

Disorganized/De-organized/Reorganized: Midwest Labor and Working Class History Colloquium 2018

Posted on November 8, 2017 by Rosemary Feurer

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We are pleased to announce the Midwest Labor and Working-Class History Colloquium, which will be held on May 26, 2018, at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. The colloquium is a graduate student led event that is open to students, scholars, public historians, and activists presenting on contemporary and historical topics in labor and working-class studies, broadly defined. The colloquium is co-sponsored by the University of Iowa Department of History, the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, and the Labor Center. All presentations will be free and open to the public.

The 2018 colloquium, titled “Disorganized/De-organized/Reorganized,” will feature a keynote address by Professor Rosemary Feurer of Northern Illinois University, as well as a roundtable of community activists and local labor organizers. All presentations will be free and open to the public.

This colloquium will take place during a political situation characterized by rancor, divisiveness, and polarization in both the U.S. and many places around the globe. These characteristics, however, are not unique to this political moment. Scholars of labor history are attuned to the way such politics have long affected the lives of working people. Many state level public sector unions have lost bargaining power as anti-union legislation is made law in state after state. The challenges workers face today have deep and important historical roots, including working class fragmentation, corruption of the democratic process, globalization, and the erosion of employment and employment security in the post-industrial age. Beyond the focus on labor as employment, many fruitful questions center around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, citizenship status, and ability. With this

in mind, we especially welcome submissions that 1) explore challenges and tactics across different sectors of organizing and 2) offer insight into the ways in which workers take part in constructing political realities and adapting to, or resisting, institutional or legislative action. The colloquium is open to scholars from any discipline, public historians, graduate students, and activists presenting on contemporary and historical topics.

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Submissions for both individual papers and panels of three papers are accepted. For individual papers, please send an abstract of no more than 250 words and a short CV. For panels, please send a panel proposal of no more than 250 words, abstracts of no more than 250 words for each paper, and CVs for each panel member.

Please send materials and any inquiries to ashley-dorn@uiowa.edu. **Submissions are due by February 2; accepted papers will be due in full by May 12.**

Author



[Rosemary Feurer](#)

Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, among other books and essays. She is working on *The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940* and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.