

History 102: The History of the United States Since 1865

Term Paper Assignment and Instructions - Worth 200 points (Preparation Assignments, 50 points; final paper, 150 points)

Introduction

On March 25, 1911 a fire broke out in the Triangle Waist Factory in New York City. Within 18 minutes 146 garment workers were dead. Although thousands of workers died every year in America in industrial accidents, this fire and the deaths of these women sparked a change in the way Americans viewed worker safety. The Triangle Fire is sometimes called 'the fire that changed America.'

Prompt

How did the Triangle fire spark change in New York regarding the role of government in protecting workers? Why did it take this tragedy to make this change?

In order to answer this question fully, you will need to explore how the working conditions of garment workers, their struggle for unionization and the fire impacted how New Yorkers began to view the role of government in regulating working conditions. The paper should 'connect the dots' between these issues in order to examine why this particular fire sparked change.

Preparation Assignments

As you begin to develop your paper, I will assign three assignments that will help you with the research and writing process. They are:

- 1) Preparation 1 - Reading the Introduction (worth 15 points)
- 2) Preparation 2 - Annotated Bibliography (worth 20 points)
- 3) Preparation 3 - Paper Outline (worth 15 points)

All of these assignments will be found on the class website.

Sources

The main source for your paper is the *Triangle Fire* book, but I have listed below other sources that you must or may also use for this paper. **YOU MAY NOT USE ANY OTHER SOURCES THAN THESE FOR THE PAPER.** If you use any outside sources you will get an "F" on the paper, and per my syllabus you will automatically fail the class.

The annotations below each source indicates how they should be used in your paper:

REQUIRED

The Triangle Fire: A Brief History with Documents

The first half of this book provides an overview of working conditions, the 1909 garment worker strike, the fire and the resulting trials and commissions. *The second half is where you find the primary sources that you are expected to use as evidence for your paper. You are required to use at least 5 of these documents in your paper!!*

Website, Cornell University, Remembering The Triangle Factory Fire @ <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

This website includes a lot of information that you can explore to provide you with context. The section of the website that you must use for the paper is the section with primary sources. **You must use at least one primary source document from this website in your paper.**

OPTIONAL (note limitations on video use)

Lecture Notes

You MAY use any lecture notes that you wish from class.

Photograph Collection, Working and Living Conditions, found on class website @ kerre.org

These photographs provide evidence that you can use in the working conditions section of the paper.

Goldfield, *The American Journey*, volume 2

Your textbook provides material on working conditions, a summary of the strike in 1909, the fire and results of the fire. It also provides context for how business and Americans viewed the role of government in the areas of safety, working conditions and so forth. Use this source for broad context rather than used to describe the fire. Use, especially, the sections of chapters 18, 20 and 21.

PBS, The American Experience, "The Triangle Fire"

This video, which you can find @ <http://video.pbs.org/video/1817898383> and which we watched in class, provides an overview of working conditions, the strike and fire. You should use this video FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ONLY and for the first prep assignment. Do NOT cite this source in your paper.

Structure of Paper

I. Introduction (one paragraph)

In your introduction provide

- 1) an overview of the topic,
- 2) your thesis statement and review of your arguments.

Please DO NOT underline your thesis statement.

II. Body Part One (three to four paragraphs)

In this section you need to provide the context in which the fire occurred by explaining

- 1) what factory work was like prior to the fire, (1-2 paragraphs)
- 2) the role that government played (or not) in regulation of workplace issues, (1 paragraph) and
- 3) how the garment industry tried to change conditions through unionization/strikes (particularly the 1909 strike) (1-2 paragraphs)

This section may be as many as three or four paragraphs in length, depending on how you structure this contextual framework. Remember, your goal in the paper is to explain how these issues combined with the fire led to a broader role for government in regulating working conditions.

POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR THIS SECTION:

- *Triangle Fire* documents and introductory essay for working conditions, role of government, and strike
- Cornell site, primary sources on working conditions, strike and fire
- REVEL/lecture, how business and government viewed its role in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the area of workers' rights and safety.
- Photographs discussed in class for working and/or living conditions.

Remember: in your paper you must use at least 5 primary sources from The Triangle Fire and at least one from the Cornell site.

III. Body Part Two: Your Analysis (three to four paragraphs)

In this section you will address your thesis and make your arguments about the impact of the fire on the role of government through a discussion of the fire and its consequences. This is where you will make your arguments, using the context from part one, and new evidence about the fire, the deaths, and the resulting call for reforms.

You must provide at minimum three (3) arguments/reasons that support your position, and your arguments should 'connect the dots' between working conditions, the strike, the fire and reform.

POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR THIS SECTION:

- *Triangle Fire* documents, especially those on investigations and reform and the fire itself
- Cornell site, primary sources on the investigation/fire
- REVEL for broader reforms of progressives at the national level

IV. Conclusion (one paragraph)

In your conclusion you need to provide a summation and reflection on the depth and breadth of change that the fire may or may not have created. If you wish you can reflect on working conditions in modern times, bringing the paper to a close.

Paper Format (Note: you will be marked down 10% automatically for failure to follow instructions here)

- o 5-7 pages in length, typed at standard 11-12 point font, double-spaced.
- o First page should have title on first line, Name/date/class/day/time in upper right hand corner.
- o Follow the citation guidelines posted on the class website for proper citation of sources for this paper.
- o You must use primary source documents from the Triangle Fire book, Cornell site and photo collection!
- o All papers turned in after the due date will be considered late and I will apply the following late policy: One grade lower for each class period paper is late for three class periods.

Due Date Rules and Regulations

- The due date for the paper is **Monday, June 6, 2016**.
- Please note that the due date is at the beginning of class. Any papers turned in under my office door will be docked 10% from their total score.