

DePaul University
Department of Economics

Economics 317-101
American Economic History

Dr. Laura Owen
Fall 2020

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Please type ECO317 in the subject line when sending an e-mail about class issues.

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:30-1:30pm [via Zoom] or by appointment

TEXTS:

Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy*, Yale University Press, 2006

Additional course readings are available through the library's e-reserves [ARES], accessible through each Module in D2L.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: The goal of this course in American Economic History is to provide students with a basic understanding of how the institutions of the current U.S. economy have evolved over time. From the colonial period to the Great Depression, we will focus on topics such as differences in regional development, the economic effects of slavery, the role of transportation improvements and westward expansion in economic growth, the rise of large scale businesses and their impact on industrial structure and the nature of work, and the development of government policy in response to economic fluctuations.

COURSE STRUCTURE: The course will be delivered primarily online-asynchronous with students having the flexibility to listen to lectures and complete readings at convenient times but on a weekly schedule. We will set up various times for synchronous discussion groups to accommodate everyone's schedule.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: The prerequisites for this course are ECO105 (Principles of Microeconomics) and ECO106 (Principles of Macroeconomics). A basic understanding of the principles of economics and economic terminology will be assumed.

COURSE CREDIT: Economics majors taking this course count it as an economics elective. Students with other majors can take this course for Liberal Studies Credit in the Historical Inquiry domain.

Liberal Studies Program, Historical Inquiry Domain Learning Outcomes:

Historical understanding is a critical competence for our society and a fundamental component of a liberal arts education at DePaul University. Students who are competent in understanding the past are able to achieve learning outcomes that demonstrate their successful development and application of historical knowledge, historical skills, and historical thinking.

GRADING POLICY: Your grade will be determined by the following components: participation in weekly discussions (15%), short writing assignments (30%, based on best 6 of 7), reading quizzes (10%, based on best 6 of 7), two primary source group projects (15%), and the final exam (30%).

Writing Assignments [For modules 1-4, 6, 8]: Think about the discussion question [listed on D2L for each of these modules] as you read the week's readings. Identify one point of evidence from each reading [**noting the author and page number**] that is relevant to the question. Write one to two sentences explaining its relevance. You may use a quote from the reading as your point of evidence but the explanation of its relevance should be in your own words. [Writing Assignment for Module 9 takes a different format and guidelines are included within the module on D2L.] Writing assignments should be uploaded to the D2L submission folder by 11am on the day of each discussion as noted in the course outline of topics.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes are available through the class D2L site under each module. These brief quizzes [5 multiple choice questions] are designed to test your understanding of the assigned readings prior to our discussions. **You should complete these quizzes on your own**, but you may consult the readings as you answer the questions. Quizzes will be due at 11am the day of each discussion as noted in the course outline of topics.

Group Projects: The class will be divided into 6 groups of 6 students each to complete two group projects. These will consist of the group engaging in an online discussion about a primary source document [through a D2L discussion board]. Details about the two projects are included in Modules 5 and 7 on the D2L site.

Final Exam: The comprehensive final exam will be given during final exam week.

All work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy: The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's. Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment."

COURSE OUTLINE (Schedule, readings, questions, and due dates)

(e): reading available through Library electronic reserves system accessible through each D2L module

Module 0: Introduction to the Course

Survey submission due Sunday, September 13th by 5pm

Discussion: Wednesday, September 16 [post to D2L Introduction Discussion Board by 11am]

Module 1: The Colonial Period and the American Revolution

Charles Beard, *The Enduring Federalist*, No.11 and No.12 **(e)**

Marc Egnal and Joseph Ernst, "An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 29, January 1972. **(e)**

Discussion: Wednesday, September 23 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: Why did the colonists think they would be better off economically as an independent nation? Did all colonists share this view?

Module 2: Antebellum Agriculture

Gavin Wright, "The Structure of the Cotton-Slave Economy," chapter 2 in *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, Norton, 1978. **(e)**

Charles Post, "The 'Agricultural Revolution' in the United States: The Development of Capitalism and the Adoption of the Reaper in the Antebellum U.S. North," *Science & Society*, 61(2), Summer 1997. **(e)**

David M. Wishart, "Evidence of Surplus Production in the Cherokee Nation Prior to Removal," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Mar., 1995). **(e)**

Discussion: Wednesday, September 30 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: Think about how the expansion of agriculture was tied to the generation of wealth in the U.S. before the Civil War. Which groups received the highest returns to their labor and why?

Module 3: Transportation, Early Industrialization and Economic Development

Thomas Dublin, "The Transformation of Lowell, 1836-1850, and the New Mill Work Force," chapter 8 in *Women at Work*, Columbia University Press, 1979. **(e)**

Anne Rose, "The Languages of Capitalism," chapter 3 in *Voices of the Marketplace*, Twayne Publishers, 1995. **(e)**

Discussion: Wednesday, October 7 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: How did industrialization and expansion of economic output in the first half of the 19th century change the lives of **individuals** in the U.S.?

Module 4: Antebellum Growth, the Civil War and the Post-War South

Roger Ransom, "The Impact of Emancipation," chapter 7 in *Conflict and Compromise*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

C. Vann Woodward, "Capitulation to Racism," chapter 2 in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Oxford University Press, 1957.

Discussion: Wednesday, October 14 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: Was the economic stagnation in the South following the Civil War inevitable?

Module 5: The American Economic Vision--Origins

Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*, chapters 1-2 (pp. 12-68)

Small Group Online Discussion: Tuesday, October 20 [1st post by noon, ends at midnight]

Discussion: Wednesday, October 21

Discussion Question: How did segregation impact the pursuit of Lincoln's American Dream for both white and black Americans?

Module 6: Industrialization, Big Business, and Labor

Charles McCurdy, "American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation," *Journal of Economic History*, 38(3), September 1978. **(e)**

Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, "The Changing Structure of American Industry," chapter 17 in *A New Economic View of American History*, 2nd edition, Norton, 1994. **(e)**

Discussion: Wednesday, October 28 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: Who was advocating for more government intervention in the economy in response to the industrial growth of the late 19th and early 20th centuries?

Module 7: The American Economic Vision—Two Views Clash

Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*, chapters 3-4 (pp. 47-87)

Small Group Online Discussion: Tuesday, November 3 [1st post by noon, ends at midnight]

Discussion: Wednesday, November 4

Discussion Question: Did the Gospel of Wealth [Garfinkle, ch. 3.] limit the pursuit of the American Dream for some groups of people? Did the reforms [Garfinkle, ch. 4] remove these limits?

Module 8: The Interwar Years [1920s and 1930s]

Frank Stricker, "Affluence for Whom? Another Look at Prosperity and the Working Classes in the 1920s," *Labor History*, 24(1), Winter 1983. **(e)**

Randall Parker, "An Overview of the Great Depression". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. March 16, 2008. URL: <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/an-overview-of-the-great-depression/>

Gordon Berg, "Labor Hall of Fame: Frances Perkins and the Flowering of Economic and Social Policies," *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1989. **[on D2L]**

Discussion: Wednesday, November 11 [Quiz and Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: How are the economic events of the 1920s and the 1930s linked?

Module 9: The American Economic Vision—Two Views Clash with Reality

Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*, chapters 5-6 (pp. 88-143)

Discussion: Monday, November 16 [Writing Assignment due by 11am]

Discussion Question: In our final discussion we will look at the government policy response to the Great Depression, including your individual analyses [from the final Writing Assignment] of the role of funding the arts in a time of economic crisis. We can also consider our current economic situation to think about what policies are called for now?

Final Exam: during final exam week as scheduled by the college