HISTORY OF CAPITALISM

Overview:

In recent years scholars have built upon the work of prior generations of business historians, labor historians, and economic historians to develop a new field that has become known as the “history of capitalism.” This graduate seminar will consider the methodologies and substantive contributions of recent scholarship in the field, in conjunction with classic works on the history of political economy.

Assignments and Grading:

This is a readings seminar, and the primary expectation is that every student will arrive in class prepared to contribute to in-depth discussions of the assigned texts. Additionally, each student will open the discussion of the readings for one week by posting three to five succinct questions on Blackboard by 8:00pm on the Sunday before the meeting, and providing five to ten minutes of introductory remarks that situate the major reading within a broader historiography at the beginning of class.

This course will be graded pass/fail for graduate students, and using conventional letter grades for BA/MA students.

Texts:

A number of the course readings (denoted with an * in the syllabus) will be available on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, should be acquired separately:


**Tuesday, September 4: Introduction**

**Tuesday, September 11: Inventing Capitalism**


*Supplementary Readings:*

- Jerry Muller, *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Modern European Thought* (Knopf, 2002).

**Tuesday, September 18: The Political Economy of the Antebellum South**


*Supplementary Readings:*


**Tuesday, September 25: Wealth and Space in an Industrial Age**


*Supplementary Readings:*


• Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (Hill and Wang, 1982).

Tuesday, October 2: Products and Commodities


**Supplementary Readings:**

Tuesday, October 9: The Making of the Modern Corporation


**Supplementary Readings:**

**Tuesday, October 23: The New Politics of Labor**


**Supplementary Readings:**


**Tuesday, October 30: The Financialization of America**


**Supplementary Readings:**


**Tuesday, November 6: Consumer Society since the New Deal**


**Supplementary Readings:**

Tuesday, November 13: Corporate Liberalism


**Supplementary Readings:**
- (Harvard University Press, 2006).

Tuesday, November 20: The Return of the Market


**Supplementary Readings:**
• David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

**Tuesday, November 27: The Ethos of the Service Economy**


**Supplementary Readings:**

• Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (Yale University Press, 2006).

**Tuesday, December 4: Postindustrialism and its Problems**


**Supplementary Readings:**


