Introduction

The market revolution in America defined the development of US society and culture over the course of the long nineteenth century. This course examines how Americans at that time constructed, experienced and challenged the many facets of capitalism taking shape in the US. Taking a thematic approach, the course will explore topics such as labour and the culture of work, class and gender identities in a capitalist society, debt and failure, confidence and speculation, commodities and consumption and finally the spread of American capitalist cultures both at home and abroad.

Aims and Objectives

At the end of this module you will have a strong understanding of how capitalism as a social structure and cultural construct was created and how it shaped the lives of Americans in the nineteenth century.

You will also be familiar with the key scholarly debates that surround the history of American capitalism in the nineteenth century and will have engaged with those debates yourself.

You will also have developed the skills needed to identify and intervene in scholarly debates, work closely with primary sources and plan a research project on a topic of your choosing.

Methods of Assessment

The assessment for this course is based entirely on coursework. The four assessments are designed to test and improve all the different skills you require as historians. Over the semester you will be working towards the larger goal of developing a research proposal of your own, one that could form the basis of a Historical Research Dissertation if you would like to pursue one.

Teaching Arrangements

There will be one lecture and one single hour seminar each week:

Lectures are on Fridays at 10am

Seminars are also on Fridays and will be held at either 11am or 12pm. Please check your timetable for details.

The lectures are on the broad context of the week’s topics. As there is no textbook for this course, attendance is crucial for both your understanding of the course material and your successful completion of this course.

Seminars are an opportunity to explore the week’s readings and the themes of the
week in greater detail. **You will read at least one primary source and one secondary source per week.** These discussions are the heart of the course. They provide you with the chance to deepen your analytical skills and hone your critical abilities through discussion. Consequently, attendance is mandatory and participation is strongly advised.

**Preparation for Class**

**For each seminar you should:**

- Read the assigned reading *thoroughly*. Skimming is not recommended.
- Locate, read and contextualize the primary source material.
- Prepare a short comment or question and post it to the class blogspot.
- Bring the week's reading materials and copy of the primary source to class with you.

The assigned secondary source readings for the week are available from the Course Reader.
Primary sources are either available via Google Books, on the Class Website (CW) or in the QM Library.
Books marked (SH) are available from Senate House only.

The books and articles listed in the longer bibliography are there to guide you when you are working on your research essay. **However,** if you have time to read one book from this list each week, it will dramatically improve your ability to participate in the class discussions and will lift your overall performance on the module. Make it a goal to read one extra item a week.
Course Programme

Week 1: Thinking about Capitalism as Culture

Assigned Reading:

“Culture’ and ‘Capitalism’ in Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (1983) (CW)

Additional Reading:


********

Week 2: The Great Debate: The Market Revolution

Assigned Reading:


Additional Reading:

Gilje’s article is an introduction to a collection of articles in this issue of the journal that engages with the question of what was changing about the American economy in the early Republic. Look at the titles and choose one to read in addition to Paul Gilje’s article. You should NOT use one of these articles as part of your literature review but reading at least one of them will enhance your literature review with an additional perspective.
Week 3: Creating Commodities out of Human Beings

Assigned Reading:

AND


Primary Source:

A selection of Slavery Broadsides (CW)

Additional Reading:


Assigned Reading:


Primary Source:

Edward Hazen, *The Panorama of Professions and Trades* (1836) Google Books
Please read the Preface and 1 entry of your own choosing.

Additional Reading:

Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*, (1989).
Billy G. Smith, *Down and Out in Early America*, (2004). (SH)
Week 5: Gender, Labour and Capitalist Ideology.

Assigned Reading:


Primary Source:


Additional Reading:

John Mack Farragher, Women and Men on the Overland Trail, (1979)
**Week 6: The Culture of Failure**

**Assigned Reading:**


**Primary Source:**


**Additional Reading:**


Cathy Matson, “Flimsy Fortunes: Americans’ old relationship with paper speculation and panic’ *Common-Place: Special Issue Hard Times* 10:3 (April 2010) at www.common-place.org


Sharon Ann Murphy, “Doomed to eat the bread of dependency?’ Insuring the middle-class against hard times, *Common-Place: Special Issue Hard Times* 10:3 (April 2010) at www.common-place.org


Week 8: Confidence and Counterfeits: Trust in a Capitalist Economy

Assigned Reading:


Primary Source:


Additional Reading:


Ann Fabian, Card Sharps and Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth Century America (1999)

Karen Haltunnen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture (1986)

Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War, (1957).


Week 9: Buying the American Dream

Assigned Reading:


Primary Source:

Browse the Baker Library Trade Card Collection
http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/19th_century_tcard/

Additional Reading:


Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940*, (1986). (SH)


Week 10: The Promise of Wealth and the Problem of Labour.

Assigned Reading:


Additional Reading:

Moon-Ho Jung Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation (2006).
Week 11: Culture in the Age of the Corporation

Assigned Reading:


Additional Reading:


Andrew Carnegie, *The Empire of Business*, (1903).


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


Week 12: Cultural Imperialism and Capitalist Dreams

Assigned Reading:


Additional Reading:

Mary Renda, Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism (2001) (SH)
Assessment Instructions

Short Literature Review: 1,500 words (20%)
Gobbet Exercise: 1,500 words (15%)
Research Proposal and Bibliography: 1,000 words (15%)
Research Essay: 2,500 words (50%)

1. Short Literature Review (20%)

The aim of this assessment is to use current scholarship to identify themes and topics of interest to you within the broader historiography. This skill allows you to do several things. First, it enables you to create a bibliography of books and articles that will give you an in-depth knowledge of a subject. Second, it allows you to learn what historians have already said about a given topic and weigh up the strength of the research on your chosen subject. Third, it enables you to see if there are any gaps in the current scholarship, helping you identify areas for new research and ultimately make way for an original project of your own.

The end product of the Short Literature Review will be a 1,500 word essay that examines the current research on the history of capitalism in the Early Republic. Your essay will identify ONE book and TWO articles and characterize the argument of each piece. It will examine how these pieces of writing support or challenge one another and will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the three pieces of writing, both individually and collectively. Finally, your review will discuss ideas or areas that require further research.

To locate these THREE items you will use the footnotes of the following article, which is the assigned reading for Week 2.


Your essay must focus on ONE of the following topics:

- Money and Banking
- Transportation and Communications
- Land and the Frontier
- Industrialization
- Consumerism
- Capitalist mentalities and ideologies

TIP: when choosing your book and articles make sure they were published at different times so that you can see how historians’ ideas on this topic have developed.
2. Gobbet Exercise (15%)

The aim of this assessment is to develop your skills at locating primary sources and using those sources to build up evidence of past events, ideas, social structures and cultural frameworks.

The end product of the Gobbet Exercise will be a 1500 word essay that discusses TWO primary sources in depth. Your essay will contextualise each source, discuss their content in detail and describe the wider uses and implications of these two sources for historians. You should explain what these two sources together could show us about the past.

Your FIRST Primary Source must be one that we have read for class, between Weeks 3-9 inclusive. Your SECOND Primary Source should be one that you find for yourself. The websites below will provide you with a wide range of digitized sources but you can also use the resources at the British Library, in particular the Newspaper Collections held at Colindale.

- American Antiquarian Society Digital Exhibitions
  http://www.americanantiquarian.org/exhibitions.htm
- American Memory at the Library of Congress
  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html
- Baker Library at Harvard Digital Exhibitions
  http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/exhibits/index.html
- The Emergence of American Advertising, Duke University
  http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/eaa/
- Historic Moneys in the University of North Carolina Collection
  http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/money/
- IMPAC, The Library Company’s Digital Collections
  http://lcpdams.librarycompany.org:8881/R?RN=730312805
- Making of America (Cornell)
  http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/
- Making of America (Michigan)
  http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagr/
- NYPL Digital Gallery
  http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/explore/dgexplore.cfm
- Quakers and Slavery
3. Research Proposal and Bibliography (15%)

The aim of this assessment is to design a research project that you could carry out and complete in a year. It is an opportunity to produce a design for a project that would, if carried out, result in original research on the history of American capitalism in the nineteenth century.

The end product of the Research Proposal is a 1000 word proposal NOT including your bibliography. The proposal should outline a research question and explain its significance. The proposal must describe and locate the relevant primary sources for the question. The proposal will also indicate how the question will contribute to the existing historiography. In addition, you must produce a substantial bibliography of secondary source materials that would support research on this question and provide the basis for a future literature review. Your bibliography must be formatted correctly in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style.

4. Research Essay (50%)

The aim of this assessment is to demonstrate your deeper understanding of the history of American capitalism.

You should choose ONE of the following questions and write a 2,500 word essay NOT including your bibliography.

a) What was capitalist about slavery in antebellum America?
b) How did ideas about class change in America? Your answer should discuss either the period 1776 to 1850 or 1850 to 1917?
c) To what extent did the market revolution provide opportunities for American women?
d) How did American attitudes to debt change between 1776 and 1917?
e) ‘American capitalism grew out of cons and confidence schemes.’ Discuss.
f) How did American attitudes towards consumption change between 1776 and 1917?
g) How did the rise of the corporation in the late nineteenth century change American culture?

**Deadlines**

Short Literature Review: Friday Week 6 (February 17, 2012)

Gobbet Exercise: Friday Week 9 (March 9, 2012)
Coursework Submission

You must submit two copies of all pieces of coursework

1. A paper copy must be placed in the History Department Essay Box with a departmental coversheet attached.
2. An electronic copy must be submitted on Blackboard.

Both copies of your coursework must be submitted by noon on the date of submission. If you have any trouble submitting either copy of your essay you should contact the History Office immediately. It is your responsibility to ensure that both copies of your coursework have been submitted correctly and on time.

As indicated in the Student Handbook, the Department employs a very strict policy with regard to coursework submissions. Five marks will be deducted for each day that the assignment is overdue, not including weekends, bank holidays, and those days on which the office is closed. Extensions can be authorized only the Senior Tutor, on the basis of appropriate documentation.

An important note on plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined on page 33 of the Undergraduate Handbook as ‘the failure to properly credit the writings or ideas of another person that you have used in your own work. In such cases you are, deliberately or inadvertently, attempting to pass their work off as your own.”

Both ‘conscious plagiarism” (deliberately copying someone else’s work) and “unconscious plagiarism” (from poor note taking or accidental omission of quotation marks) are examination offences. The penalty for plagiarism is a zero mark.

Plagiarism is avoided by always making sure you put direct quotes in quotation marks and adding footnotes to reference your source. However, if your essay is simply a series of quotations strung together then this too constitutes a form of plagiarism. You should endeavor to paraphrase and summarize other peoples’ ideas carefully and conscientiously when writing your essays and always add footnotes to reference the source. If you have any questions please ask for help.