Syllabus

HIST 3000-A01/ ECON 3090-003
History of Capitalism in the USA

UNC-Charlotte, Spring 2015
This course meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30-4:45 in Fretwell 118

Instructor: Dr. Mark Wilson, Associate Professor, History Dept.  
Office: Garinger 226D  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00-12:00, and by appointment.  
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Course Description and Goals

This lecture and discussion course explores the history of the US economy from the 18th century to the 21st century, with special attention to the development of business enterprises, business-labor relations, and business-government relations. Among the major topics treated include agriculture, labor, and commerce in the colonial-era Atlantic world; the rise and fall of slavery; industrialization; money, banking, and finance; the rise of "big business" and antitrust regulation; lobbying; the rise and decline of organized labor; the New Deal order; the changing position of the USA in the global economy; and recent trends in the direction of de-industrialization, "financialization," and growing inequalities of income and wealth.

One important element of this course is a series of talks by outside speakers, including academic experts and business leaders. Some of these speakers will address joint meetings of our course and our sister course, LBST 2101-206. Funding for these talks has been generously provided by the Dowd Foundation of Charlotte.

By the end of this course, students will have a richer understanding of the past and present dynamics of the US economy. Course assignments require that students hone their skills in critical evaluation of qualitative and quantitative evidence, original historical research, and advanced analytical writing.

Attendance, Etiquette, and Participation

Attendance is required; attendance will be taken each day, using a seating chart and/or the short answers to in-class exercises, submitted by teams. You should plan on attending every single class meeting.

All exams and other assignments assume that students have attended each class meeting and have carefully followed each lecture and discussion. If an emergency causes you to miss a class meeting, you should contact the instructor or a fellow student to ask about the content of that meeting. If you have a lengthy illness or other persistent problem that causes you to miss more than two class meetings, you should contact the Dean of Students and speak with the instructor.

During class, turn off electronic devices (unless they are used to take notes for personal use), be on time for class, stay for the duration, and be respectful when others are speaking. Each student should plan on contributing to class discussions at least a couple of times during the semester by offering comments or raising questions. All students will benefit from taking notes during class.
Reading
There are no textbooks for purchase. Instead, students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources (such as journal articles), available for free via Atkins Library and the internet. Whenever possible, direct links to the readings will be provided in the syllabus and on the course’s Moodle page. Reading designated as “required” in the syllabus and on Moodle must be read carefully by all students; knowledge of this materials will be assessed during in-class exercises and exams. Additional readings listed on the course Moodle page, designated as “recommended,” are optional.

Exams
This course includes one in-class midterm exam, scheduled for February 18. This exam will be written in a “blue book” (stapled, lined examination notebook), which you should purchase in January at the UNCC bookstore or Gray’s. The final exam is a take-home exam, due on May 5. Both exams will require you to answer questions with full paragraphs and short multi-paragraph essays. Make-up exams will be given only to students who have a valid and documented medical or activities-related excuse.

Short Archival Research Project
Students will complete a small archival research project, in teams, using one of the small business history related collections in UNCC’s Special Collections department, on the 10th floor of Atkins Library. Deadlines for various stages of this project are noted in the course calendar. The end product will be a report of research findings, of approximately 1,250-1,500 words, submitted by each team. We will discuss details in class.

Academic Integrity:
Academic honesty and integrity are essential to the existence and growth of an academic community. Without the maintenance of high standards of honesty, members of the instructional faculty are defrauded, students are unfairly treated, and society itself is poorly served. Maintaining academic standards of honesty and integrity is ultimately the formal responsibility of the instructional faculty; and this responsibility is shared by all members of the academic community. For a formal statement of university policy on this matter, see http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html

Plagiarism on any assignment will bring a minimum penalty of zero credit for the assignment, as well as an academic settlement that will likely result in a minimum of recording the violation with the Dean of Students. More severe penalties, including an F for the course, may also be imposed, depending on the circumstances. For guidance on how to avoid plagiarism and its consequences, please visit http://history.uncc.edu/Student-Resources/plagiarism

Diversity:
UNC Charlotte strives to create an academic climate in which the diversity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to, ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Disability: If you believe that you have a disability that requires special accommodations in this course (or others), you should contact immediately the Office of Disability Services, 704-687-0040, disability@uncc.edu, http://ds.uncc.edu/.
Weight of course requirements for grading purposes:

Attendance and participation, including completion of short in-class team exercises   25%
(one point for each of the 27 regular class sessions, with no penalty for 2 absences)
Midterm Exam (in class)   20%
Small team archival research project:
  Preliminary questions and research plan:   2%
  Revised questions and research plan:   3%
  Full draft report:   5%
  Final, revised report:   10%

Final Exam (take home)   35%

Bonus for winning answers / questions in short in-class team exercises     up to 8%
(up to 2 points per month)
Bonus for attending Louis Hyman talk on March 11, or another appropriate talk:     2%

Course Calendar

January 7    Introductions. First meeting, in Fretwell 118. Creation of teams.
Required reading: Please look over the course syllabus in advance of this session; bring questions about it, along with other questions about the course.

January 12    General Course Intro, Part 1: The Rise of Capitalism, to the early 19th century
Note: This session, led by Professor John Smail, is the first of several joint meetings with our sister course, LBST 2101-206. Joint meetings will be held in their room, Denny 220.
Required reading: To prepare for the January 12 session, please read in advance TBA.

January 14    Gen’l Course Intro, Part 2: Capitalism Ascendant, Transformed, and Challenged, 19th & 20th centuries. Another joint session, this one led by Dr. Wilson, again in Denny 220.
https://ia801409.us.archive.org/15/items/ImperialismTheHighestStageOfCapitalism/IHC.pdf
And, Woodrow Wilson, “Monopoly, or Opportunity?,” chapter 7 of The New Freedom (1913):
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14811/14811-h/14811-h.htm#X1

January 19    No Class Meeting: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January 21    Gen’l Course Intro, Part 3: Capitalism and Globalization, 20th & 21st centuries
Final joint introductory session, led by Professor Jurgen Buchenau, again in Denny 220.
Required reading: TBA
January 26  Economics in pre-Columbian North America
Note: this is our first regular session, back in our regular room, Fretwell 118.

January 28  What kind of capitalism arrived in the first ships? Merchant capital and trade in British
North America and the Atlantic World, 17th-18th centuries
Required reading: Jacob M. Price, “What Did Merchants Do? Reflections on British

February 2  Labor in British North America: Servants, Slaves, Farmers, & More
In class today: Assignment of archival collections to teams
Required readings: Spend some time examining the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database:
http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces. Examine an indenture contract from 1755,
reproduced at “Virtual Jamestown” site: http://www.virtualjamestown.org/wbind1.html

February 4  Special guest speaker to joint session: Prof. Peter Coclanis, UNC-Chapel Hill
Note: Meet in Denny 220
Required reading: Peter A. Coclanis, "Distant Thunder: The Creation of a World
Market in Rice and the Transformations It Wrought," American Historical Review 98 (October
1993): 1050-78.
In advance of this talk, prepare one or more draft questions for the speaker.

February 9  US Capitalism in the Age of Revolution and the Early Republic
Required readings: The Constitution of the United States (1787). Widely available; one
source is the National Archives site: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/
Read also President Andrew Jackson, 1832 Bank Veto message:
http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-3636

February 11  Class visit to Special Collections, Atkins Library, 10th Floor
Due today: Preliminary list of questions / team research plan, based on reading of online
finding aid of your archival collection, and other quick preliminary research on that collection.

February 16  Planter and Slaves, from the Age of King Cotton through Emancipation
Required reading: sample some of the documents presented by the Freedmen and
Southern Society Project: http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/sampdocs.htm
And read Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, “Capitalists without Capital: The Burden of
Slavery and the Impact of Emancipation,” Agricultural History 62, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 133-60.

February 18  Midterm exam in class. Bring a blue book and pens
February 23  The rise of big business, and antitrust
   Required readings: cartoons of the monopolistic “octopus” from 1882-1909, in digital file made available by the National Humanities Center:  
   http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/power/text1/octopusimages.pdf
   Theodore Roosevelt, “New Nationalism” speech (1910):  

February 25  Special guest speaker to HIST 3000 only: Mr. Blake Barnes, founder/owner, Common Market stores, Charlotte, NC. (Meet in regular Fretwell room.)
   Required reading: the 1875 Montgomery Ward catalog:  
   https://archive.org/details/catalogueno13spr00mont
   And, Jonathan McFadden, “Secret to Common Market’s Staying Power: ‘We’ve Never Shut Down for a Day’,” Charlotte Observer, 2 Sept. 2014:  
   http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/08/26/5130078/secret-to-common-markets-staying.html#.VKqc9dh0yM8
   In advance of this talk, prepare one or more draft questions for the speaker.

March 2-4  No class: Spring Break

March 9  Jim Crow Capitalism?
   Required reading: targeted browsing of the African American Newspapers, 1827-1998 database, available online via Atkins library. Choose just one year in the 1900-30 range; search using detailed terms such as “life insurance company”; use full page views to see advertisements and articles in context. What does the evidence from the newspapers suggest about business enterprise in African American communities, in the era of Jim Crow segregation? Is there a difference between Southern and Northern papers?

March 11  Capital, labor, and labor-management relations in the age of the big strikes, 1870s-1910s.
   Sampling of press coverage of Homestead, Penn. steelworkers strike of 1892, via Library of Congress:  
   http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/topics/homestead.html
   Special guest speaker on March 11, perhaps 5:00 PM (after class) only: Professor Louis Hyman, Cornell University. Details TBA.

March 16  No regular HIST 3000 meeting: work in Special Collections, etc.

March 18  Great Depression; New Deal regulation and “state capitalism”
   Due today: Revised team plan for archival research, reflecting a first examination of actual documents, and response to comments on preliminary plan.
   Required reading: Democratic and Republican party platforms from 1936, via the American Presidency Project website, University of California, Santa Barbara
March 23  
Labor and capital in the era of the New Deal and World War II  
Required reading: Digital History Reader unit on the Flint, MI sit-down strike, 1936-37:  

March 25  
Special guest speaker to joint session: Prof. Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, West Virginia Univ.  
Note: Meet in Denny 220.  
In advance of this talk, prepare one or more draft questions for the speaker.

March 30  
The USA as the global standard-bearer for capitalism, early Cold War  
Required reading: Gen. George Marshall, “Marshall Plan” speech at Harvard University (1947), reproduced by the OECD:  
http://www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm  

April 1  
The golden age of the American industrial corporation (mid-20th century)  
Required reading: Use the ProQuest Historical Annual Reports database, available online via Atkins Library, to examine quantitative and qualitative evidence from two or more annual reports from the 1950s, from one or more major US corporations, such as General Motors, Ford, Du Pont, IBM, etc. What do they tell us, and fail to tell us, about the operations of these companies, and about US capitalism at mid-century?

April 6  
Deregulation since the 1960s: Theory, Politics, and Practice  

April 8  
Special guest speaker: Roddey Dowd, Jr., CEO, Charlotte Pipe & Foundry Co.  
Note: Meet in Denny 220  
Additional reading TBA  
In advance of this talk, prepare one or more draft questions for the speaker.

April 13  
Focus on archival research projects: peer review of draft reports, in class  
Due in class no later than today: full draft report on archival research.
April 15  Globalization, “financialization,” and the reshaping of US capitalism


April 20  Special guest speaker to joint session: Daniel R. DiMicco, former CEO, Nucor Steel Corp., headquartered in Charlotte, NC.

Note: Meet in Denny 220.


Browse DiMicco’s blog: [http://www.dandimicco.com/blog](http://www.dandimicco.com/blog)

In advance of this talk, prepare one or more draft questions for the speaker.

April 22  US Political Economy in the Age of Wal-Mart


April 27  Last regular class meeting: Review and ways forward

Required readings: Bill Gates, 2008 Davos speech on “creative capitalism”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws21GbIaNsE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws21GbIaNsE)


April 29  Reading Day

May 1: Final team report on archival research project due by 5:00 PM.

May 5: Take home final exam due by 9:00 AM.