# History 247, History of American Capitalism

## Essentials

In brief: **Lecture topics** and, within reason, **assigned readings** are subject to change. Participation in **discussion sections** is mandatory. The due dates of the three **writing assignments** are indicated on the schedule below. The **final exam** will be a “blue book” with essay questions handed out in advance. The exam will take place as scheduled on Dec. 23 but we will also offer an optional early exam on Tuesday, Dec. 20. Course materials, including most (though not all) readings, are available on **Learn@UW**. We will also experiment with a new course discussion tool called **Piazza** at [http://piazza.com](http://piazza.com).

## Schedule of Lectures, Sections, and Readings

### Week of September 6-8

**Sept. 6 (T) Lecture – Introductions**

- **Introductory reading**
  - Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010), chs. 1-4. This will help to orient students who have not taken a college-level history course and will serve as a refresher for those who have.
  - “Themes and Concepts” – handout in lecture; also on Learn@UW.

**Sept. 7-8 (W-Th) Discussion Sections**

Will meet this week; no assigned reading (except for 9/8 lec. reading – see below).

**Sept. 8 (TH) Lecture – Thinking about capitalism; “Doing business in the colonies”**

**Keyword:** bill of exchange

For discussion in lecture today (handed out in lecture on Sept. 6; also available on Learn@UW)


### Week of September 13-15

**Sept. 13 (T) Lecture – “The imperial political economy”**

**Keyword:** colony

For discussion in lecture today (handed out in 9/6 lec.; also available on Learn@UW)

- Excerpt from *The Present State of the British Court . . .* (1720) on the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations (141-142). *Can you discern a description of the colonial “political structure” in this source?*

**Sept. 14-15 (W-Th) Discussion Sections**

Assigned readings

*On merchants and trade*


On women as colonial capitalists


SEPT. 15 (TH) LECTURE – “Revolutionary and post-colonial tumult”

**KEYWORD:** (first) Bank of the United States

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**Week of September 20-22**

SEPT. 20 (T) LECTURE – “Breaking with the colonial past: the War of 1812”

**KEYWORD:** War of 1812

SEPT. 21-22 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

**On conflicting visions of the new American political economy**


**SEPT. 22 (TH) LECTURE - “A new institutional power: the corporation”**

**KEYWORD:** general incorporation

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**Week of September 27-29**

SEPT. 27 (T) LECTURE – “Capital and credit in antebellum capitalism”

*1st paper assignment – handed out in lecture*

SEPT. 28-29 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

**On the creation and governance of “artificial beings”**


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**SEPT. 29 (TH) – Workshop in lecture on the writing assignment**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 4-6**

OCT. 4 (T) – “Race and gender in antebellum capitalism”

1st paper assignment – due in lecture today

OCT. 5-6 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

*On the social world of antebellum business*

- Revised Statutes of the State of Wisconsin . . . 1858, ch. 95, “Of the Rights of Married Women” (571-572).

OCT. 6 (TH) LECTURE – “What was so revolutionary about ‘industry’?”

**KEYWORD:** "American System" (of manufacturing)

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 11-13**

OCT. 11 (T) LECTURE – “Civil War: Refiguring state and economy”

**KEYWORD:** "American System" (the policy package)

OCT. 12-13 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

*On the quotidian aspects of antebellum and Civil War business*

- Annual reports of the Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road Company, 1827, 1837, 1847, 1857.
- "King Bread vs. King Cotton," Chicago Tribune, September 28, 1861, o_2.

OCT. 13 (TH) LECTURE – “New strategies of growth”

**KEYWORDS:** horizontal integration, vertical integration
WEEK OF OCTOBER 18-20

OCT. 18 (T) LECTURE – “Social relations of capitalism transformed”

KEYWORDS: plutocracy

OCT. 19-20 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

On the new social relations of industrial capitalism

OCT. 20 (TH) LECTURE – “The birth of financial capitalism”

WEEK OF OCTOBER 25-27

OCT. 25 (T) LECTURE – “Social barriers to entry: race and gender ca. 1900”

KEYWORD: Granville T. Woods

2nd paper assignment – handed out in lecture today

OCT. 26-27 (W-TH) – DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

On the social world of business

OCT. 27 (TH) LECTURE – “The peculiar bifurcation of economic policymaking”

KEYWORD: “race to the bottom”

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 1-3

NOV. 1 (T) LECTURE – “Consolidating the mass production economy in the Great War”

KEYWORD: dollar-a-year men, simplification

2nd paper assignment – due in lecture today

NOV. 2-3 (W-TH) DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Assigned readings

On the regulatory challenges of the new strategies of growth

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**Week of November 8-10**

**Nov. 8 (T) Lecture** – “The Great Depression: Crisis of Capitalism?”

**Keywords:** diversification

**Nov. 9-10 (W-TH) Discussion Sections**

**Assigned Readings**

- **On technological systems**

- **On the new, “modern” advertising of the 1920s**
  - “The Story of the New Campaign,” *The Chameleon* [Sherwin-Williams Co. publication for its salesmen], September 1918, 6-7, 11.

**Nov. 10 (TH) Lecture** – “World war again - forging modern American capitalism”

**Keywords:** technological unemployment

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The Writing Center will hold a workshop on in-class essay exams on Friday, Nov. 11, 1:30 p.m. For details and to register, go to: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Classes/essayExams.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Classes/essayExams.html).

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**Week of November 15-17**

**Nov. 15 (T) Lecture** – “The surprise of post-WWII prosperity”

**3rd paper assignment – handed out in lecture today**

**Nov. 16-17 (W-TH) Discussion Sections**

**Keywords:** National Defense Highways Act, automation

**Assigned Readings**

- **On the balance of power between capital and labor**

**Nov. 17 (TH) Lecture** – “New Strategies – Conglomeration and Franchising”

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Nov. 22 (T) No Lecture

Prof. D. will be available for one-on-one consultations.

Nov. 23-24 (W-Th) Discussion Sections

Will not meet this week. Read the assigned novel, work on your paper, and enjoy the holiday!

Assigned reading

- Kurt Vonnegut, Player Piano (any edition)

Nov. 24 (Th) No Lecture – Thanksgiving Break

Week of November 29-December 1

Nov. 29 (T) Lecture – “American business pushes abroad”

Keyword: multinationals

3rd paper assignment – due in lecture today

Nov. 30-Dec. 1 (W-Th) Discussion Sections

Assigned readings

- Finish the Vonnegut novel for discussion in sections.

Dec. 1 (Th) Lecture – “The problem of the corporation”

Week of December 6-8

Dec. 6 (T) Lecture – “Why the ‘new (social) regulation’?”

Keyword: OSHA

Dec. 7-8 (W-Th) Discussion Sections

Assigned readings

On multinationals


On corporate social responsibility


Dec. 8 (Th) Lecture – “Crisis again? The 1970s”

Keyword: stagflation

Week of December 13-15


Keyword: core business, deregulation

Dec. 14-15 (W-Th) Discussion Sections

Keyword: pseudo-professionalism

Assigned readings

On the troubles of the 1970s

[see next page]


On jobs and globalization


KEYWORDS: nanotechnology, “forced capitalists”

END-OF-SEMESTER EVENTS

REVIEW: Friday, Dec. 16, 3:00 p.m. (location TBA)

OPTIONAL EARLY EXAM: Tuesday, Dec. 20, 3:00 p.m. (time is approximate; location TBA)

FINAL EXAM: Friday, Dec. 23, 12:25 p.m.- 2:25 p.m., 1121 Mosse Humanities Building