

AMH5930: Readings Seminar in American Capitalism

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Wednesdays, 3-6 p.m.
Room 113, Keene-Flint Hall

Course Introduction

This course will be a broad-based survey in the history of American capitalism from the early evolution of a market economy, the rise of industrialism, and through the ascendance of American consumerism. Although the narrative of American enterprise forms the basic structure of AMH5930, we will also examine the social, cultural, and political impact of capitalism by exploring several core questions. How did commercial and financial markets evolve in the American context? Who were the winners and losers in the Industrial Revolution and how did class formation evolve in the United States? How did the American state(s) shape a political climate that attempted to serve the interests of workers, individual entrepreneurs and large, multi-divisional corporations? Could American capitalism negotiate moments of crisis such as the Panic of 1837 or the Great Depression without undergoing major change? Why did the consumerist vision of American society triumph by the post-World War II period? In order to address these questions and others, students will read and discuss many of the cutting-edge, award-winning studies in the growing field of American capitalism and engage them in brief comparative reviews, but there is no prerequisite expertise in economics or business history necessary.

These reading seminars are designed to give you an introduction to the historiography of a particular time period or subject matter in American history. They are also designed to allow you to work on your analytical and writing skills. For this reason, your grade will be determined by a combination of your contributions in the week-to-week seminar discussions and also your performance on a number of written assignments. Students will work on practical skills such as critiquing a book's argument, writing a cogent review and engaging in a comparative analysis of multiple works of history.

Course Requirements

There will be two major components to this course. First, students will be expected to read and analyze the assigned readings for each class meeting. This includes discussing the major arguments of the assigned books during class. Our comprehension and discussion of the assigned readings is the basic foundation of this seminar, so attendance and participation in every class meeting is essential. Unanticipated absences do occur from time to time, but since participation is an essential part of this class, any absences above one will result in a failing grade in the class. Discussion and participation will make up 40% of your final grade.

The second major component of this class will be five (5) book reviews. One of these readings will deal only with the assigned reading; the three other ones will compare the assigned reading with an outside source. These reviews will not simply summarize the book—they will focus upon the major arguments of the author, analyze the sources employed in the work, and provide your own assessment of the effective use of evidence and argument. The first book and final book reviews should be about 1,000 words and will cover the second week's reading (Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution*) and the final week's reading (Roubini & Mihm, *Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance*). The second, third, and fourth book reviews will be longer, comparative essays of 1,250-1,500 words that compare the assigned reading with one of the suggested readings for that week. These comparative book reviews will be distributed throughout the semester and students will be expected to make a brief presentation of the book to the colloquium during the class session. These papers will make up 60% of your final grade in the course.

It should go without saying, but I will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty for this course. For any questions regarding UF's policy on academic honesty, please consult the following website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>. Should you require any accommodations as a result of a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. For any questions regarding UF's policy on disability accommodations, please consult the following website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

Seminar Schedule (Subject to Revision)

January 8 Course Introduction and Expectations

January 15 The Big Picture

Main Reading:

Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011)

Supplemental Readings:

Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1942)

Karl Polyani, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (1944)

Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1966)

David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (1998)

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (2000)

January 22 Buying and Selling in Early America

Main Reading:

Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2011)

Supplemental Readings:

Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (1966)

Thomas Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (1986)

David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (1997)

Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (2002)

Timothy Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Lorena Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607-1763* (2010)

January 29 Class Formation in the Early American Republic

Main Reading:

Sharon Murphy, *Investing in Life: Insurance in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013)

Supplemental Readings:

Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class* (1984)

Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (1987)

Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (2006)

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (2008)

Joshua Greenberg, *Advocating the Man: Masculinity, Organized Labor, and the Household in New York, 1800-1840* (2009)

Brian Luskey, *On the Make: Clerks and the Quest for Capital in Nineteenth-Century America* (2010)

February 5 Boom and Bust in Antebellum America

Main Reading:

Jessica Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Supplemental Readings:

Peter Temin, *The Jacksonian Economy* (1969)

Edward Balleisen, *Navigating Failure: Bankruptcy and Commercial Society in Antebellum America* (2001)

Bruce Mann, *Republic of Debtors: Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence* (2003)

Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (2005)

Jane Kamensky, *The Exchange Artist: A Tale of High-Flying Speculation and America's First Banking Collapse* (2008)

February 12 Slavery and American Capitalism

Main Reading:

Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013 0674045556)

Supplemental Reading:

Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974)

James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (1990)

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (2001)

Dylan Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African-American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (2002)

Robert Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (2003)

Stephen Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Brian Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (2009)

February 19 Financial Risk in 19th Century America

Main Reading:

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012)

Supplemental Reading:

Naomi Lamoreaux, *Insider Lending: Banks, Personal Connections, and Economic Development in Industrial New England* (1994)

Rowena Olegario, *A Culture of Credit: Embedding Trust and Transparency in American Business* (2006)

Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (2007)

Scott Nelson, *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters* (2013)

February 26 The Landscape of American Industrialization

Main Reading:

Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

Supplemental Reading:

Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures since 1880* (1986)

Anthony F.C. Wallace, *St. Clair: A Nineteenth-Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry* (1988)

Paul Krause, *The Battle For Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel* (1992)

William Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1992)

Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (2011)

March 12 American Imperialism

Main Reading:

Jason Colby, *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013)

Supplemental Reading:

Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (1982)

Cyrus Veese, *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power* (2002)

Marcelo Bucheli, *Bananas and Business: The United Fruit Company and Columbia, 1899-2000* (2005)

Kristin Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (2007)

Noel Maurer, *The Empire Trap: The Rise and Fall of U.S. Intervention to Protect American Property Overseas, 1893-2013* (2013)

March 19 The Corporation in American Life

Main Reading:

Julia Ott, *When Wall Street Met Main Street: The Quest for an Investors' Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011)

Supplemental Reading:

Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977)

Martin Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism: The Market, Law, and Politics, 1890-1916* (1988)

William Roy, *Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America* (1997)

Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (2000)

Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of American Marketing* (2001)

March 26 The New Deal's Legacy

Main Reading:

Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013)

Supplemental Reading:

Ellis Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence* (1966)

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (1990)

Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935* (1994)

Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (2006)

Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (2008)

Kimberly Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal* (2010)

April 2 Borrowing to Prosperity

Main Reading:

Louis Hyman, *Debtor Nation: The History of America in Red Ink* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012)

Supplemental Reading:

Lendol Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit* (2001)

Kathleen G. Donohue, *Freedom From Want: American Liberalism & The Idea of the Consumer* (2003)

Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003)

Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (2004)

Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (2007)

April 9 The Sunbelt's Consumerist Creed

Main Reading:

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

Supplemental Reading:

James Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development* (1993)

Bruce Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South 1938–1980* (1994)

Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (1997)

Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business* (2009)

Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (2013)

April 16 Post-Industrial America

Main Reading:

Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011)

Supplemental Reading:

Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (2005)

Gerald Davis, *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Re-Shaped America* (2009)

Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (2010)

Greta Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (2011)

Joseph McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike That Changed America* (2012)

April 23 A Usable Past?

Main Reading:

Nouriel Roubini & Stephen Mihm, *Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance* (New York: Penguin, 2011)

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