

# ATCW-1020: COMMUNICATIONS WORKER HISTORY

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## Cuyahoga Community College

**Viewing: ATCW-1020 : Communications Worker History**

**Academic Term:**

Spring 2019

**Subject Code**

ATCW - AIT-Communication Workers

**Course Number:**

1020

**Title:**

Communications Worker History

**Catalog Description:**

Covers the history of communications in America, union organizing efforts and union evolution. Includes the divestiture and deregulation of the communication industry and the effects on telephone workers and companies.

**Credit Hour(s):**

2

**Lecture Hour(s):**

2

### Requisites

**Prerequisite and Corequisite**

Departmental approval: admission into the CWA apprenticeship program.

### Outcomes

**Course Outcome(s):**

I. Discuss the history of communication covering basic forms of information transmission including telegraph and telephone.

**Objective(s):**

1. List the early forms of communication.
2. Describe the role of organized labor with respect to communication in early America.
3. Discuss the work of pioneers in communication as the telegraph was being developed.
4. Identify the inventions that played a role in communication.
5. Differentiate between receivers and transmitters used in early phones.
6. Describe the function of the diaphragm with respect to signal transmission.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

II. Discuss organizing efforts of the Communications Worker's of America (CWA) including Government resistance and strikes, divestiture and organizing initiatives.

**Objective(s):**

1. Summarize the attitude of the United States Government with respect to telephone workers and the communications industry and discuss how it became part of the Federal Government and under the Postmaster General.
2. Define Company Associations and explain how they were used against telephone workers local unions.
3. Discuss the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and discuss its terms with respect to unfair labor practices.
4. Discuss how workers in the early 20th century organized to have better working conditions.
5. Discuss the protests and strikes in St. Louis and explain how gains were made in the mountain states.
6. Explain how women became members of organized labor in the communication industry and discuss the role of Nelle Curry in the initiative.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

III. Discuss the evolution of independent telephone unions, the National Federation of Telephone Workers (NFTW) and the birth of the CWA and its effects on technology, worker advances.

**Objective(s):**

1. Discuss the creation of the NFTW, its struggles, divisions and its ability to recognize worker needs and coordinate efforts to unite workers.
  2. Discuss the strike of 1947 at ATT by the NFTW and its effects on the communication industry, the Nation, the workers and ATT.
  3. Discuss how the strike of 1947 shattered the NFTW and created a new union, CWA.
  4. Discuss the ongoing disputes between the CWA, the Telephone Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and its divisive effect.
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**Course Outcome(s):**

IV. Discuss divestiture, deregulation and its far reaching effects on the workers, the telephone customers, technology and the greatest communications system in the world.

**Objective(s):**

1. Explain the move towards deregulation as it is related to the action by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and failure to take action by the United States Congress.
  2. Discuss the effects of bargaining leading up to divestiture.
  3. Discuss the twenty-two day strike and its long term effect on pensions and CWA's successful efforts to secure them through legislature in Congress.
  4. Discuss how divestiture of the Bell System affected and confused the general public.
  5. Explain how divestiture affected the telecommunications industry with respect to geography, technology and identity.
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**Methods of Evaluation:**

1. Quizzes
2. Tests
3. Class participation

**Course Content Outline:**

1. Early history of communication
  - a. Forms of communication
    - i. Town crier
    - ii. Ponyexpress
    - iii. Newspaper
    - iv. U.S. Postal service
    - v. Telegraph
    - vi. Radio
    - vii. Television
  - b. Role of labor
    - i. Working conditions
      1. Hours
      2. Safety
      3. Attitudde of management
    - ii. Economics
    - iii. Organized efforts
      1. Protests
      2. Strikes
    - iv. Women in communications
      1. Nelle Currie
      2. Telephone operators
      3. Existing policies
  - c. Pioneering in communications
    - i. Samuel Morse
    - ii. Alexander Graham Bell
    - iii. Thomas Edison
  - d. Inventions
    - i. Telegraph
    - ii. Telephone
    - iii. Electricity
  - e. Receivers

- i. Speakers
  - ii. Vibrations
  - iii. Signals
  - iv. Electrical pulses
- f. Transmitters
  - i. Voice projection
  - ii. Signals
  - iii. Amplifier
- g. Diaphragm/function
  - i. Signal conversion
  - ii. Signal transmission
  - iii. Tinsel wire
- 2. CWA organizing
  - a. 20th Century
    - i. Working conditions
    - ii. Wages
    - iii. Independent unions
    - iv. Solidarity
      - 1. Need
      - 2. St. Louis
      - 3. New Orleans
  - b. Union advancement
    - i. St. Louis
      - 1. Meetings
      - 2. Strike
    - ii. Mountain states
    - iii. Protests
      - 1. Worker rights
      - 2. Working conditions
      - 3. Wages
      - 4. Benefits
    - iv. Strikes
      - 1. Wildcat
      - 2. Worker unification
  - c. Women in labor
    - i. Nelle Curry
      - 1. Government field investigator
      - 2. Telephone operators
      - 3. Women's advocate
    - ii. Low wages
    - iii. Corporation controlled
    - iv. Overcrowded conditions
    - v. Work volume
    - vi. Physical effect
  - d. United States Government
    - i. Attitude
      - 1. Lax toward workforce
      - 2. Controlling
    - ii. Postmaster General
      - 1. Acted on behalf of worker
      - 2. Presidential order
      - 3. Bargaining rights
  - e. Company Associations
    - i. Government sanctioned
    - ii. Committees
    - iii. Union fear
    - iv. Company encouragement
    - v. Compensation
    - vi. Anti-union fostering

- f. National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)
  - i. Terms
    - 1. Wagner Act
    - 2. Union banned companies
    - 3. Restrictions
  - ii. Purpose
    - 1. Worker protection
    - 2. Anti-spying
    - 3. Labor's Magna Carta
  - iii. Labor guarantees
    - 1. Organizing policies
    - 2. Collective bargaining
- 3. Evolution of telephone unions
  - a. NFTW
    - i. Purpose
      - 1. Unification of independents
      - 2. Structure
      - 3. Communication
    - ii. Federation of local unions
    - iii. Leadership
  - b. Strike of 1947
    - i. Purpose
      - 1. Bargaining issues
      - 2. Employer-employee relationships
    - ii. National involvement
    - iii. Effects
      - 1. Industry
      - 2. National
      - 3. Worker
      - 4. AT&T
  - c. Strike failure
    - i. Striker coordination
    - ii. Common representation
    - iii. CWA
  - d. Internal disputes
    - i. TWOC
    - ii. IBEW
    - iii. CWA
    - iv. Divisive effects
  - e. Technological advances
    - i. Increased employment
    - ii. Union membership
    - iii. Market share
    - iv. New opportunities

## Resources

Morton Bahr. *From the telegraph to the internet*. current. From the telegraph to the internet Washington D.C., 1998.

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Thomas R. Brooks. *Communications Workers Of America: The story of a Union*. current. Thomas R. Brooks. New York: Mason/Charter, 1977.

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Bill Yenne/Dr. Morton Grosser. *Inventions that shaped world history*. current. Morton Grosser. San Francisco Ca, 1993.

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**Resources Other**

1. [www.cwa-union.org/about](http://www.cwa-union.org/about)
2. [www.cwa1105.org/](http://www.cwa1105.org/) (<http://www.cwa1105.org/history.php/>)**history.php**
3. [www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utarl/02040/ar1-02040.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utarl/02040/ar1-02040.html)

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