

## **HIS 353: American Capitalism and the Global Economy**

Course Credits: 3

Semester: Fall 2016

Prerequisites: Two semesters of History / Political Science Survey

**Dr. Jennifer M. Black**

### **Course Description:**

*From the University Catalog:*

This course provides an analysis of the historical origins and development of American capitalism, from the late-eighteenth century to the present. It examines the shifting nature of capitalism and the ways that it has framed both the role of the US government (broadly construed) and the social experience of the American people, as well as America's role in the global economy.

### *Introduction*

American business has long been the topic of historical, political, and economic debate. What is the nature of American capitalism? What is the relationship between the American government and the capitalist economy? How have capitalistic pursuits motivated foreign policy? What are the effects of the capitalist economy on American society? This course will examine the historical origins and development of American capitalism since the late-eighteenth century, focusing on three major themes: the shifting nature of capitalistic thought and practice, its effects in framing the role of the US government (broadly construed), and the social impact of capitalism on the American people. Students in this course will engage in discussion of a variety of topics, including: industrialists, workers, foreign policy, domestic and global trade, banks and financial regulation, corporate responsibility, economic crises, and consumption. At the conclusion of the course, students will have developed a deep and critical understanding of the economic, political, and social implications of the American capitalistic system and its relationship to the global economy.

### **Course Objectives**

University Goals: This course addresses the following University goals:

3. Consider ethical issues and values and make reasoned judgments about them.
4. Think independently and creatively, analyze information critically, and solve problems.
5. Respect and understand cultural differences.
6. Understand global perspectives.
7. Communicate and interact effectively.

### Program Goals:

This course addresses the following Program Goals for the History Major:

1. Broaden perspectives on local, national, and international issues.
3. Provide a critical approach to looking at historical and current events.
4. Cultivate writing and oral communication skills.

This course addresses the following Program Goals for the GLNS Major:

1. To provide students with an interdisciplinary background in history, political science, and related disciplines.
2. To cultivate the ability to think, write, and speak clearly with thoroughness and independence.
5. To afford students the opportunity to develop and increase their capacity for qualitative and quantitative analysis and evaluation of local, national, and international issues and the strategic implementation of concepts and policy options for conflict and problem resolution.
6. To familiarize students with the political, economic, legal, and national security institutions and processes in the United States and the international community, and their histories.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

- Identify major trends in the history of American capitalism
- Articulate critical perspectives on both primary and secondary sources, in both verbal and written analyses
- Apply course material to contextualize social, economic, cultural, and political developments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries
- Synthesize primary and secondary sources in an original research paper

**Required Texts:**

Breen T. H. *The marketplace of revolution: How consumer politics shaped American independence*. Oxford University Press; 2004. ISBN: 9780-19-5181319

Luskey, Brian P., and Wendy A. Woloson, eds. *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-century America*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. ISBN: 9780-8122-46896

Rivoli, Pietra. *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014. ISBN: 9781-118-950142

\*Additional Readings as posted on the Blackboard

**Course Assignments & Evaluation:**

There are two exams in this course, a short research / position paper (with presentation), and a series of discussion assignments required of each student. The final course grade will be weighted as follows:

Participation & Discussions Lead	25%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%
Position Paper / Debate	30%

Throughout the semester, each student will choose two weeks to lead discussion (for one session that week). For that week, the student will create a discussion related to one of the topics assigned in the week's readings, and will prepare materials to help lead the discussion for the

day. The goal of the discussion is to relate the historical content in the readings to current events / issues related to capitalism today. Detailed instructions on leading discussions will follow.

The mid-term and final exam will be composed of essays and short-answer questions designed to test your understanding of the course material and ability to apply it to current events. You will also be required to research and write a position paper that contextualizes current campaign issues to their historical predecessors. Detailed instructions on the position paper will follow. We will hold a group “debate” halfway through the semester to discuss these positions as they relate to American politics today.

Assignment Policies:

*Formatting:* please be sure that your essays are typed, on plain white paper, with all the margins set to one-inch. You should double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. You will be graded on both the style and content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Make sure your paper is clearly organized with an introduction, argument (thesis statement), topic sentences, evidence, and conclusion. Papers must meet the minimum word-count requirement to receive full credit; however no penalty will be given for papers exceeding the suggested limit.

You are required to submit a hard copy in class AND upload a copy to the Blackboard (assignments listed under “Content”) by the due date and time.

*Late Policy:* Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Late penalties begin at the end of class, and papers will incur a grade deduction of five points for each day late with a maximum penalty of 25 points (i.e. if the original grade is 85/100 and the paper was submitted one day late, it drops to an 80/100).

Grading Scale for Course Grades:

A = 93-100%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% and below
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	
B+= 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%	

## Weekly Schedule

*Readings with an asterisk (\*) are available on Blackboard*

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### **Week 1 (Aug 29-Sept 2): Introduction**

*Readings:* \*Williams, *Keywords*, for Bourgeois, Capitalism, Class, & Industry (18p)  
\*Adam Smith, Excerpts from *Wealth of Nations* (10p)  
Breen, introduction (8p), begin chapter 1

*Homework:* OED assignment (see instructions on Blackboard), due on 9/2/16, 1:30pm

\*NO CLASS September 5- Labor Day Recess

### **Week 2 (Sept 7, 9): The Colonies in the Mercantile System**

*Readings:* Breen, chapters 1-2, p88-101 (84p)

### **Week 3 (Sept 12-16): Non-Importation and Consumer Power**

*Readings:* Breen, p166-182, 191-192, p195-234 (66p)

Discussion

### **Week 4 (Sept 19-23): From Revolution to a New Nation**

*Readings:* Breen, 235-267, 289-293, chapter 8 (68p)

Discussion

### **Week 5 (Sept 26-30): Money and Government Policy in the Early Republic**

*Readings:* CBG chapter 3 (Greenberg) (22p)  
\*Blackford & Kerr p50-63 on Smith, Jefferson, Hamilton (12p)  
\*Wright, "Corporation Nation" (23p)

Discussion

\*Annotated Bibliography due in class, 9/30/16

### **Week 6 (Oct 3-7): Illegitimate Trade**

*Readings:* CBG chapter 2 (Gamble) (21p), chapter 6 (Goettsch) (17p), chapter 9 (Hemphill) (21p)

Discussion

### **Week 7 (Oct 10): Labor and Race in the North**

*Readings:* \*Lapsansky, "Separate Churches" *American Quarterly* (1980) (24p)

### **(Oct 12) MID-TERM EXAM**

\*NO CLASS October 14 (Fall Break)

**Week 8 (Oct 17-21): Slavery and the Market**

- Readings:* \*Baptist, on Debt & Slavery (23p)  
\*Faust, Plantation as Business Enterprise (8p)  
\*Johnson et al., on Commodification of People (29p)

Discussion

**Week 9 (Oct 24-28): The Labor Question**

- Readings:* \*Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor*, p11-51  
\*Marx, *Communist Manifesto*, Parts 1-2, 4 (15p)

Discussion

\*Optional Paper conferences this week- make appointment with Dr. Black

**Week 10 (Oct 31-Nov 4): Industry and Consumerism**

- Readings:* \*Dunlavy, on growth of Big Business, from *Major Problems* (6p)  
\*Leach, *Land of Desire* (p263-285, 292-308) (32p)

\*\*Position Papers Due Oct 31, in class

\*\*Presentations will take place this week

**Week 11 (Nov 7-11): Responses to Capitalism**

- Readings:* \*Blackford & Kerr on Regulation (p207-219) (12p)  
\*Horkheimer & Adorno, "The Culture Industry" (48p)

Discussion

\*WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> —Last day to withdraw without academic penalty

**Week 12 (Nov 14-18): Depression & World War**

- Readings:* \*Bernstein et al., essays on Labor & Industry 1930-1945, from *Major Problems* (14p)  
\*Clarke, *Trust & Power*, chapter 6 (25p)  
\*Blanke review of Clarke (6p)

Discussion

**Week 13 (Nov 21): Capitalism in the Twentieth Century**

- Readings:* \*Head on Walmart, from *Major Problems* (6p)  
\*Cohen "Consumers' Republic," from *J. Consumer Research* (2004) (4p)  
Rivoli, p. ix-23

\*NO CLASS November 23-25 (Thanksgiving Recess)

**Week 14 (Nov 28-Dec 2): China & Foreign Markets**

*Readings:* Rivoli, p.24-104

Discussion

**Week 15 (Dec 5-9): From Chinese Factories to US Markets**

*Readings:* Rivoli, p.105-212

Discussion

**Week 16 (Dec 12): Capital and Your T-Shirt**

*Readings:* Rivoli, p.215-285

**FINAL EXAM-** per the University exam schedule