Seminar Topics

Jan. 21: The Evolution of American Economic and Business History

Jan. 28: Three Centuries of Economic Growth


Feb. 4: Income Inequality


Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson, American Inequality: A Macroeconomic History.

Feb. 11: The Colonial Economy

*John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, pp. 5-88.


McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, pp. 91-377.


Feb. 18: Industrialization

*Lindstrom, "The Industrial Revolution in America" and "Eastern Industrialization, 1840-1860".

Thomas Cochran, Frontiers of Change.

Feb. 25: Transportation

*Albert Fishlow, "Internal Transportation," in Davis Easterlin and Parker, American Economic Growth, pp. 468-547.

Fishlow, American Railroads and the Transformation of the Antebellum Economy.
James Mak and Gary Walton, Western River Transportation.

March 4: Government in the Nineteenth Century

*Willard Hurst, Law and the Conditions of Freedom.

Peter Temin, "Capital and Growth," The Jacksonian Economy.

March 11: Slavery and the Southern Economy


Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross.
Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South.

March 18: Civil War and the Postbellum South


Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom.
Robert Higgs, Competition and Coercion.
April 1: More Discrimination, Labor Force and Population


Joan Hannon, "Immigrant Worker in the Promised Land" (Cliometric Conference, 1977).


April 8: Rise of Big Business


April 15: Origins of the Great Depression

*W. Elliot Brownlee, Dynamics of Ascent, pp. 384-407.


April 22: The New Deal and Keynes

*Lester Chandler, America's Greatest Depression, pp. 127-246.

April 29:  Big Business in Postwar America

Topics:  Managerial Capitalism
         Multinationals
         Mergers (Conglomerates)
         Military-Industrial Complex
         Multi-Divisional, Decentralized Corporation

May 6:  Big Government

Topics:  Fiscal Policy Since 1941
         Social Welfare
         Regulation and Deregulation
         International Economy

* Required Readings

Students will write two brief review essays (approximately 5 pages) from the books and articles listed under the dates from February 11 to April 8.

They will also write a longer paper (approximately 10 pages) on one of the topics listed under April 29 and May 6. This paper will be due the Thursday before the seminar at which it will be discussed.

Final grades will be based upon seminar participation, the review essays and the topical essay.