This course provides a broad, interdisciplinary overview of the U.S. labor movement in the fight for social and economic justice. It will introduce students to critiques of capitalism and the power dynamics inherent in paid work, while considering why and how workers form unions in response. One of the primary objectives of this course is to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of contemporary workers’ experiences in the U.S. shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, language, religion, and other social constructs. There will be a special comparative focus on the role of structures and the space for agency and mobilization in the Latinx, Black and Asian American communities. The course will cover current challenges facing the US workforce, such as wage theft, temporary and contingent employment, corporate restructuring, the impact of technology, and globalization. Despite tremendous political and legal obstacles, millennials are organizing to build power that is transforming their communities. In 2017, 76 percent of the increase in union membership was workers under 35. Disruptive innovations in workers’ rights campaigns such as the Fight for $15 and teachers’ walk-outs have led a resurgence of bargaining for the common good. The course will integrate guest speakers, films, current news, blogs, and community engagement to deepen students’ appreciation of the role of unions and workers’ centers in promoting intersectional equity and justice.

Instructor: Prof. Anibel Ferus-Comelo
Course #: 29969 | Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11:00 AM
Location: Davis 532

For more information about the UC Berkeley Labor Center and the Labor Studies Program at Cal, visit:
http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/labor-studies-cal/