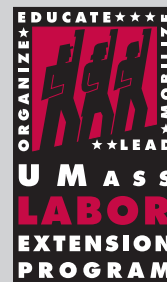


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Labor Extension Bulletin

A Publication of the University of Massachusetts Labor Extension Program
UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

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Visions of Labor: Film and Worker Voices

On November 9th and 10th, 2019 workers from around the region gathered at the UMass Amherst campus for a two-day conference that highlighted worker stories through film. Attendees viewed a range of documentary and feature films about workers in historical and present-day settings, and then participated in smaller workshops where they were asked to discuss and critically examine ways in which workers' stories fit within a historical trajectory.

For many participants, this conference represented a unique educational opportunity to actually view and engage with films about workers. Many of these films have been viewed and discussed for decades by labor and film scholars, but most workers rarely, if ever, see these films that provide a window into workers' lives and struggles through a powerful, accessible—and when done well—more engaging medium than written words or speakers.

Film represents a valuable and yet often underutilized tool for labor educators. When filmmakers point a lens at workers' struggles in historical and current contexts, questions come alive. For example, in *Norma Rae* (1979), a mill worker becomes a union campaign leader, raising questions of gender bias and harassment, family conflict, racial division, and perceptions of class and self. *At the River I Stand* (1993) documents the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike and Dr. King's involvement and assassination. The film raises questions of connections and conflicts between the civil rights and labor movements; it also examines race relations, the role of multiple communities (black, white, young, old, religious), government's role, and how all this interacts with the workers organizing to improve their lives. In *Pride* (2014), striking Welsh miners and London-based gay and lesbian activists in Britain meet and confront their own biases, raising questions of how to connect with people perceived as "the other". *The Hand that Feeds* (2015) documents a small group of immigrant workers in NYC organizing for safe conditions, benefits, and job protections, raising questions of treatment of low-wage workers, and their response to threats of deportation.



As workers engage with these films they are forced to examine these and related questions in the context of their own lives. This creates a rare opportunity to reflect and feel empowered to act in a variety of ways, including choosing to strengthen their abilities come together and organize with their coworkers.

In addition to the professionally produced and edited documentaries and feature films, the event also created a space to involve a diverse group of union members from the region in the process of digital storytelling to share their own stories of collective action. The majority of the digital storytelling participants were women and people of color and they represented a range of occupations—administrative staff, carpenter, community activist, janitor, personal care assistant, pre-school teacher, MGM casino worker, nurse, social worker, and warehouse worker. The digital storytelling was a process of reflection, education, and social change for the workers involved. The workers were also able to share their stories with others at the conference prompting critical discussions about what spurs people to engage in collective action.

For labor educators, this event demonstrated the power of film for actually bring working people inside history. These films, when paired with carefully facilitated discussions can engage workers in a dialogue around labor issues and struggle. Please check out the resource corner to learn more about the films and workshops shown at the event and how you can use film to engage workers in your own classroom or union hall.

In the Past 6 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program has provided trainings on these topics...

- **Youth Rights on the Job**
Boston Public Library
- **Bargaining for the Common Good**
Higher Education Conference
- **Strategic Planning**
New Lynn Coalition
Lowell Education Justice Alliance
- **UMass Lowell Labor League**
In coordination with MTA
- **Strategic Planning for Local Leaders**
MTA Union Skills Winter Conference
- **Combating Bullying in Grad School, From the Classroom to the Lab**
Graduate Employee Organization, UAW 1596
- **#MeToo at Work: Trauma-Informed Practices for an Empowered and Resilient Workplace**
National COSH Conference, with Sarah Gonzalez, Futures Without Violence
- **Gender Harassment and Sexism in the Academy**
Massachusetts State College Association, MTA, Fitchburg State chapter

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

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Boston, MA 02125-3393 www.umb.edu/lrc
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email: anneta.argyres@umb.edu</p> | <p>■ UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM
Department of Sociology, Dugan Hall 205Q, 883 Broadway
Lowell, MA 01854 www.uml.edu/LaborEducation
Elizabeth Pellerito: 978-934-3137 Fax: 978-934-4033
email: Elizabeth.Pellerito@uml.edu</p> |

Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program at <http://umasslep.org>

- **Overcoming Obstacles in Undergraduate Organizing**
New England Undergraduate Workers Convention
- **Steward as Organizer**
Greater SE Mass Labor Council
- **Child Labor Education Program**
Monthly Art and Culture night in New Bedford
- **Fall River Labor History Walk**
Union and community members and K-12 students
- **Introduction to Organizing: How to Get More People Involved in Social Change**
UMass Dartmouth students
- **Introduction to Oral History: Documenting Local Stories for Social Change**
UMass Dartmouth students and community members
- **Pride at Work with the Workers Art Center**
Monthly Art and Culture night in New Bedford
- **LGBTQ+ Labor History: Being Out at Work Past & Present, with Pride at Work**
Provincetown Library
- **Climate Change, the Green New Deal and Labor**
Mass Labor Educators
- **Presentation on Lewis Hine's Photography, Child Labor and Social Reform**
Fall River Heritage State Park
- **Discussion about the Civil Disobedience in Social Change**
UMass Dartmouth students, sponsored with the National Lawyers Guild

Around THE STATE

History, Herstory, Our Stories AHA! Night

Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 6pm

Location: Greater Southeastern Mass Labor Council, 350 Pleasant Street New Bedford, MA

Cost: Free

Massachusetts Nurses Association will share a film on union organizing based on oral histories with nurses from the former Hale Hospital.

Dr. Marie Equi: Activist for Healthcare, Women's and Labor Rights

Tuesday, March 19th 9:30-10:45am

Location: UMass Dartmouth, LARTS 206

Cost: Free

Contact: Camilo Viveiros at cviveiros@umassd.edu.

On the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in the United States, 100 years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment, what is still needed to fulfill universal suffrage for all, for prisoners and immigrants? Learn more about the activism of Marie Equi. Born in New Bedford in 1872, a leader in the struggle for women's and workers' rights, and reproductive healthcare, Dr. Equi lived at the intersection of multiple overlapping movements. She will talk about the relevance of her activism for today, and discuss ways we can utilize local history to reflect on the past while we strategize next steps in our current social movements.

Annual Labor Legislative Breakfast

March 21, 8:30am

Location: UMass Dartmouth, Woodland Commons

Cost: TBA

Contact: Kim Wilson at kwilson@umassd.edu

Regional elected officials will speak and listen to local unions and community groups. Speak directly with local elected officials about issues of working people in SE MA.

4th Annual Boston Labor Conference: Labor, Climate Change and Political Power

Saturday, March 28, 8:30 am – 4 pm

Location: Massachusetts Archives

Cost: Free

Contact: Wally Soper at Wally.Soper@umb.edu

This conference will bring together academics with community and labor leaders who are working to build coalitions to address climate change and just transitions. In addition to key note speakers and two panels,

attendees will participate in break out sessions to explore one coalition's effort in more detail. For more information and to register, visit: umb.edu/lrc/the_boston_labor_conference_2019

"No Fascist USA! The John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Lessons for Today's Movements" Book Presentation and Discussion with the Authors

Monday April 6, 11 am – 1 pm

Location: UMass Dartmouth, LARTS room 104, 285 Old Westport Rd., Dartmouth MA 02747

Cost: Free

Contact: Camilo Viveiros at cviveiros@umassd.edu

Hear stories of a network of anti-racist activists and their efforts to combat racism and state repression throughout the 1980s. Discuss what tactical lessons their activism offer those dedicated to fighting white supremacy today.

WILD Popular Education for Social Change Training of Trainers for Women

April 11th, 9:30am - 4:00pm

Location: Massachusetts Teachers Association 48 Sword St, Auburn, MA 01501
Cost: \$25 (Free to WILD women volunteers and facilitators)

Contact: Clare Hammonds at 413-545-6166 or chammonds@soc.umass.edu

Join other women for a Popular Education workshop to examine the theory and techniques of education for social change. We'll review ideas about how adults learn, present tools for effective adult education, and explore applying these to the goal of social change.

Earth Week Presentation at UMass Dartmouth by Irene HongPing Shen of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy: Just Transitions at the Intersections of Climate & Worker Justice

April, specific day. TBA

Location: UMass Dartmouth

Cost: Free

Contact: Camilo Viveiros cviveiros@umassd.edu

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) is a growing global network of dozens of labor unions working to advance democratic control and social ownership of energy, in ways that promote solutions to the climate crisis, address energy poverty, resist the degradation of both land and people, and respond to the attacks on workers' rights and protections. TUED brings together social movement and policy allies from countries around the world, both North and South.

RESOURCE CORNER: Film and Worker Stories

Visions of Labor: Film and Worker Stories. This website includes conference materials, links to films and access to worker created digital stories. <https://visionsoflabor.weebly.com/>

Labor Films: A searchable database of the both recent and classic labor films. This is a great resource for identifying films on particular issues. <https://laborfilms.com/>

Workers' Unite Film Festival. This annual film festival features student and professional films from the United States and around the world. <https://www.workersunitefilmfestival.org/>

Tom Zaniello's Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, and Riffraff: An Expanded Guide to Films about Labor (Ithaca: ILR, 2003) is an excellent film guide including write-ups and related references.

DC Laborfest is a month-long labor arts festival presented in various locations around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. <http://www.dclabor.org/dc-laborfest.html>

Some resources on creating digital stories: **StoryCenter** provides resources and training to help use digital storytelling as a vehicle for education, mobilization and advocacy. <http://www.storycenter.org/>

Digital Storytelling for Social Impact is a report from the Rockefeller Foundation on the role that digital technology can play in elevating the practice of storytelling to support organizing work. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/blog/digital-storytelling-social-impact/>

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

The Labor Center residential program continues to thrive welcoming thirteen new students this fall. Many of our students are supported through our internship program where students work directly with unions around the state. Labor in the Age of Trump, a collection of papers edited by Labor Center faculty, is now available from Cornell University Press. A number of book events are planned around the county for this spring. Our major conference "Visions of Labor: Film and Worker Voices" took place this past November and brought over 100 people to campus. You can find information about the event, conference resources, and access to newly-created digital stories about the lives of workers on the Labor Center website.

■ UMASS BOSTON

After a busy fall, we're heading into an exciting spring. We're gearing up for our 4th annual Boston Labor Conference. This year's theme is Labor, Climate Change, and Political Power, and features a wide variety of people working with labor to address climate change, including: Julian Brave Noisecat, Alyssa Battistoni, Lee Matsueda, Carol Zabin, Chad Montrie, Lara Skinner, Michael Leon Guerrero, and more! The conference will be on Saturday, March 28, from 8:30 am to 4 pm, at the Massachusetts Archives. To register for the conference, please send an email to laborresourcecenter@umb.edu with your name, organization, and contact information. This spring we will also release the first in what we hope will be a series of short reports on labor and its impacts on our society. The series is called Massachusetts Labor Matters and the first report is titled, "The Union Effect in Massachusetts."

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

At UMass Dartmouth we have built multi-disciplinary connections on campus. We continue to work with a diverse group of interns on intersectional projects that connect issues such as immigrant rights, climate justice, LGBTQ rights to the labor movement. Our interns learn about the labor movement by contributing to timely research and developing living history activities. Also last year, in collaboration with Eastern Mass Pride At Work, we presented on local and national LGBTQ labor leaders. We worked with Oral History experts and provided organizing trainings for students. We are excited to work with students on developing new scripts that highlight the lives of local activists. Our "steward as organizer", oral history and organizing trainings as well as social movement focused events offer education and support for labor and student activists. We held three sessions of our popular "Steward as Organizer" training for union stewards to learn more about the nuts and bolts skills to develop stronger workplace collective action.

■ UMASS LOWELL

The program at UMass Lowell is now hiring a part-time Coordinator — see our website for more details. We have record enrollment this semester in our Intro to Labor Studies class and we continue to seek opportunities to partner with other programs on campus to expand our reach. In addition to service learning projects with the Lowell Education Justice Alliance (LEJA), the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (PHENOM), MassHIRE, the Tsongas Industrial History Center, and the Lowell Telemedia Corporation, we are excited to host an undergraduate intern from Valencia, Spain, and two graduate Research Assistants working on affordable housing and the impacts of racism on educators of color. Program Director Elizabeth Pellerito also partnered with COSH and other organizations to help develop a four-workshop track on sexual harassment at the National COSH Conference this past December. She has also been active with the Young Workers Movement project sponsored by MA AFL-CIO and was a member of the UMass Lowell Sexual Harassment Task Force. This semester, we will offer an activist training series for union members at UMass Lowell.



Academic Offerings

UMass Amherst

UMass Amherst offers a unique multi-disciplinary program leading toward an MS degree in labor studies. We offer a two-year residential master's program as well as a limited-residency format for trade union officers, staff, and activists. To learn more about our program, please visit our website at: <http://www.umass.edu/lrrc/>.

UMass Boston

Our BA Major and Minor in Labor Studies is continuing to grow, along with our Certificate in Labor Leadership. Now's the time to start thinking about taking courses for next fall. Our evening course (Tuesdays, 5:30-8:15 pm) is **Globalization & Labor**, taught by Natália Tracy. If you're interested in one course or the whole program, contact Wally Soper (617-287-7267 or wally.soper@umb.edu). Our other fall 2020 courses include: **Labor & the US Economy; Labor & Working Class History; Labor & Migration; Sports & Inequality; Work & Society**. In addition we offer Field Placements for students wanting to get experience working in the labor movement. For more details about these classes or our programs, visit our website: umb.edu/lrc.

UMass Dartmouth

At UMass Dartmouth, we are reaching deeper to work with students through creating credit internships and offering service-learning projects connecting students to local community organizing efforts and the labor movement. We also continue to offer guest presentations in university classes and in the community. We continue to pursue Participatory Action Research/Community Based Research that will yield results for local efforts. Last year we conducted research about working conditions for immigrant workers. We also launched an Artist in Residence program. For more information visit www.umassd.edu/labored/work-withstudents or to apply contact Camilo Viveiros, at cviveiros@umassd.edu.

UMass Lowell

The program at UMass Lowell continues to attract students to our Labor Studies Minor. Students in our Introduction to Labor Studies course partner with unions and social justice organizations for a variety of service learning projects, from interviewing labor leaders for cable TV station to assisting with local workforce development. In addition to service learning, we provide undergraduate students with access to research opportunities, including conference presentations and the opportunity to submit to the statewide LEP undergraduate journal. We are currently discussing ways to build and expand an internship program. For more information about our minor, visit www.uml.edu/FAHSS/Labor-studies.

Notice of Changes to public sector labor laws in Massachusetts

AN ACT RELATIVE TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING DUES (2019)

An Act Relative to Collective Bargaining Dues

In 2019, this collection of changes to existing labor laws in Massachusetts about the rights of public sector employees and their unions was passed to address the impacts of the US Supreme Court's decision in the *Janus v AFSCME* case. The five sections of the Act are detailed below.

Section 1: Protecting the privacy of public employees and their families

This section amends Chapter 66, Section 10B of the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) by adding that **contact information about public employees and their family members (including home address, personal email address, home and mobile telephone numbers) that are kept on file by their public sector employer are not part of the public record.** This law means that public employers may not share this information as part of a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request made by an outside party. The law further states that employees' contact information may be disclosed to employee organizations registered with the Department of Labor Relations, nonprofit retiree organizations, and criminal justice agencies.

Section 2: Allowing unions to charge fees to non-dues paying members

This section amends Chapter 150E of the MGL by **allowing unions to require non-dues paying members to pay "reasonable costs and fees, including arbitrator fees and related attorney fees" that arise from pursuing a grievance or arbitration at the request of the non-dues paying member.** If the non-dues paying member refuses to pay the costs and fees, the union will not be obligated to pursue the grievance or arbitration.

The law also specifically limits unions' Duty of Fair Representation to "the negotiation and enforcement of the terms of agreements" with public employers. This allows unions to provide additional legal, economic or job-related benefits (such as trainings, legal aid for MCAD claims, etc.) only to their dues-paying members.

Section 3: Providing information and access to public employees' unions

This section further amends Chapter 150E of the MGL by establishing the following rights for unions that represent public employees:

- **the right to meet with individual employees** during the workday and at the workplace in order to investigate and discuss workplace issues, complaints and grievances
- **the right to conduct meetings with many employees** at the workplace during non-work breaks and before or after work, to discuss workplace issues, contract negotiations, and any other matters related to the union
- **the right to meet with newly-hired employees** for at least 30 minutes during the workday and at the workplace within the first 10 calendar days of being hired; if the employer conducts orientations for new hires, this meeting should be part of the orientation

- **the right to information about each new hire** no later than 10 calendar days after they accept the job offer or are hired; the information must include the new hire's name, job, title, worksite location, home address, work telephone number, date of hire, work email address, and, if these are provided to the employer, the new hire's home and person cellular numbers, and personal email address. The employer and union must agree on a format for the information.
- **the right to use the email system of a public employer** to communicate with bargaining unit members about any and all union-related matters
- **the right to use buildings or facilities owned or leased by government entities** to hold meetings about union-related issues; the union may be charged for any additional maintenance, security or other costs associated with the meeting

An employer's failure to comply with any of these new rights is a violation of MA labor law.

Section 4: Allowing employees to move grievances on their own

This section duplicates much of Section 2 (above), adding that language into Chapter 161A, Section 26 of MGL. In addition, it states that **an employee may present a grievance without the union's permission, but the union must be given the opportunity to be present at any such meetings**, and whatever agreement is reached must be consistent with the union collective bargaining agreement.

Section 5: Dues deduction authorization and revocation

This section replaces the existing law under Chapter 180, Section 17A of MGL. It establishes the following new rights around dues authorizations and their revocation:

- authorization for the deduction of dues from an employee's payroll must be made in writing by the employee
- authorizations may state that it cannot be revoked for a period of up to one year, but not more than one year
- if the authorization does not specify a revocation period, the employee must give at least 60 calendar days notice in writing to both the employer and the union treasurer that they wish to cease dues deductions
- the union's treasurer must notify the employer within 15 calendar days if a member requests to revoke their authorization for dues
- unions must be bonded in order to receive the dues deducted by public employers
- counties, cities and towns must take affirmative action for this section of the Act to apply to them.

For more information: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-unions-and-collective-bargaining>