

DePaul University
Department of Economics

Economics 317 American Economic History
Hybrid [Tuesday, 11:50am-1:20pm]

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Please type ECO317 in the subject line when sending an e-mail about class issues. I will respond to emails within 24 hours if received during the week and by Monday noon for emails received over the weekend.

Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:30-3:30pm 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 [available at the Loop bookstore]

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 [1700s-1930s], 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 is offered in a hybrid format with students having the flexibility to listen to lectures and complete readings at convenient times but on a weekly schedule. We will meet on a weekly basis [Tuesday, 11:50am-1:20pm] for group presentations and discussions. **These weekly sessions are a required part of the course and attendance will be taken at each class.** Due dates for all assignments are noted in D2L and appear on the course calendar.

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.

GRADING POLICY: Your grade will be determined by the following components: participation in weekly discussions (15%), two group presentations on a reading (25% total), reading quizzes (10%, based on best 5 of 6), three primary source writing projects (15% total), and the final exam (35%). Grades for the reading quizzes will be automatically available when you complete the quiz. Grades on

the writing assignments and group presentations will generally be posted within a week of the due date. The following grading scale will be used to calculate final letter grades:

A	92-100	B	82-87	C	72-77	D	62-67
A-	90-91	B-	80-81	C-	70-71	D-	60-61
B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D+	68-69	F	below 60

Participation in Weekly Discussions

Modules 1-4, 6, 8: There is a discussion question for each of these modules noted under CONTENT on D2L and on the Course Outline in the syllabus. Think about this discussion question as you read the week's readings. During our class discussion, you should be prepared to reference specific points of evidence from each reading that are relevant to the discussion question. I suggest you make note of these on your downloaded copies of the readings.

Modules 5, 7, 9: There is a question for each of these modules that you will respond to in a short essay which will be submitted through D2L prior to class. These written assignments will form the basis of class discussion for the module. Details for the writing assignment are posted on D2L under each module.

Group Reading Presentations

Modules 1-4, 6, 8: The class will be divided into seven small groups [roughly 5 students] to complete two group projects. Student groups will make presentations on each of the assigned readings for these modules [1 group per reading]. Over the term, your group will make two reading presentations.

Groups will be formed during the first class session.

Reading presentations should include the following:

- Title slide: Author(s) of reading, title of article/chapter, names of group members
- The thesis of the article/chapter or the author's primary conclusion
- Definition of important terms/concepts introduced in the reading
- Identification of three points of evidence from the reading [note page number] that relate to the module discussion question and a brief description of their relevance. You could use a quote from the reading as a point of evidence followed by a 1-2 sentence explanation of its relevance to the discussion question

Aim for a 6-slide presentation, one for each of the components noted above. **Please post these slides to the Discussion Board for the module by 11:30am the day of class.**

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 are due at 11:30am the day of each discussion** as noted in the course outline of topics. **Late submission of quizzes is not permitted.**

Primary Source Writing Assignments

Modules 5, 7, 9: The reading for these modules is from the Garfinkle text. Students will individually read the assigned chapters and review the photographic evidence provided on D2L. Using the discussion question as the writing prompt, students will construct a short essay analyzing the primary source material [photographs] making reference to the Garfinkle text. More detailed guidelines for these assignments are posted under each of these modules. **Writing assignments must be uploaded to the D2L submission folder by 11:30am on the day of each discussion.**

Final Exam: The comprehensive final exam will be given during final exam week. A study guide for the exam will be made available later in the term.

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.”

Use of AI in generating reading presentation slides and in writing primary source analysis essays is generally discouraged. I want to hear your original thoughts and reactions to course materials. If AI is used, University Academic Integrity Policy must be followed. “In this context, AI can be considered analogous to a person....In this way, content generated by AI is a “source” and should be cited appropriately.”

Liberal Studies Program, Historical Inquiry Domain:

This course is approved for HI Domain credit and meets the following learning outcomes.

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a depth and breadth of historical knowledge of specified content by:
 - Explaining historical developments in terms of continuity and change.
 - Describing the relevant political, economic, social, and/or cultural contexts of historical events and developments.
 - Explaining how people have lived, acted, and thought in one or more particular historical periods.
- Demonstrate historical skills by:
 - Analyzing and evaluating primary and secondary sources. [primary sources noted in course outline by (p)]
 - Differentiating between historical facts and historical interpretations.
 - Articulating a historical argument.
 - Supporting an interpretation with evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- Demonstrate historical thinking by:
 - Articulating how geography and regional differences affect the past.
 - Interpreting the complexity and diversity among issues, events, and ideas of the past.
 - Distinguishing among multiple perspectives that shape interpretations of the past.
 - Using the categories of race, gender, class, ethnicity, region, and religion to analyze historical events and developments.

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

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

(p): module includes examination of primary source material

Module 0: Introduction to the Course

First Class: Tuesday, April 2

Module 1: The Colonial Period and the American Revolution

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

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

Discussion: Tuesday, April 9 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: What was the primary **economic** incentive that led the colonists to support independence?

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) (p)** (p: reading includes primary source data from U.S. Census)

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: Tuesday, April 16 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: How did the organization of agriculture impact wealth accumulation in the U.S. before the Civil War?

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: Tuesday, April 23 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: What was the most significant transformation in the lives of **individuals** in the U.S. brought about by industrialization and expansion of economic output in the first half of the 19th century?

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.

Jane Dailey, "Origins of the Readjuster Movement," chapter 1 in *Before Jim Crow : The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia*, University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Discussion: Tuesday, April 30 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: What **government policy** choices [if successful] might have helped the South avoid the economic stagnation experienced following the Civil War?

Module 5: The American Economic Vision—Origins

Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*, chapters 1-2 (pp. 12-68) plus images available on D2L **(p)**

Discussion: Tuesday, May 7 [no Quiz; Primary source essay posted to D2L by 11:30am]

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: Tuesday, May 14 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: Identify **one group** affected by the industrial growth of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and why they advocated for more government intervention in the economy.

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) plus images available on D2L **(p)**

Discussion: Tuesday, May 21 [no Quiz; Primary source essay posted to D2L by 11:30am]

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)**

Federal Reserve History, "The Great Depression" <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/great-depression>

Federal Reserve History, "Banking Panics of 1930-31" <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/banking-panics-1930-31>

Gordon Berg, "Labor Hall of Fame: Frances Perkins and the Flowering of Economic and Social Policies," *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1989. **(e)**

Discussion: Tuesday, May 28 [Quiz due by 11:30am]

Reading Group presentation posted to D2L by 11:30am

Discussion Question: Should the economic events of the 1920s and the 1930s be thought of as separate events, or are they 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) plus images available on D2L **(p)**

Discussion: Tuesday, June 4 [no Quiz, primary source essay posted to D2L by 11:30am]

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.

Final Exam: To be completed during final exam week [details provided on D2L]