Course Description:

465 is designed to introduce you to the topics, methods, and materials of American economic history. The lectures identify the issues that have defined the field over the past three decades. At the beginning of each lecture I outline the day’s topic and explain why I think it is worthy of your time and attention. The readings acquaint you with the very best that is written in the field. In written summaries and in discussion you will analyze these readings, paying particular attention to the authors’ arguments and evidence. By the end of the semester, you should be able to pick up an article or a chapter of a book and quickly pen a clear, concise analysis. And if I have done my job, you will continue to enjoy economic history long after you have left this classroom.

Required readings:

You should purchase Thomas Doerflinger’s *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise* and a packet of readings available at the Humanities Copy Center located in 1650 Humanities.

Lecture Topics:

Sept. 3: Introduction to American Economic History

Sept. 8: Capitalism and Commerce
10: Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century*

Sept. 13: The Tobacco Colonies in the Seventeenth Century
15: Agriculture in the Eighteenth Century*
17: The Extractive Industries and Manufacturing

Sept. 20: Colonial Currency
22: Colonial Commerce*
24: Unfree Labor: Servants and Slaves

Sept.  27: Colonial Income and Wealth
29: British Mercantilism and the Road to Revolution*

Oct.  1: The Revolutionary War

Oct.  4: The Burdens and Benefits of Independence
6: Adam Smith and the Institutional Origins of American Capitalism*
8: The Federalist Era

Oct. 11: From Market-Places to a Market Economy
13: The Golden Age of Commerce, 1790-1815
15: Mid-semester Exam
No readings the week of the mid-semester.

Oct. 18: The Beginnings of Modern Growth
20: The Transportation Revolution: I
22: The Transportation Revolution: II*

Oct. 25: American Industrialization in an International Context
27: Two Patterns of Manufacturing Development: The Large Firm
29: The Small Firm*

Nov.  1: The Changing World of Work
3: The Standard of Living Debate
5: Early American Banking*
*Read: Naomi Lamoreaux, *Insider Lending*, pp. 11-51

Nov.  8: Andrew Jackson and the Bank War
10: Government in the Antebellum Era
12: Slavery and the Southern Economy*
Nov. 15: The Conditions of Slavery *
  17: Northern Agriculture I
  19: Northern Agriculture II

Nov. 22: The Railroad
  24: The Iron Industry

Nov. 29: The American System of Manufactures
Dec. 1: Technology*
  3: The Demographic Transition

Dec. 6: Immigration and the Urban Boom
  8: The Coming of the Civil War*
  10: The Civil War I

Dec. 13: The Civil War II
  15: Growth and Inequality

*Denotes discussion. You should have read the readings and written your two to three page analysis by the class hour.

Your grade will be determined as follows:
Weekly summaries..........50%
Midsemester examination..20%
Final examination..........30%

On those days marked by an asterisk (*) you will turn in a brief (two to three page) essay. This essay should identify the author’s argument, evidence, and methodology. The essay must be turned in at the beginning of the class hour, late papers will not be accepted. Students may take three byes, that is, may select three weeks in which they will not submit a paper. On those weeks you will just turn in a sheet of paper notifying me that this is your bye week. You will still be responsible for having read the readings and for contributing to discussion.

The examinations will consist of broad essay questions. Copies of old exams will be available.
My office is in 4125 Humanities, office hours are Monday from 1:15-3:30. If you cannot meet during those times, call me at 263-2366 (office) or 848-5456 (home) or email me at dllindst@facstaff.wisc.edu for an appointment.