 16-week internship at a labor union or labor-related organization with readings on and analysis of the U.S. labor movement in a contemporary national and global context. In eight two-hour class meetings, students will reflect on their internships, comparing their experiences with those of other students and discussing them in relation to course readings on selected labor issues. In addition to union structure and governance, these issues will include union jurisdiction and industry analysis; organizing and collective bargaining; union democracy and rank-and-file participation; demographics of leadership and membership; dynamics of class and power relations; diversity and multiculturalism; the effects of globalization on work and workers; and alternative paradigms for worker organization. Through the combination of field work and scholarly analysis, students will explore the relationship between theory and practice and will acquire multiple perspectives on union structure, practice and principles as well as on a broad range of union activities.

LABR 607 - Labor and the Economy (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This class is designed to provide anyone working for a union, NGO, workers' rights organization or for social change a solid foundation in economics: basically, it is labor economics for practitioners and activists. The course offers an overview of capitalism as an economic system, focusing on the principles and logic that underlie American capitalism in particular. Students will explore the roles of production and profits; competition and concentration; technology; and control and conflict in the workplace. The course is set up for students to expand their literacy regarding the main labor issues related to the economy, such as employment, wages (including minimum wage and living wage), labor market discrimination, globalization and trade. We will consider the mainstream, or neo-classical, theory that explains how the economy functions, as well as examine some alternative theories.

LABR 614 - Labor and Immigration (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course explores the dynamics of immigration to the U.S., past and present, with a particular focus on its implications for the labor movement. The course covers a range of topics that are vital to understanding the impact of immigration on labor, such as: the "push" and "pull" factors that shape migration flows; the characteristics of the distinctive waves of migration to the U.S. over the past two centuries; the varying skill levels and world views of immigrants from different parts of the world; the historical and contemporary tensions between immigrants and U.S.-born workers; the role of immigrant social networks in chain migration and in immigrant labor organizing; changing notions of citizenship and the emergence of "illegal" immigration; the changing gender composition of the immigrant workforce; changing employer policies toward immigrant labor; the development of the modern immigrant rights movement; and the politics of the current immigration reform debate. Students will explore the ways in which the labor movement has responded to immigration in the past and currently, and examine the conditions under which efforts to organize immigrant workers have been successful and those under which they have failed. The growth of worker centers as alternative models for immigrant organizing will also be examined.

LABR 649 - Independent Study (1-3 Credits)

Prerequisite: **Permission of the Department Chair**

The Independent Study will be taken under the supervision of an instructor. The student will develop a proposal and rationale for the Independent Study, which must be approved in advance by the instructor. The Instructor and the student will develop a set of guidelines for the course, including the scope of reading and writing assignments. These guidelines will be submitted to the Department Chair in the form of a course proposal and plan. Students will be limited to one independent study in fulfillment of the elective requirement.

LHIS 601 - U.S. Labor History (3 Credits)



CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES

Prerequisite: None

Students in this course will examine U.S. labor history from several perspectives, seeking to understand how the experience of workers and the nature of working-class institutions have evolved in the context of larger historical developments. In this process, the course will try to account for patterns of growth and decline in the labor movement, paying particular attention to: industrialization and deindustrialization; patterns of migration and immigration; and the historical relationships between organized labor and other movements for social justice. Students will explore how the ideologies and structures of organized labor have been shaped by major economic, political and social forces as well as diverse cultural expressions. At every level of analysis, students will address issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation, especially as these categories of social identity relate to class and class formation. Assigned texts reflect a range of scholarship and differing points of view. Thus, students will become familiar with historiographical debates about topics covered in this course.

LPOL 602 - Work, Culture, and Politics in New York City (3 Credits)

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed to provide an interactive overview of the constantly changing worlds of work, culture and politics in New York City. We will learn about where New Yorkers live and work, how specific urban communities develop, and assess how the cultural and political institutions of New York serve the city's diverse population. The class uses an historical frame to situate the contemporary city, spending equal time on past and present inquiries. Field trips to significant spaces, and visits to and from NYC organizers, policy makers, artists and scholars will take place on a near weekly basis. Throughout, we will learn about New York's key industries, trends in immigration, economic development, public policy, public and private space, popular culture, urban social identity, community organizations, and labor's contributions to building the city's institutions.