

HIST 273 - CAPITALISM AND GLOBALIZATION SINCE 1492
FALL 2008 – MON/WED 3:00-4:20PM SCTR A154

PROF. WHITE

OFFICE HOURS: TUES 2-4, WED 10-12

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Course Structure:

This course asks the big question: “Why did some countries get rich and others get poor?” We will approach the issue historically, giving particular emphasis to the role of trade and political institutions. *The course requires no prior training in economics or quantitative methods, but a basic understanding of micro- and macroeconomic principles will help. If you had high school economics or regularly read the news about financial and economic affairs, that should be enough.* This course will be carried out in lecture-discussion format, with emphasis on class question and answer.

Assignments:

For your first assignments, you will select three of the primary source readings on Blackboard and write a paper (2-3 pages) *for each* that

- 1) briefly explains the historical background of the author, the writing, and the topics it discusses; and
- 2) analyzes the economic issues contained in the passage in their historical context, giving particular attention to historical and contemporary economic debates.

****Papers are due within two weeks of the week for which the source is posted. In other words, a reading posted in “Week 1” will be due at the end of week 3. I strongly encourage students to space out their assignments, especially since some of the best readings come early in the course.**

For your class essay, you will read one book from a list of recent works on contemporary globalization and capitalism (TBA) and write an essay (5 pages) that

- 1) explains the author’s view of economic history and the origins of globalization and capitalism
- 2) analyzes how the author arrived at that view and how it has influenced his assessment of recent developments
- 3) considers how a different historical approach might have influenced the author’s conclusions.

Grades will be:

20% Class discussion

20% Midterm

20% Primary source papers

20% Essay

20% Final

Course Policies:

Attendance: Students are expected to participate in class and complete the assigned readings each week. Much of the material in the lectures may not be covered in the readings but will be on the exams, and so students should obtain notes for any missed classes.

Honor Code: All course work is governed by Oberlin's Honor Code. If you have a question about how the Honor Code applies to a particular assignment, you should ask the professor in advance of the due date.

Turning in Assignments: Assignments may be handed in at class, office hours, or by e-mail. Late work will be counted 8 points off every day late, including Saturdays and Sundays—no exceptions apart from serious emergencies.

E-mail: I will answer short e-mails Mon-Fri 9-5. If you have any questions that require a long answer, please come by my office during office hours instead. I will be happy to give feedback on any draft or outline of your class work provided you send it in at least 48 hours before the deadline—the longer in advance, the better the feedback.

Grading: A(90-100), B(80-89), C(70-79), D(60-69), F (below 60). Plus and minus grades may be awarded for close scores at my discretion.

Course Books:

Marks, Robert. *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative*. Lanham, 2002.

Bairoch, Paul. *Economics in World History*. Chicago, 1993.

Findlay, R. and K. O'Rourke. *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*. Princeton, 2007.

**works on contemporary globalization (TBA – note that these will be titles readily available at the library or through Amazon)

Required reading runs about 80-100 pages per week. Some of the reading, particularly in Findlay, can be slow going, so give yourself enough time.

Week 1: The Question

Lectures:

9/3: How did some countries get rich and others poor?

Required Reading:

-Marks (intro and chapter 1)

Week 2: The Commercial World of the 16th Century

Lectures:

9/8: The world in the 16th century: an overview

9/10: The beginnings of capitalism and globalization?

Required Reading:

- Marks (chapters 2 and 3)
- Flynn, D., and A. Giraldez. "Path Dependence, Time Lags and the Birth of Globalization." *European Review of Economic History* 8 (2003): 81-108 ([Flynn \(04\) "Path Dependence, Time Lags, and the Birth of Globalization"](#))

Week 3: Crisis and Transformation in the World Economy

Lectures:

- 9/15: The 17th-century crisis and the rise of merchant empires
- 9/17: Drugs and the "industrious revolution"

Required Reading:

- Findlay p.175-87 and chapter 5 (you don't have to memorize all the details of Asian political history—just understand the general trends!)
- de Vries, Jan. "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution." *Journal of Economic History* 54 (1994). ([De Vries \(94\) "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution"](#))

Week 4: The Industrial Revolution

Lectures:

- 9/22: The rise of the Atlantic world economy
- 9/24: The problem of sustained economic growth

Required Reading:

- Findlay (p.311-364)
- Goldstone, Jack. "Efflorescences and Economic Growth in World History: Rethinking the "Rise of the West" and the Industrial Revolution." *Journal of World History* 13 (2002): 323-379. ([Goldstone \(02\) "Efflorescences and Economic Growth"](#))

Week 5: Why Europe? The Great Divergence Debate

Lectures:

- 9/29: Traditional views
- 10/1: Revisionist explanations

Required Readings:

- Marks (chapter 4)
- Landes, David. "What Room for Accident in History? Explaining Big Changes by Small Events." *The Economic History Review* 47 (1994): 637-56. ([Landes \(94\) "What Room for Accident in History"](#))
- Vries, P.H.H. "Are Coal and Colonies Really Crucial? Kenneth Pomeranz and the Great Divergence." *Journal of World History* 12 (2001). ([Vries \(01\) "Are Coal and Colonies Really Crucial?"](#))

Week 6: Review and Exam

Lectures:

10/6: Review
**In class midterm 10/8

**No new readings

Week 7: Industry and Globalization

Lectures:

10/13: Commodities and the transportation revolution
10/15: The terms of trade

Required Reading:

-Findlay (chapter 7)
-Hobsbawm, Eric. "The World Unified" (selection from *The Age of Capital*) (ERes)

Week 8: No Classes

**Fall Recess 10/20-10/22

Week 9: Imperialism and International Order

Lectures:

10/27: Economic aspects of imperialism
10/29: The European state system and international order

Required Reading:

-Bairoch (p.59-98)
-Horowitz, Richard. "International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire during the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of World History* 15 (2004).
([Horowitz \(04\) "International Law and State Transformation"](#))

Week 10: Trade and Protectionism

Lectures:

11/3: Liberalism and the development of economics
11/5: The rise of nationalism and protectionism

Required Reading:

-Bairoch (p.16-56)
-Gerschenkron, Alexander. "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective" (ERes)

Week 11: Crisis (?) 1914-1945

Lectures:

11/10: The first wave of global migration
11/12: The Great Depression

Required Reading:

- Findlay (chapter 8)
- McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15 (2004): 155-89. ([McKeown \(04\) "Global Migration"](#))

Week 12: Recovery (?) 1945-1989

Lectures:

- 11/17: The rise and fall of the Bretton Woods system and the “economic miracle”
- 11/19: Schemes for development in the Third World

Required Reading:

- Findlay (chapter 9)
- W.W. Rostow “The Stages of Economic Growth” (from *ibid.*)

Week 13: Sources of Contemporary Globalization

Lectures:

- 11/24: The triumph of neo-liberalism
- 11/26: The Information Age

**No new readings: You have this week to finish a work on contemporary globalization for the second essay

Week 14: Global Economic Inequality

Lectures:

- 12/1: Measures of inequality
- 12/3: Kicking away the ladder?: The debate over globalization and growth

**Second essay due by the end of the week.

Required Reading:

- Marks (chapter 5-end)
- Bairoch (p.101-118)

Week 15: Current Issues

Lectures:

- 12/9: The return of Asia
- 12/11: Globalization and the environment

Required Reading:

- selections from contemporary works on globalization (TBA)*