

# Class Unknown: Undercover Investigations of American Work and Poverty from the Progressive Era to the Present (Culture, Labor, History)

Mark Pittenger

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2013 Notable Title in American Intellectual History from the Society for U.S. Intellectual History Since the Gilded Age, social scientists, middle-class reformers, and writers have left the comforts of their offices to "pass" as steel workers, coal miners, assembly-line laborers, waitresses, hoboes, and other working and poor people in an attempt to gain a fuller and more authentic understanding of the lives of the working class and the poor. In this first, sweeping study of undercover investigations of work and poverty in America, awardwinning historian Mark Pittenger examines how intellectuals were shaped by their experiences with the poor, and how despite their sympathy toward working-class people, they unintentionally helped to develop the contemporary concept of a degraded and "other" American underclass. While contributing to our understanding of the history of American social thought, Class Unknown offers a new perspective on contemporary debates over how we understand and represent our own society and its class divisions.



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