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10-11 a.m. & by appointment

University of Connecticut
Department of History
HIST 3995, Special Topics
Fall 2015

History of American Capitalism

Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30 - 4:45 p.m.
Business 227

This course offers a broad overview of American capitalism from the era of the American Revolution through the present day. Focusing on the reasons for and effects of economic growth, it follows the transformation of North America from a rural, colonial outpost of the British Empire to the largest industrial power in the world, and considers how this in turn shaped the ways Americans produced and lived. The course will examine the political, social, cultural, geographical, legal, moral, environmental, and technological dimensions of economic life, capturing the historical dynamics of American capitalism.

Participation (25% of course grade). Your participation grade will be assessed on the quality and frequency of your contribution to in-class discussion. This, in turn, relies on the careful reading of assigned materials ahead of class meetings.

Papers (40%). You will write two short papers in this course (5-7 pages each).

Paper #1: Analyze a primary source document, exploring one or more themes and/or placing it in historical context. The document will be selected from the course syllabus. You are not expected to research your topic outside of course readings. The paper must be submitted no later than October 22 and before we discuss that particular document in class. For instance, if you wish to write on Andrew Jackson's Bank Veto Message, you must submit the paper no later than the beginning of class on September 24, the date on which we plan to discuss the document as a group.

Paper #2: Analyze one of the films we are watching in the last six weeks of class using the scholarship and/or documents we are reading alongside the film. You are not expected to research your topic outside of course readings. The paper must be submitted before we discuss the film you select as a group.

Midterm Exam (10%). The midterm exam will consist of three short-answer identifications and one lengthier essay question. One week before the exam, you will be given three possible essay questions, of which one will appear on the actual exam. Though you will not have advance notice of possible short-answer IDs, you will be able to select the IDs you wish to write on from a list that appears on the exam.

Final Exam (25%). The final exam will follow the same format as the midterm exam, except that you will write two essays (one essay will be cumulative and the other will cover material from the second half of the term). As with the midterm exam, you will be given possible essay questions one week ahead of the final exam.

Readings. All readings will be available through our HuskyCT course website. Readings are subject to change; any changes will be preceded by an announcement in class.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are the gravest violations of academic conduct. They will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including failure in the course. Plagiarism consists of reproducing or utilizing ideas or text from other sources without proper attribution. For more information, see <http://www.plagiarism.org> and http://www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html.

Accessibility. To request accommodations for a disability you must first contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (room 204 of the Wilbur Cross Building; <http://www.csd.uconn.edu>). You must have the appropriate forms from this office before we can arrange accommodations.

SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Introductions to Capitalism

9/1 (Tu.)

9/3 (Th.)

Joyce Appleby, "The Puzzle of Capitalism" in *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (2010), pp. 3-26.

Ellen Meiksins Wood, "The Agrarian Origins of Capitalism," *Monthly Review* 50 (1998).

2. American Revolution

9/8 (Tu.)

Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* (January 1990): 3-29.

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, excerpts.

9/10 (Th.)

Petition of the Town of Greenwich [Mass.], January 1786.

United States Constitution, Article 1, Article 4 section 2, Article 6.

[James Madison] *The Federalist* #10.

[James Madison] *The Federalist* #51.

3. Slavery

9/15 (Tu.)

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), maps and Introduction, pp. ix-xxvii.

Walter Johnson, "The Racial Origins of American Sovereignty," *Raritan* (2012): 50-59.

Gary J. Kornblith, "Mississippi Dreamin' and the American Nightmare," *Reviews in American History* (2014).

Edward E. Baptist, "Toxic Debt, Liar Loans, and Securitized Human Beings: The Panic of 1837 and the Fate of Slavery," *Common-place* 10, no. 3 (April 2010).

9/17 (Th.)

"Management of Slaves, etc.," *Farmer's Register* (1837).

"The Law of Slavery in the State of Louisiana," *The National Era* (1847).

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup* (1853), pp. 78-88.

4. Early Industrialization

9/22 (Tu.)

Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts 1780-1860* (1990), pp. 93-117, 176-191, 228-261.

Thomas Dublin, "Women, Work, and the Family: Female Operatives in the Lowell Mills, 1830-1860," *Feminist Studies* (Autumn 1975): 30-39.

9/24 (Th.)

Diary for 1829 of factory manager N. B. Gordon, Mansfield, Mass.

Factory Tracts. Factory Life as it Is (1845).

Andrew Jackson, Bank Veto Message (1832).

James Kirke Paulding, "Letter XXXV," in *Letters from the South: By a Northern Man*, vol. 2 (1835), pp. 128-144.

5. American Civil War

9/29 (Tu.)

Eric Foner, "Free Labor: The Republicans and Northern Society," in *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970), pp. 11-39.

James Henry Hammond, "Cotton is King' Speech," (1858).

Abraham Lincoln, "Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society" (1859).

10/1 (Th.)

Richard F. Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (1990), pp. 1-17.

Heather Cox Richardson, "'It Was Statesmanship to Give Treeless Prairies Value': The Transcontinental Railroad," in *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies During the Civil War* (1997), pp. 170-208.

MIDTERM EXAM: 10/6 (Tu.)

6. New Birth of American Capitalism

10/8 (Th.)

William Graham Sumner, "On a New Philosophy: That Poverty is the Best Policy," in *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883), pp. 13-27.

Sven Beckert, "Democracy in the Age of Capital: Contesting Suffrage Rights in Gilded Age New York," in Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, Julian E. Zelizer, eds., *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History* (2003), pp. 146-174.

10/13 (Tu.)

Richard White, "Information, Markets, and Corruption: Transcontinental Railroads in the Gilded Age," *Journal of American History* (June 2003): 19-43.

Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., "The Beginnings of 'Big Business' in American Industry," *Business History Review* (1959): 1-31.

10/15 (Th.)

Ida T. Tarbell, *History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904), pp. 1-6, 22-33, 196-200.

William Cronon, "Pricing the Future: Grain," in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991), pp. 97-147.

7. Revolt and Reform

10/20 (Tu.)

David Montgomery, "American Labor, 1865-1902: The Early Industrial Era," *Monthly Labor Review* (1976): 10-17.

Jonathan Levy, "Betting the Farm," in *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (2012), chapter 5, pp. 150-190.

Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (2007), Introduction, pp. 3-22.

10/22 (Th.)

People's Party of America, "Omaha Platform" (1892).

Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), pp. 30-48.

Woodrow Wilson, "Monopoly or Opportunity?," in *The New Freedom* (1913), pp. 163-191.

8. Consolidation

10/27 (Tu.)

Roland Marchand, "A 'Corporation Consciousness': General Motors, General Electric, and the Bruce Barton Formula," in *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (1998), pp. 130-163.

Lizabeth Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots: The Experience of Chicago Workers in the 1920s," *American Quarterly* (March 1989): 6-33.

10/29 (Th.)

The Plow That Broke the Plains, directed Pare Lorentz (1936).

John Kenneth Galbraith, "Cause and Consequence," in *The Great Crash of 1929* (1955), pp. 173-199.

Milton Friedman and Anna J. Schwartz, "The Great Contraction, 1929-1933," in *A Monetary History of the United States* (1963), pp. 299-301, 406-419.

Michael A. Bernstein, "Why the Great Depression Was Great," in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* (1990), pp. 32-54.

9. Corporate Liberalism

11/3 (Tu.)

Nelson Lichtenstein, "Reconstructing the 1930s," in *State of the Union* (2003), pp. 20-53.

Joel Davidson, "Building for War, Preparing for Peace: World War II and the Military-Industrial Complex," in Donald Albrecht, ed., *World War II and the American Dream* (1995), pp. 186-229.

11/5 (Th.)

C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite," in *The Power Elite* (1956), pp. 269-297.

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, directed by Nunnally Johnson (1956).

10. Great Expectations

11/10 (Tu.)

Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America," *American Historical Review* (October 1996): 1050-1081.

Salesman, directed by Albert Maysles, David Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin (1969).

11/12 (Th.)

Michael Harrington, "Pastures of Plenty," in *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962), pp. 39-60.

Nancy MacLean, "Civil Rights at Work," in *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (2008), pp. 76-113.

11. Disruption

11/17 (Tu.)

Michael J. Piore and Charles F. Sabel, "The Mass-Production Economy in Crisis," in *The Second Industrial Divide* (1984), chapter 7, pp. 165-193.

Harlan County, U.S.A., directed by Barbara Kopple (1976).

11/19 (Th.)

Ralph Nader, "The Great American Gyp," *New York Review of Books*, November 21, 1968, pp. 27-34.

Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970.

Lewis Powell, "Attack on American Free Enterprise System," Confidential Memorandum to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, August 23, 1971.

Irving Kristol, "On Corporate Capitalism in America," *National Affairs* (Fall 1975): 124-141.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

12. New Economy

12/1 (Tu.)

Bruce Cumings, "Silicon Valley: A New World at the Edge of the Sea," in *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (2009), chapter 16, pp. 424-470.

Who Killed the Electric Car?, directed by Chris Paine (2006).

12/3 (Th.)

Sam Walton with John Huey, *Sam Walton: Made In America* (1992), pp. 156-244.

13. Insecuritization

12/8 (Tu.)

Louis Uchitelle, *The Disposable American: Layoffs and Their Consequences* (2007), pp. 124-177.

Jacob S. Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream* (2006), pp. 1-60.

12/10 (Th.)

Gerald F. Davis, "From Banks to Markets: How Securitization Ended the 'Wonderful Life,'" in *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Reshaped America* (2009), chapter 4, pp. 102-153.

Inside Job, directed by Charles Ferguson (2010).

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 18, 1:00 pm - 3:00 p.m. (to be confirmed later in the term).