

AMER20112: Work and Play in the USA, 1880-2010

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Why today do Americans work a month longer each year than they did in the 1970s? Why are American workers alone in the advanced world in not having guaranteed paid vacation? How in the 1990s did companies like Starbucks train their workforce to 'treat their customers like celebrities'? This course examines shifting ideas about work in the modern US, alongside the remaking of the concept leisure. It asks not only what Americans did for work, but also *what they thought about it*—and how the length of the working day changed, and the relationship between work and leisure got redrawn. Students will also consider the recreational activities that won popularity among Americans across the social spectrum between the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twenty-first centuries, and consider how political, technological, and architectural changes shaped commercial and public leisure—from New York's Central Park, to Coney Island, and California's Disneyland. The module uses a wide variety of texts, including written accounts, photographs, paintings, and films, and original sources, including *Sports Illustrated* magazine and ESPN broadcasts.

