

History 890
Graduate Readings Seminar in
American Economic History and the History of Capitalism
Spring 2011, Mondays 5:30 – 8:20 PM
Hamilton 570

Professor Benjamin Waterhouse

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Hamilton 422

Office Hours: Wednesday 1–3 PM, and by appointment

This seminar is designed to expose graduate students to a rich and vibrant field of historical inquiry. We will examine some of the major methodological and conceptual issues explored by scholars of American capitalism (whether they self-identify as such or not). Through rigorous historiographical analysis, we will ask how historians have studied major problems of political economy, how different schools of thought frame the central questions of American economic history, and how attention to material factors can inform our own work. The seminar is aimed at graduate students in American history who will find this reading list helpful in constructing their comps lists. Nonetheless, it is also open to students from other fields and departments who are interested in the historical problem of political economy and the history of capitalism.

Assignments:

Each week, we will read and discuss a major work in economic history and the history of capitalism. One student will be the appointed discussion leader and take charge of introducing the material and central debates. In preparation for that role, that student will write a short (3–4 page) review of the assigned book with reference to one or two related works, which she or he should choose from the list of recommended readings for that week. (Students who wish to use material not on this list should discuss the choice with the instructor first.) *These reviews will be due to the instructor the night before class.* Each student should expect to lead two discussions and write two short reviews. (Depending on enrollment, certain weeks may feature more than one discussion leader.) In addition, all students will write a substantial historiographical essay of approximately 15 to 20 pages on a subject of their choice, in consultation with the instructor, which will be due during exam week.

Grade Breakdown:

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| Seminar Participation: | 25% |
| Reviews and Discussion Leading: | 30% |
| Major Essay: | 45% |

Seminar Schedule

Week 1: January 10—**Introduction to Course**

Required:

Sven Beckert, “History of American Capitalism”
Jürgen Kocka, “Writing the History of Capitalism”

Week 2: January 24—**What is The History of Capitalism?**

Required:

Joyce Appleby, *Relentless Revolution* (2010)

Week 3: January 31—**Capitalism and the Founding**

Required:

Robin Einhorn, *American Taxation, American Slavery* (2006)

Suggested:

Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913)
Thomas Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (1985)
Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan., 1990), pp. 3-29.
Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1993)
Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy* (2003)
Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (2007)

Week 4: February 7—**The Rise of Industrial Capitalism**

Required:

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By* (2009)

Suggested:

Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860* (1966)
Anthony Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (1978)
Paul Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution, 1780–1860* (1981)
Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic* (1984)
Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (1991)
Robert Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (1993)

Week 5: February 15—**The Political Economy of Slavery**

Required:

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul* (1999)

Suggested:

Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (1978)

Drew Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South* (1982)

Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1989)

Thomas Bender, ed., *The Anti-Slavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (1992)

Julie Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860–1870* (1994)

Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (1997)

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery* (2007)

Week 6: February 21—**Money and Power in an Expanding Nation**

Required:

Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters* (2007)

Suggested:

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (1945)

Richard Hofstadter, “Andrew Jackson and the Rise of Liberal Capitalism,” *The American Political Tradition* (1948), pp. 44–66

Barrington Moore, Chapter 3, “The American Civil War: The Last Capitalist Revolution,” in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, pp. 111–115 (1966)

Harry Watson, *Liberty and Power* (1990)

William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis* (1991)

Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis* (2001)

Adam Rothman, *Slave Country* (2005)

Week 7: February 28—**The Managerial Revolution**

Required:

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

(No Reviews for this week.)

HAVE A PRODUCTIVE AND ENJOYABLE SPRING BREAK

Week 8: March 7—**Corporate Liberalism (and the Progressive Era)**

Required:

Martin Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism* (1988)

Suggested:

Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (1955)

Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (1963)

Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order* (1967)

James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State* (1968)

Jeffrey Lustig, *Corporate Liberalism: The Origins of Modern American Political Theory* (1982)

Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice* (1991)

Week 9: March 21—**The Great Depression**

Required:

Charles Kindleberger, *The World in Depression* (1973)

Suggested:

Milton Friedman, *Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960* (1963)

Peter Temin, *Did Monetary Forces Cause the Great Depression?* (1976)

Charles Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (1987)

Barry Eichengreen, *Golden Fetters* (1992)

Ben Bernanke, *Essays on the Great Depression* (2000)

Harold James, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression* (2001)

Week 10: March 28—**The New Deal**

Required:

Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works* (2006)

Suggested:

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval, 1935–1936* (1945)

Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (1955)

William Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (1963)

Ellis Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly* (1966)

Robert Collins, *The Business Response to Keynes, 1929–1964* (1981)

Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* (1989)

Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (1995)

Week 11: April 4—***Les Trentes Glorieuses***

Required:

Robert Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (2000)

Suggested:

Herbert Stein, *Presidential Economics* (1984)

Louis Galambos, *The Rise of the Corporate Commonwealth* (1988)

Nelson Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (1995)

Jonathan Bean, *Beyond the Broker State* (1996)

Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics* (2005)

Jennifer Delton, *Racial Integration in Corporate America* (2009)

Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands* (2009)

Louis Hyman, *Debtor Nation: The History of America in Red Ink* (2011)

Week 12: April 11—**The Age of Compression**

Required:

Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade* (2010)

Suggested:

Paul Krugman, *Peddling Prosperity* (1994)

Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves* (1999)

Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights* (2003)

Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic* (2003)

Philip J. Cooper, *The War Against Regulation* (2009)

Week 13: April 18—**The Political Economy of the Service Economy**

Required:

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart* (2009)

Suggested:

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* (2001)

Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country* (2008)

Nelson Lichtenstein, *Retail Revolution* (2009)

Week 14: April 25—**Globalization and Its Discontents**

Required:

Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002)

(No Reviews for this week.)

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW ESSAY DUE MAY 6, 5 PM