

DePaul University
Department of Economics

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

Dr. Laura Owen
Winter 2022

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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, 12:30-1:30pm or by appointment [Zoom link available on D2L under NEWS]

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 [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 will be delivered in an online-hybrid format with students having the flexibility to listen to lectures and complete readings at convenient times but on a weekly schedule. Due dates for all assignments are noted in D2L and appear on the course calendar. We will meet via Zoom on a weekly basis [Wednesday, 11:50am-1:20pm] for discussions. These weekly discussions are a required part of the course and college policy is for students to turn on their cameras during the Zoom sessions.

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%), short writing assignments (30%, based on best 6 of 7), reading quizzes (10%, based on best 5 of 6), two primary source group projects (15% total), and the final exam (30%). Grades for the reading quizzes will be automatically available when you complete the quiz. Grades on

the writing assignments and group projects 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

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 5 groups of 7 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."

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.
 - 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

Module 0: Introduction to the Course

First Zoom Class: Wednesday, January 5

Post to D2L Introduction Discussion Board by Friday, January 7, 5pm

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)**

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, January 12 [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)**

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, January 19 [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)**

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, January 26 [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.

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.

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, February 2 [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, February 8 [1st post by noon, ends at midnight]

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, February 9

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)**

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, February 16 [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, February 22 [1st post by noon, ends at midnight]

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, February 23

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. **(e)**

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, March 2 [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)

Zoom Discussion: Wednesday, March 9 [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.

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