



Respond to **ONE** of the following questions. Your essay should be roughly 5 to 6 double-spaced pages. An excellent essay uses specific evidence drawn from assigned readings and lectures, is well-organized, makes a coherent argument supported by evidence, and engages with the historical significance of your chosen topic. An excellent essay makes an effort to consider the whole chronological range of topics covered in the class. An excellent essay also has a title that captures the essay's argument in a few words.

For references to assigned reading, lectures, etc. use parenthetical citations [for instance: (Lichtenstein, 245) ]. If citing outside reading, news stories, etc., use footnotes. No bibliography necessary if you follow these rules.

1. **What is to be done?** Reflecting on what you have learned in this class, write a memorandum to a specific leader or set of leaders in the contemporary U.S. labor movement (broadly defined). Make the case for a specific set of strategies and actions that you believe will improve the social and economic conditions of working people and address their most significant concerns. An excellent essay will suggest ethically-grounded actions that leaders might plausibly consider, draw on concrete historical examples, and reflect your own opinion and ideals.
2. **Could things have been different?** Beginning in the 1970s, trade unions in the U.S. began a steep decline in membership and influence (something that did not happen to the same degree in most other industrialized nations). What were the most important factors contributing to this historical process, and what events were the decisive turning points? Did labor leaders and rank and file activists of the time have any chance to stop or reverse this decline, or were the die cast by earlier generations? You may use a counter-factual approach (imagining a different historical path), or traditional historical analysis.
3. **Visualize historical significance.** Pick one historical image that says something powerful about the relationship between organized labor and American working people in all their diversity. Write a well-crafted essay that draws on historical evidence to assess the most significant aspects of the relationship between wage earners and organized labor, and links the content of the image to your analysis of history. Your image may be from any time period between 1900 and 2018. The image may originate from any place, but your analysis must focus primarily on events in the U.S. Give your image a caption of 25 words or less that summarizes your thesis.

