
HISTORY 247 – AMERICAN BUSINESS HISTORY – FALL 2009

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., or by appointment

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WHY STUDY BUSINESS HISTORY?

What could be a more exciting time to study American business history than the ever-surprising and tumultuous present? Everything – from financial markets, global trade flows, and work relations to international competitiveness, consumer behavior, and government regulation – seems to be in a state of turmoil and (perhaps) in the throes of change. History cannot be used to predict the future (alas), but understanding the historical processes by which we arrived at our current state will help (a bit) in making sense of the changes going on around us today.

THEMES AND GOALS

This survey is structured around three broad and persistent themes in American business history:

- the development of a distinctive American style of **capitalism**;
- the critical, though changing, **role of government**; and
- American business as a **social world**.

As we explore these themes in business history, the lectures, assigned readings, and writing assignments will encourage you to develop your *analytical and historical-thinking skills*. If you do well in the course, you may describe yourself as “adept at analyzing complex, dynamic events on the basis of incomplete information.”

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

See the [ONLINE SYLLABUS](#) for full details. Meeting times and places:

Tues., 9:55-10:45 a.m., 2619 Humanities

Tues., 11:00-11:50 a.m., 2637 Humanities

Wed., 12:05-12:55 p.m., 2211 Humanities

Wed., 1:20-2:10 p.m., 1217 Humanities

READINGS AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Major Problems in American Business History and *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* are required texts, available for purchase at local bookstores and on reserve at College Library. Be sure to read the editors' introduction to each chapter. Other readings will be available on E-Reserves.

Writing assignments consist of three papers on questions that will be handed out in lecture. These papers are to be based on the assigned readings only. You may also be given occasional assignments in section. See the [ONLINE SYLLABUS](#) for full details.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, SECTIONS, AND READINGS

NOTE: Lecture topics and, within reason, assigned readings are subject to change. Because two sections meet before the Tuesday lecture and two meet afterwards, I have grouped the lectures and lists of section readings assignments in modules to try to keep us all “on the same page.” The basic principle is that the assigned readings for discussion in a given week relate to (supplement or complement) the lectures from the previous week. Please do the readings in the order listed – they will make more sense that way.

SECTIONS ON WED., **SEPT. 2** — WILL NOT MEET TODAY

LECTURE ON THURS., **SEPT. 3** — Introduction

SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **SEPT. 8-9** — Introduction



LECTURE ON TUES., **SEPT. 8** — “Doing business in the colonies”

Read James Fulcher, *Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction*, ch. 1 (What is Capitalism?), for discussion in lecture today (available on E-Reserves and I will email it to you).

KEYWORD: bill of exchange

LECTURE ON THURS., **SEPT. 10** — “The imperial political economy”

KEYWORD: colony

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **SEPT. 15-16**

Read Perkins’ essay last and consider its validity in light of the other readings.

- *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, chs. 1-4 – available at local bookstores
- *Major Problems, Chapter 2*
 - Doc. #1, Benj. Franklin Coaches an Ambitious Tradesman, 1748
 - Doc. #2, John Woolman’s Christian Conscience Impels Him to Leave Retailing, 1756
 - Doc. #3, Farmers Ask the Rhode Island Assembly to Regulate Commercial Fishing, 1766
 - Doc. #4, Iron Masters Petition Rhode Island Lawmakers for Water Rights, 1769
 - Doc. #5, Promoter Alexander Clúny Extols Florida’s Virtues, 1770
 - Doc. #6, Merchant-Planter Henry Laurens Reflects on Florida’s Challenges, 1766
- *Major Problems, Chapter 3*
 - Doc. #1, VA Merchant-Planter Wm. Fitzhugh Describes His Tobacco Plantation, 1686
 - Doc. #2, Boston Merchant Thomas Hancock Launches a Covert Voyage to Amsterdam, 1742
 - Doc. #3, New York Merchant Gerard G. Beekman Insures Slave Cargo from Africa, 1749
 - Doc. #4, A Hudson’s Bay Factor Orders Merchandise for His Indian Customers, 1739
- *On E-Reserves*
 - Beekman letters: to Joseph Kirby, Philadelphia, Dec. 25, 1749; and to Samuel Chase, Rhode Island, Aug. 16, 1750
- *Major Problems, Chapter 2*
 - Perkins, “The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America”



LECTURE ON TUES., SEPT. 15 — “Post-colonial tumult”

LECTURE ON THURS., SEPT. 17 — “Breaking with the colonial past: War of 1812”

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTION ON TUES.-WED., SEPT. 22-23

- *Major Problems, chapter 3*
 - Essay by Morgan, “British Merchants, the Slave Trade, and the Transatlantic Economy”
 - *On E-Reserves*
 - Additional Beekman letters: To David and William Ross, Newry [Ireland], Feb. 10, 1766; and to David and William Ross, Newry [Ireland], May 2, 1766
- *Major Problems, chapter 3*
 - Doc. #6, Revolutionary Era Merchants Explain the Causes of Inflation, 1779
 - Doc. #7, Tench Coxe Proposes a Chamber of Commerce, 1784
 - Doc. #8, Antifederalist George Bryan Attacks the Merchant Junto, 1788
 - Doc. #9, A Merchant-Speculator Encourages Europeans to Invest in Western Land, 1788
 - Essay by Doerflinger, “Philadelphia Merchants and the Rise of Federalist Power in the New Nation”
- *Major Problems, chapter 4*
 - Essay by Matson, “Financial Innovation . . .,” pp. 125 to bottom of p. 128 ONLY



LECTURE ON TUES., SEPT. 22 — “A new institutional power: the corporation”

KEYWORD: general incorporation

LECTURE ON THURS., SEPT. 24 — paper-writing workshop

Review *Pocket Guide*, chapter 4, and read chapters 6, 7a, and 7c *before lecture*

The first paper assignment will be handed on in lecture on Sept. 24 and will be due in lecture on Oct. 1.

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., SEPT. 29-30 (*time management required! – do these even though you have a paper due tomorrow*)

- *On E-Reserves*
 - Daniel Raymond, *Thoughts on Political Economy* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jun'r., 1820), ch. 10, “Corporations.”
 - *Letter, on the Use and Abuse of Incorporations, Addressed to the Delegation from the City of New-York, in the State Legislature. By One of Their Constituents* (New York: G. & C. Carvill, 1827), pp. 3-14, 50-59.



LECTURE ON TUES., SEPT. 29 — “Understanding the antebellum American ‘State’”

KEYWORD: “American System” (the policy package)

LECTURE ON THURS., OCT. 1 — “Social limits on property rights: race and gender in antebellum business”

The first paper assignment is due in lecture today

KEYWORD: Free Frank

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., OCT. 6-7

- *Major Problems, chapter 4*
 - Doc. #7, *Baltimore Patriot* Supports Government Regulation of Telegraph, 1845
 - Doc. #8, *New York Journal* Presses for the Privatization of Telegraphy, 1846
 - Essay by John, "Building the First Information Highway: The Deregulation of Telegraphy"
 - Essay by Matson, "Financial Innovation . . .," review the first part, then read from the bottom of p. 128
- *Major Problems, chapter 5*
 - Doc. #1, A Georgia Planter Instructs His Overseer, 1832
 - Doc. #2, A Carolina Industrialist Explains Why Factories Are Good for the South, 1845
 - Doc. #3, Frederick Douglass Remembers the Slave Trade, 1852
 - Doc. #4, Louisiana's Slave Laws Simplified, 1853
 - Doc. #5, A Virginia Slave Master Hires a Slave Workforce, 1856
 - Doc. #6, Senator James Henry Hammond Declares "Cotton is King," 1858
 - Essay by Johnson, "The Slave Traders of New Orleans"
 - Essay by Dew, "Running Buffalo Forge: Master, Slaves, and the Overwork System"
 - Essay by Faust, "James Henry Hammond and the Plantation as a Business Enterprise"
- *Major Problems, chapter 6*
 - Doc. #1, Industrialist Kirk Boott Chronicles the Great Achievements of Lowell, 1827
 - Doc. #2, A Factory Girl Leads a Tour of the Lowell Mills, 1845
 - Doc. #3, George S. White, The Moral Influence of Industry, 1836
- *Major Problems, chapter 9*
 - Doc. #1, Jewish Immigrant Abraham Kohn Laments His Wanderings as a Peddler, 1842-1843



LECTURE ON TUES., OCT. 6 — "What was so revolutionary about 'industry'?"

KEYWORD: "American System" (of manufacturing)

LECTURE ON THURS., OCT. 8 — "Civil War: laying the foundations of post-bellum industrial growth"

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., OCT. 13-14

- On E-Reserves
 - "King Bread vs. King Cotton," *Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 1861, o_2, ProQuest Historical Newspapers Chicago Tribune (1849-1986)
- *Major Problems, chapter 6*
 - Doc. #4, *New York Times* Discusses the Morrill Tariff and American Industry, 1861
 - Doc. #5, *Atlantic Monthly* Visits Pittsburgh, the Workshop of the West, 1868
 - Doc #6, Freeman Hunt, The Ups and Downs of Business, 1856
 - Doc. #7, Andrew Carnegie, How Young Men Can Succeed, 1885
 - Essay by Ingham, "Clash of the Titans: Andrew Carnegie and Pittsburgh's Old Iron Masters"
 - Essay by Laird, "Progress and the Double Meaning of Industry"
 - Essay by Beckert, "New York Business Elites and the Civil War"
- *Major Problems, chapter 7*
 - Doc. #1, Technology Enshrined at the World's Fair, 1876



LECTURE ON **OCT. 13** — “New strategies of growth and their consequences”

KEYWORDS: horizontal integration; vertical integration

LECTURE ON **OCT. 15** — “Social relations of capitalism transformed”

KEYWORDS: plutocracy, cooperatives

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **OCT. 20-21**

- *On E-Reserves*
 - Frederick W. Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (1916), ch. 2
- *Major Problems, chapter 8*
 - Doc. #1, Unionized Workers in the Knights of Labor Demand a Fair Share of American Wealth, 1878
 - Doc. #3, Sweatshop Conditions Horrify a Factory Inspector
 - Doc. #4, Industrialist George M. Pullman Explains the Strike at Pullman Palace Car Works, 1894
 - Doc. #8, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Applies Human Engineering to the Labor-Capital Problem, 1920
 - Essay by Jacoby, “Welfare Capitalism at Kodak”
- *Major Problems, chapter 10*
 - Doc. #1, John Wanamaker, The Four Cardinal Points of the Department Store, 1911
- *On E-Reserves*
 - Edward D. Jones, “The Manufacturer and the Domestic Market,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 25, Business Management and Finance (January 1905): 1-20



LECTURE ON TUES., **OCT. 20** — “Social barriers to entry: race and gender at the turn of the century”

KEYWORD: Madam C. J. Walker

LECTURE ON THURS., **OCT. 22** — “Reconfiguring business regulation: competition policy goes national”

KEYWORD: “race to the bottom”

The second paper assignment will be handed out in lecture on Thurs., Oct. 22, and will be due in lecture on Oct. 29.

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **OCT. 27-28** (*time management required! do these and finish the paper that is due tomorrow*)

- *Major Problems, chapter 9*
 - Doc. #2, A Credit Agency Monitors Businesses Nationwide, 1850s-1880s
 - Doc. #3, A Cleveland Newspaper Heralds the Peoples’ Drug Company as an Achievement for the Negro Race, 1906
 - Essay by Olegario, “Jewish Merchants, Creditworthiness, and Business Culture”
- *Major Problems, chapter 7*
 - Doc. #4, A Vice President at the New York Central Railroad Describes Railroad Management as a Manly Profession, 1903
 - Doc. #5, Male and Female Telegraph Operators Go on Strike, 1907 [there’s more!]

- *Major Problems, chapter 8*
 - Doc. #2, Journalist Henry Demarest Lloyd Exposes the Standard Oil Monopoly, 1881
 - Doc. #5, Sugar King Henry O. Havemeyer Declares the Customs Bill as the Mother of All Trusts, 1899
 - Doc. #6, President Theodore Roosevelt Advocates Regulation, 1901
 - Doc. #7, “People’s Attorney” Louis D. Brandeis Lashes Out Against the Money Trust, 1913
 - Essay by Dunlavy, “Why Did Some American Businesses Get So Big?”



LECTURE ON TUES., **OCT. 27** — “Consolidating ‘bigness’: The era of the Great War

KEYWORDS: Simplification, dollar-a-year men

LECTURE ON THURS., **OCT. 29** — “The rise of ‘systems’ in the 1920s”

The second paper assignment is due in lecture today

KEYWORD: diversification

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **NOV. 3-4**

KEYWORD: chain stores

- *On E-Reserves*
 - Stuart Chase, *The Tragedy of Waste* (1929, orig. pub. 1925), ch. 7, “An Analysis of Advertising”
 - Earnest Elmo Calkins, *Business the Civilizer* (1928), pp. 1-29
 - “The Story of the New Campaign,” *The Chameleon* [in-house publication for Sherwin-Williams Co. salesmen], September 1918, 6-7, 11.
- *Major Problems, chapter 9*
 - Doc. #5, Christine Frederick Advises Retailers on Selling to Women, 1920
- *Major Problems, chapter 10*
 - Doc. #4, Paul T. Cherington, Putting American Consumers Under the Microscope, 1924
 - Doc. #5, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., How GM Gets the Facts on Car Buyers and Competes with Ford, 1927
 - Doc. #6, Herbert Hoover Explains How World Trade and Protective Tariffs Ensure American Prosperity, 1928
 - Doc. #7, J. C. Penney, How Chain Stores Benefit Farmers, 1930
 - Doc. #8, National Wholesale Grocers’ Association, Why Chain Stores Threaten the Nation’s Welfare, 1930
 - Essay by Blaszczyk, “Marketing Pyrex Ovenware”
 - Essay by Bean, “Mass Marketing Meets Main Street: Department Stores, Mail Order, and the Chain Store Menace”



LECTURE ON TUES., **NOV. 3** — “The Great Depression”

KEYWORD: technological unemployment

LECTURE ON THURS., **NOV. 5** — “World war again - forging the modern American economy”

KEYWORD: military-industrial complex

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **NOV. 10-11**

KEYWORD: Blue Eagle

- *Major Problems, chapter 11*
 - Doc. #1, A Wall Street Broker Remembers 1929
 - Doc. #2, NRA's Blue Eagle Displayed in a Restaurant Window, 1934
 - Doc. #3, American Liberty League Vigorously Opposes the New Deal, 1936
 - Essay by Bernstein, "Why the Great Depression Was Great"
 - Doc. #4, CIO Leader John L. Lewis Issues a Forceful Warning to Industry, 1936
 - Doc. #5, GM Managers Work Behind Closed Doors on a Collective Bargaining Policy, 1936
 - Essay by Harris, "GM, Chrysler, and Unionization"
 - Doc. #6, *Magazine of Wall Street* Assesses Corporate Performance for Investors, 1929-1938
 - Doc. #7, St. Louis Banker Heads the Defense Plant Corporation, 1940-1944
 - Doc. #8, *Life* Celebrates Henry J. Kaiser and the U.S. Wartime Shipbuilding Program, 1942
 - Doc. #9, *Mill and Factory* Explains How the Aircraft Industry Recruits Women, 1942
 - Essay by Davidson, "World War II and the Birth of the Military-Industrial-Complex"



LECTURE ON TUES., **Nov. 10** — "The surprise of post-WWII prosperity"

KEYWORDS: Highway Act of 1956, Bretton Woods

LECTURE ON THURS., **Nov. 12** — "Conglomeration and franchising"

KEYWORD: conglomeration

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **Nov. 17-18**

- *Major Problems, chapter 12*
 - Doc. #1, National Association of Manufacturers Outlines a Plan for Postwar Prosperity, 1944
 - Doc. #2, Real Estate Developers Lure Business to the Suburbs, 1948
 - Doc. #3, A Concerned Consumer Asks a Big Businessman About the Price of a Nylon Shirt, 1950
 - Doc. #4, *U.S. News and World Report* Explains What the Baby Boom Means to the Economy, 1957
 - Doc. #5, *Fortune* Credits Federal Policies for the Explosion of Motels, 1959
 - Doc. #6, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey Compares R&D Expenditures at Home and Abroad, 1962
 - Doc. #7, Vietnam War Raises Business Hackles, 1971
 - Essay by Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Marketplaces in Postwar America"
 - Essay by Schulman, "Fortress Dixie: Defense Spending and the Rise of the Sunbelt"
- *Major Problems, chapter 14*
 - Doc. #1, Economist Victor R. Fuchs Highlights the Growth of Services, 1965
 - Doc. #2, Investment Bankers Association Predicts a Computer Boom, 1963
 - Doc. #3, Bill Veeck Assesses Baseball's Marketing
 - Doc. #4, Ray Kroc Explains How He Built the McDonald's Empire, 1968
 - Essay by Dicke, "We Deliver: Domino's Pizza and the Franchising Method"



LECTURE ON TUES., **Nov. 17** — "The problem of the modern corporation"

KEYWORD: separation of ownership and management

LECTURE ON THURS., **Nov. 19** — "American business pushes abroad"

The third paper assignment will be handed out in lecture on Nov. 19 and will be due in lecture on Dec. 3.

[Check next page for continuation.]

KEYWORD: multinationals

PROF. D. WILL HAVE EXTRA OFFICE HOURS, FRI., **NOV. 20** – stop by to talk about the paper assignment



TUES., **NOV. 24** – No lecture today

THURS., **NOV. 26** – Thanksgiving; no lecture today

SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **NOV. 24-25** — workshop on paper-writing strategies

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON TUES.-WED., **DEC. 1-2**
(*time management required! do these readings and finish the paper that is due tomorrow*)

- *Major Problems, chapter 15*
 - Doc. #1, *Fortune Urges Business to Export Capitalism and Democracy*, 1947
 - Doc. #2, *High Labor Costs and Foreign Competition Confound Steelmakers*, 1968
 - Doc. #3, *National Industrial Conference Board Evaluates the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)*, 1968
 - Doc. #4, *Pharmaceutical Giant Bristol-Myers Encounters Cultural Differences in Japan and the USSR in the 1970s*
- *On E-Reserves*
 - Others TBA



LECTURE ON TUES., **DEC. 1** — “Why the ‘new (social) regulation?’”

KEYWORD: OSHA

LECTURE ON THURS., **DEC. 3** — “Crisis again: The 1970s”

The third paper assignment is due in lecture today

KEYWORD: stagflation

RELATED READINGS FOR DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS ON WED.-THURS., **DEC. 8-9**

KEYWORD: pseudo-professionalism

- *Major Problems, chapter 13*
 - Doc. #1, *A Prominent Zoologist Speaks About the Threat of the Modern Economy*, 1949
 - Doc. #2, *Weyerhaeuser Explains the Forest Industry’s Practices*, 1949
 - Doc. #3, *Ralph Nader Blames Detroit Carmakers for Automotive Accidents*, 1965
 - Doc. #4, *Alcoa CEO Explains the Public Responsibility of Private Enterprise*, 1967
 - Doc. #5, *Economist Milton Friedman Urges Business to Focus on Profits*, 1970
 - Doc. #6, *Sun Oil Executive Outlines the Nation’s Energy Dilemmas*, 1973
 - Essay by Sicilia, “The Corporation Under Siege”
- *On E-Reserves*
 - Robert H. Hayes and William J. Abernathy, “Managing Our Way to Economic Decline,” *Harvard Business Review* 58 (July-August 1980): 67-77.
 - John E. Schwartz and Thomas J. Volgy, “The Myth of America’s Economic Decline,” *Harvard Business Review* 63 (Sept/Oct 1985): 98-107.



LECTURE ON TUES., DEC. 8 — “American capitalism since the 1980s, Part 1”

KEYWORD: core business

LECTURE ON THURS., DEC. 10 — “American capitalism since the 1980s, Part 2”

Final exam prep sheet will be handed out in lecture

KEYWORD: nanotechnology

LECTURE ON TUES., DEC. 15 — “American capitalism since the 1980s, Part 3”

KEYWORD: “forced capitalists”

RELATED READINGS – OPTIONAL

- *Major Problems, chapter 14*
 - Doc. #5, Journalists Probe Transportation Workers’ Lives in the Wake of Deregulation, 1992
 - Doc. #6, Sam Walton, Ten Rules That Worked for Me, 1992
 - Doc. #7, A Congressman Explores Wal-Mart’s Labor Practices in the United States and Asia, 2004
 - Essay by Vietor, “American Airlines Competes After Deregulation”
 - Essay by Head, “Inside Wal-Mart”
- *Major Problems, chapter 15*
 - Doc. #5, *Time* Documents the Agricultural Surplus, 1986
 - Doc. #6, Journalist Thomas L. Friedman Describes McDonald’s Global Expansion, 1996
 - Doc. #7, Washington Think Tank Calculates NAFTA’s Impact on Jobs, 2001
 - Doc. #8, USDA Reports NAFTA’s Benefits to Agricultural Exports, 2001
 - Essay by Baily and Farrell, “Exploding the Myths About Offshoring”

END-OF-SEMESTER EVENTS

REVIEW: Thurs., Dec. 17 (time and location TBA)

FINAL EXAM: Tues., Dec. 22, 7:25 p.m. (location TBA)
