



Diego Rivera

History 208-02: Workers of the World: A Global Labor History

Meeting Time: M/W Asynchronous Online

Instructor: Connor Harney

Office Hours: By Request M-W-F either Webex/Email

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Course Description

Writing in the early nineteenth century, Romantic Poet William Blake once described the emergent factory system of his native England as a series of “dark satanic mills.” Only sixty years later, another critical commentator remarked that the same systemic logic that confined a large portion of the English population to toil in those infernal factories, was also been responsible for “turning Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting” of slaves. It was these comingled processes, he said, that “signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.”

But these deep critiques of the then ascendant modern economic order simply tell us about how those labor regimes appeared from the outside, neither man gave their sweat and blood on the factory floors of an industrializing Europe nor on the

slave plantations of the Americas. In this class, we will seek to, as historian E.P. Thompson did for the English hand-loom weaver and cropper, to rescue working people of all backgrounds and across the globe from “the enormous condescension of posterity.”

Moving beyond a centralized focus on wage labor and the factory system, we will look at disparate regimes of labor and those caught up in them. More than simply understanding how labor structured the daily lives of workers, we will seek to understand how they either survived, thrived in, or resisted those coercive systems from the eighteenth century to the present.

Student Learning Outcomes

GENERAL EDUCATION MARKERS

This course qualifies for the General Education Historical Perspectives (GHP) and General Education Global Non-Western Perspectives (GN) markers.

General Education Historical Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:

- I. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
- II. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

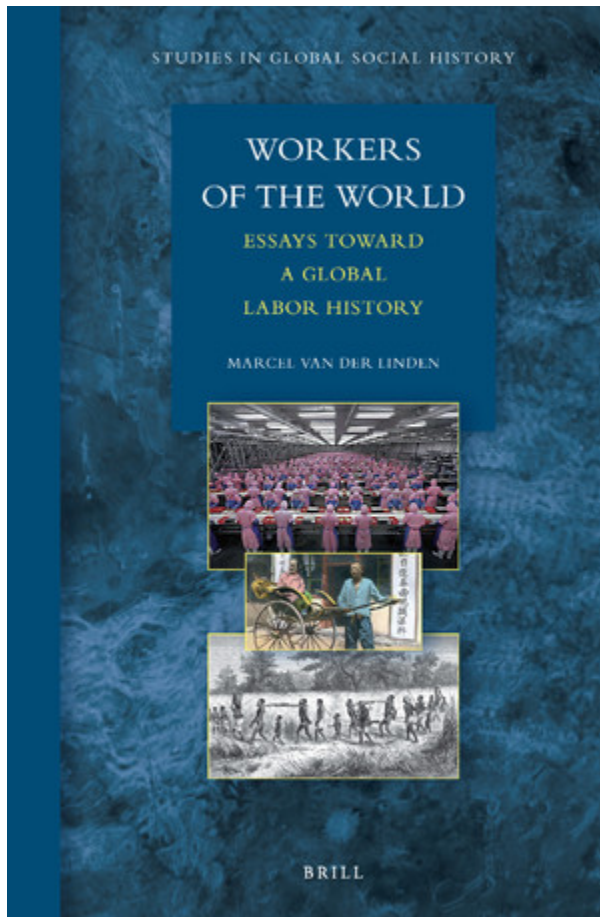
General Education Global Non-Western Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:

- I. Interpret or evaluate information on diverse cultures.
- II. Describe interconnections among cultures, polities, and/or intellectual traditions of the world other than the dominant Euro-American ones.
- III. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues

Course Specific Outcomes

- I. Assess differing political economic systems and labor regimes across the globe by looking at their development over time in the modern era.
- II. Construct a historical argument based on their interpretations of primary and secondary sources from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe since the eighteenth-century.

Required Texts and Other Media



***Workers of the World: Essays Toward A Global Labor History* by Marcel Van Der Linden**

The text is available through the bookstore and through any major online booksellers. I am pleased to announced that along with the ability to purchase a physical version of the textbook our library has worked with the publisher to make the e-book available at no cost to students. Follow this [link](#) to download a PDF version of our textbook. Any other readings will be provided by in PDF format.

Reading Guide

W. Caleb McDaniel has put out a guide "[How to Read for History](#)". I recommend you look over before you begin your readings for the semester. There are strategies contained in it that will help you read efficiently while getting the most from it

See the module below for help with reading primary documents. However, here is a quick excerpt E.P. Thompson that I think speaks to what we can get from engaging with primary sources:

"That dead, inert text of his evidence is by no means 'inaudible'; it has a deafening vitality of its own; voices clamour from the past, asserting their own meanings, appearing to disclose their own self-knowledge as knowledge. If we offer a commonplace 'fact' - 'King Zed died in 1100 A.D' - we are already offered a concept of kingship: the relations of domination and subordination, the functions and role of the office, the charisma and magical endowments attaching to that role, etc.; and we are presented with these not only as an object of investigation, a concept which performed certain functions in mediating relationships in a given society, with (perhaps) several conflicting notations of this concept endorsed by different social groups (the priests, the serving-girls) within that society - not only this, which the historian has to recover with difficulty, but also this evidence is received by the historian within a theoretical framework (the discipline of history, which itself has a history and a disputed present) which has refined the concept of kingship, from the study of many examples of kingship in very different societies, resulting in concepts of kingship very different from the immediacy, in power, in common-sense, or in myth, of those who actually witnessed King Zed die."

Historical Skills Module

In the interest of helping you better understand how to think and write like a historian, I've included a selection of six videos under the module historical skills. While you will not be discussing these videos, the skills outlined in those short videos will help you in researching and writing your final paper, which is a large percentage of your final grade. For that reason, I highly recommend that you have watched them by the sixth week of the semester. I will also provide extra credit which will be applied to your final discussion grade for completing an assignment related to the module.

Here is the [link](#) to the module

Course Activities

Essay Proposal	10%	Due February 19
Annotated Bibliography	20%	Due March 19
Final Paper	30%	Due April 28
Discussion Board	40%	

- **Essay Proposal:** Students will create a proposal for a research project based on some of the major themes encountered over the course of the semester i.e. slave labor, wage labor, capitalist development, pre-capitalist modes of production, consumerism, paternalism, etc. This proposal should take up a particular question that the student would like to answer through the remainder of class. While students are not expected to have all of their sources accounted for at this juncture, you should have an idea of what **KINDS** of sources you might use to help answer your inquiry. *Proposals should be at most two pages long including a paragraph that describes your question and why you want it answered. The proposal will also include a list of sources you might use and how you plan to proceed with your research.*

COMPARING Scholarly & Popular SOURCES

Written by scholars or researchers in academic or technical fields



Written by journalists and other professional writers

Presents theory, analysis, application, or practice as a result of original research and experimentation



Covers general interest topics like current events & popular culture as a result of research & journalistic investigation

Written for a specialized audience using vocabulary & language from the discipline



Written for a general audience at an accessible reading level

Articles are reviewed by a publication editor in addition to being peer-reviewed by experts in the field



Articles are reviewed by an editor & often go through a fact-checking process before publication

Formal citations, such as footnotes, a bibliography, or reference page, are almost always present



Formal citations are not usually given; sources may be cited indirectly (or linked to in online journalism)

The writing, editorial, & publication process take a long time; coverage of current events & new developments lag by about a year



Popular sources are published daily, weekly, or monthly; online publications may even update hourly; current events have good coverage

- **Annotated Bibliography:** Building on their proposals, students will have collected 3 secondary sources and 2 primary sources that they will use to write their paper. You will then create a bibliography in which each entry has two short paragraphs of 4-6 sentences of annotation in which you will achieve two ends: 1) summarize the source including a critique of that source, meaning what problems could there be in using it as evidence 2) explain how that source could be used to answer your research question i.e. does it affirm your original thoughts or contradict? Does it lead to new questions?, etc. *Annotated Bibliographies should be at most 5 pages double-spaced using a 12-point font. Sources will be cited using Chicago Manual Style: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html (Links to an external site.)*
- **Final Paper:** This will be the culmination of all of the research that students have done over the course of the semester. Students will submit papers that have a clear thesis supported by evidence that attempts to answer their research questions. *Keep in mind that you will receive more detailed instructions in the form of a rubric closer to the paper's due date. Papers will be 5 pages double-spaced using 12-point font. The paper will be footnoted using Chicago Manual Style (this video shows how to format and insert notes HOWEVER I want footnotes not end notes as demonstrated):*
- **Discussion Board:**
 - Monday and Wednesday with the exception of holidays, students are expected to take part in discussions with their fellow students. They will center around the readings for that day. The goal is to come together to answer any questions about the text, highlight key ideas, and contextualize it within the larger framework of the course. *Students are expected to start one thread in which they submit a passage from the text that they highlighted and why. Additionally, this post will include one question derived from their reading of that passage. **THIS WILL BE DONE FOR ALL SOURCES REQUIRED FOR THAT DAY.** On top of this initial posts, students will be required to respond to two other students questions. Your answer should explain with evidence from the text or previous texts, why you answered in the way you did. Discussion boards will open three days before each scheduled class meeting and close the day of at 6 PM. Late Responses will not be accepted.*
 - Since we do not meet physically for this course, it is even more important for students to participate in class activities. In the context

of this class, that means weekly discussion boards. While you will be receiving credit for completing the assignment, you will also be monitored for quality of participation in those discussion. *Your posts should be well thought out and engage critically with the reading of that week. Questions should be open-ended to stimulate conversation, meaning they should not be able to answered in a simple yes or no. Responses to other students should be held to the same standard. One sentence answers will not garner full credit for participation. A fuller explanation of expectations will be included in the discussion board descriptions, please see those or contact me with any further questions.*

Academic Resources

UNCG provides a variety of useful services for you, the student. Check them out!

- The UNCG Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)) provides assistance with writing assignments; contact staff members to set an appointment either in person or via instantmessaging.
- The UNCG Speaking Center (<https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)) provides assistance in improving your skill and confidence in public, group, and individual speaking.
- If you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) (<https://ods.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)). I prioritize making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and I will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me or your TA to receive accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro prohibits any and all forms of academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to know what constitutes academic integrity and academic dishonesty, and to be familiar with UNCG policies on academic integrity laid out here:

<https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/> (Links to an external

[site.](#)). Students who engage in an academically dishonest act (such as plagiarizing part of a paper or cheating during an exam) will receive a grade of “F” in the course and be reported to the Academic Dean for possible additional disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university. Do not attempt it.

Contacting Me

I encourage you to meet with me at my office hours or at another arranged time. You can also ask me questions by email. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on the weekends), but I’ll usually reply sooner.

Part One: Getting Our Bearings, Setting Our Course:



Week 1

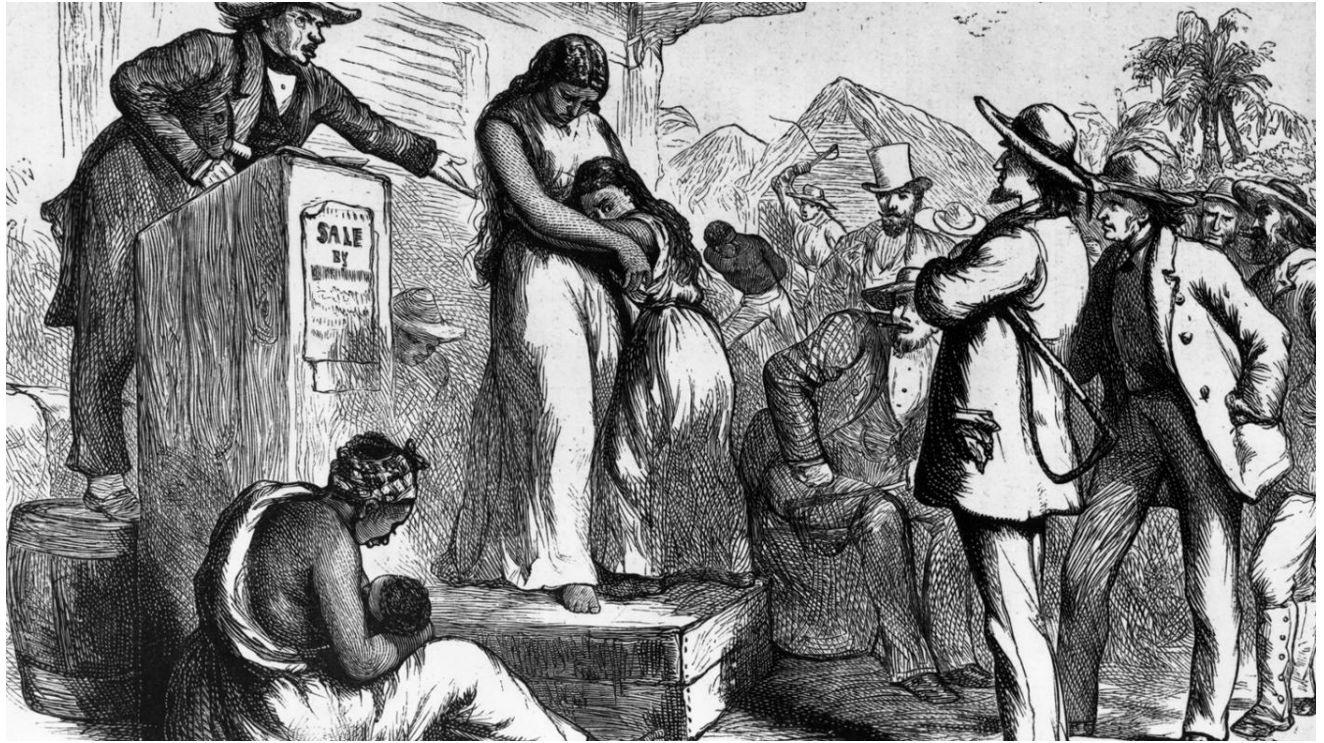
January 21: The Historian's Workshop: Read introduction to [the Historian's Craft](#) by Marc Bloch

Week 2

January 25: More on Historical Method and an Introduction to Global Labor History: Read the first chapter to *the Historian's Craft* and the introduction to *Workers of the World*

January 27: Who are the Workers and Why Study Them?: Read chapter "Who are the Workers?" from our textbook and watch [this](#) short video of historian Ira Berlin providing a short explanation of the different experiences of slavery in preparation for our unit on slavery that begins next week.

Part Two: Slavery



Week 3

February 1: The Slave Trade: Read the chapter "[Plantation Hierarchy, Social Order, and the Atlantic System](#)" from the book *American Crucible* by Robin Blackburn, and the chapter "[Charter Generations](#)" from the book *Generations of Captivity* by Ira Berlin, and "Why chattel slavery?" from our textbook

February 3: Slavery outside of the Atlantic World: Read articles "[Nobi: A Korean System of Slavery](#)" by Bok Rae Kim, and "[Slaves and Forms of Slavery in Late Imperial China](#)" by Angela Schottenhammer, and "[The Story of Swema](#)" by Edward Alpers

Week 4

February 8: Life under Slavery: Read chapter "[Africans and Afro-Americans in the Atlantic World: Life and Labor](#)" from the book *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* by John Thornton, the chapter "[Belonging](#)" from book *Slave Life in Rio De Janeiro* by Mary Karasch

February 10: The Family under Slavery: Read article "[Family and Kinship Grouping Among Enslaved Afro-Americans on the South Carolina Good Hope Plantation](#)" by Herbert Gutman, the chapter "[The Last Resort](#)" by Sylviane Diouf from the book *Fighting the Slave Trade* edited by Sylviane Diouf, and the chapter "[the Kelsall Affair](#)" by Manuel Barcia Paz from the book *The Chattel Principle* edited by Walter Johnson

Reminder that the historical skills extra credit is due February 14 at 6 PM

Week 5



Twelve Years a Slave
SOLOMON NORTHUP

February 15: The World of Work in a Slave Society: Read chapters 8 through 10 of [12 Years a Slave](#) by Solomon Northup and the chapter "[Under the Whip](#)" from the book *Slave Life in Rio De Janeiro* by Mary Karasch

February 17: Sugar and the Structure of Labor under Slavery: Finish our reading of *12 Years* with chapter 15 alongside page 50 through 10 of [Cuban Counterpoint](#) by Fernando Ortiz

Reminder that your essay proposals are due on February 19 by 6 PM

Week 6



February 22: Resistance to Slavery: Read the articles "[Cimmarones and Palenques](#)" by Anthony McFarlane, "[Slave trading and slave resistance in the Indian Ocean World](#)" by Titas Chakraborty, and "[The Haitian Revolution and Human Rights](#)" by Franklin Knight

February 24: Abolition and Emancipation: Read these articles ["The Many-Head Hydra"](#) by Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, ["Some thoughts on emancipation in comparative perspective: Russia and the United States South"](#) by Peter Kolchin, and ["The Great White Chief"](#) by David Baillargeon

Part Three: Workers In Between



Week 7

March 1: Indigenous Unfree Labor in the Spanish Empire: Read articles ["Pacified Indians' and the legal fight against enslavement"](#) by Paola Revilla Orias and [The Encomienda in Early Philippine Colonial History](#) by Eric Anderson

Week 8

March 8: Indentured Servitude: Read chapter ["Bondage Across the Ocean"](#) from the book *Bondage* by Alessandro Stanziani and the article ["Indian migration during indentured servitude in British Guiana and Trinidad"](#) by Lommarsh Roopnarine

March 10: Prison Labor: Read the chapter ["Commerce Upon a Golden Throne"](#) from the book *The Crisis of Imprisonment* by Rebecca McLennan, the chapter ["Categorizing Prisoners"](#) from the book *Death and Redemption* by Steven Barnes, and the chapter ["The Road to Hell"](#) by Harry Poeze from the book *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire* edited by Paul Kratoska

Week 9

March 15: Sharecropping: Read the chapter ["The Rise of Southern Sharecropping"](#) from the book *The Origins of Southern Sharecropping* by Edward Royce

March 17: Debt Peonage: Read the chapter ["Laboring in the Yucatan Peninsula"](#) from the book *Sugarcane and Rum* by John Gust and Jennifer Matthews and the article ["Making Capitalism with Gangsters"](#) by Wai Kit Choi

Reminder that your annotated bibliographies are due March 19 at 6 PM

Week 10

March 22: Domestic Work and the Opaque Boundaries between Free and Unfree: Read ["In Between Market and Charity"](#) by Yahya Araz and Irfan Kokdas and ["Domestic Workers and Foreign Occupation"](#) by Matthew Casey

March 24: Freedom's Just Another Word: Coercion, Voluntarism, and the Contract: Read the article ["From Unfree to Working for Free"](#) by Benedetta Rossi and the chapter ["the Devil and Commodity Fetishism"](#) from *the Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* by Michael Taussig

Watch this short video ahead of the start of our unit on wage labor that begins next week:

Part Four: Wage Labor

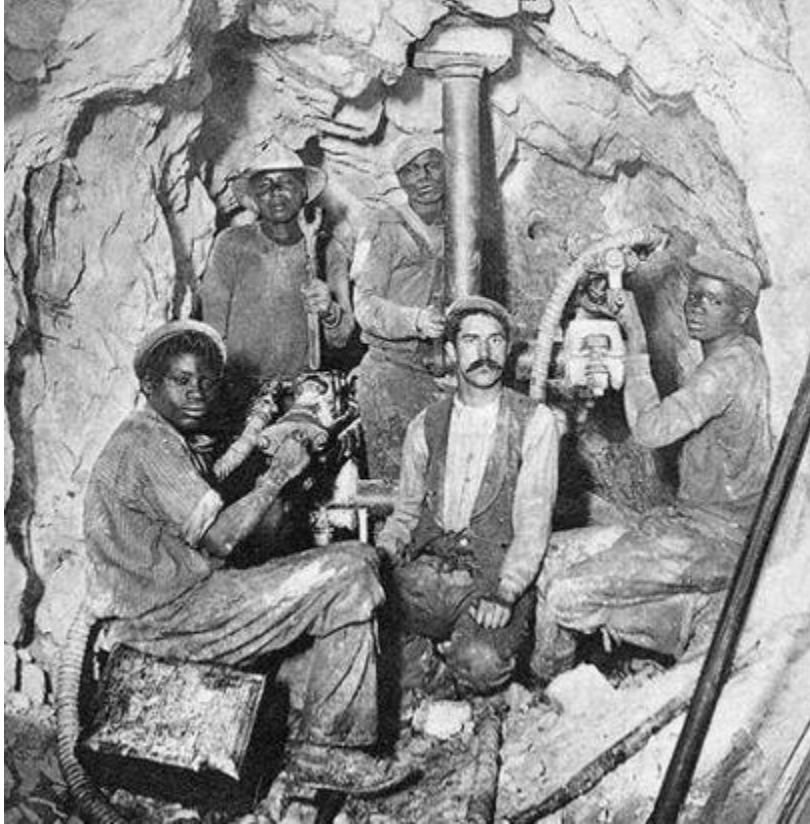


Week 11

March 29: What is "Free" Wage Labor and Who is the Working Class?: Read chapter "Why 'free' wage labor?" from our text book along with the [preface](#) and the chapter "[Exploitation](#)" from *the Making of the English Working Class* by E.P. Thompson along with the introduction through the chapter "Competition" of [the Conditions of the Working Class in England](#) by Friedrich Engels

March 31: What is Working-Class Culture?: Read articles "[Worker Culture and Worker Politics](#)" by Donald Bell, "[Message in a Bottle](#)" by Laura Phillips, and "[The Reproduction of Hierarchy](#)" by Mark Pittaway

Week 12



April 5: Making a Working Class in Africa: Read chapter ["The Life of the Compound"](#) from the book *A Most Promising Weed* by Steven Rubert, ["Class Struggle and Cannibalism"](#) from the book *Speaking with Vampires* by Luise White, and ["To Protect White Men"](#) by Bridget Kenny,

April 7: Workers on the Move: Migration in Working-Class History: Read articles ["Chinese Gold Miners"](#) by Mae Ngai, ["A Greater Enterprise than the Panama Canal"](#) by Reena Goldthree, and ["From Peasant to Worker"](#) by Deborah Cohen

Week 13



April 12: Workplace Discipline: Read articles ["Repertoires of Industrial Conflict in a Modern City"](#) by Wiktor Marzec, and ["Labor Discipline in Self-Managed Socialism"](#) by Ulrike Schult

April 14: Worker's Self-Activity: Read the chapter "Strikes" and "Consumer Protest" from our textbook along with articles ["Strike Strike, We Strike"](#) by Victoria Haskins and Anne Anne Scrimgeour and ["A Moveable Feast"](#) by Matt Garcia

Week 14



April 19: Worker's Organizations: Read the chapter "Unions" from our textbook and the chapter ["Working in Irish Steel"](#) from the book *Working in Cork* by Liam Cullinana, ["The Loneliness of Working Class Feminism"](#) by Deborah Levenson-Estrada from the book *The Gendered World of Latin American Women Workers* edited by John D. French and Daniel James

April 21: Revolution as Overcoming Resistance?: Read [The Communist Manifesto](#) (don't worry about the prefaces) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and [On the Day After the Social Revolution](#) by Karl Kautsky along with the chapter ["The Process of Revolution"](#) from the book *The Worker's State* by Mark Pittaway

Week 15

April 26: From the New Class to the Precariat: Understanding the Differences among the Working Class Part One: Read the chapter ["The New Class"](#) from *the New Class* by Milovan Djilas, the chapter ["Conscripts of Democracy"](#) by A. Ricardo Lopez from the book *The Making of the Middle Class* edited by A. Ricardo Lopez and Barbara Weinstein

April 28: From the New Class to the Precariat: Understanding the Differences among the Working Class: Part Two: Read chapters ["the Triumph of the Red Engineers"](#) and "Capitalism and Technocracy" from the book *Rise of the Red Engineers* by Joel Andreas, chapters ["Something's Happening to People like Me"](#) and "Dead Man's Town" from the book *Stayin' Alive* by Jefferson Cowie, the [preface](#) and the chapter "What is a Bullshit Job?" from the book *Bullshit Jobs* by David Graeber

Reminder that your final papers are due before midnight on April 28