Welcome to the home page for History 247, American Business History. Click on the links to the left to see detailed month-by-month schedules. I will be making additions to this site over the course of the semester, so check back often. -- Prof. D.

Required readings

American business history as the history of a distinctive kind of capitalism (with some comparison with other variants of capitalism)
Systematic attention to the politics that have structured and shaped American business history
Changes in American business as a social world—who participates and under what terms? How has the social world of business changed since the mid-18c?

Required readings

- Blaszczyk and Scranton, eds., *Major Problems in American Business History* (2006) – at University Bookstore and on reserve at College Library;
- Additional selections of primary and secondary sources – will be available on electronic reserves or on our Learn@UW website;
- Glossary of “keywords”—available on our Learn@UW website

The assigned readings are of two kinds: "primary sources," which are documents produced by participants in or contemporary observers of the historical events that we are studying; and secondary sources, that is, the writing of historians in which they interpret primary sources.

This semester, our primary and secondary sources will come primarily from a new collection, edited by historian Regina Blaszczyk and Philip Scranton. Some of the primary sources take the form of articles, essays, or excerpts from books or pamphlets written by contemporary observers about controversial developments in American business; others consist of the records of business people that give us first-hand insight into the world of business at a given moment. Read them closely and think about them -- the reading load has been kept to a minimum to ensure that you have time for close reading and reflection.

Primary sources provide the grist for the historian’s mill. Read them carefully and
actively; think not only about what information a reading conveys but about who wrote it, why they did so, and what questions it raises in your mind, especially in light of what you have learned in lectures or other readings. (Be sure to read the introduction to each chapter, too.)

Then read the secondary sources (essays in Blaszczyk and Scranton): do they elaborate upon themes evident in the primary sources? Or bring up new themes not touched upon in the essays? Or contradict the essays in any way?

Keywords: a glossary of keywords will be available on our Learn@UW site. Think of these as the building blocks of your knowledge. For each keyword, be sure that you can define the term or identify the person, place it/her/him in time, and explain it/his/her significance in American business history.

At strategic moments in the semester, you will also read chapters from *A Pocket to Writing in History*, which provides advice, among other things, about active reading and skillful analysis.

**Written work**

- Three take-home papers, in which you respond to a question based on the assigned readings (only);
- Final exam (bluebook; essay questions handed out in advance + keywords);
- Occasional assignments for discussion sections.

**Sections / teaching assistant**

Our teaching assistant this semester is John Hogue. Discussion sections are an integral part of the course (see "grades" below), and attendance is mandatory. Prepare and participate. John will provide details in sections.

**Grades**

Your grade for the semester will be based on:

- Discussion sections: 25%
- Take-home papers: 50% (10-15-25)
- Final exam: 25%

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