

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Semester I, 1988-89

## American Business History

History 247  
Prof. Dunlavy

4116 Hum., 263-1854  
Ofc. Hrs. TR 11-12p.

This is a lecture course (4 cr. for undergraduates) that surveys the history of American business from colonial times to the 1980s. For this semester's schedule of lecture topics and weekly reading assignments, see the pages that follow. The readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are taken from the books listed immediately below; these can be purchased at the University Bookstore (or other local stores) and a few copies have been placed on reserve at the College Library (Helen C. White). The rest of the readings are contained in a reading packet that can be purchased at Kinko's on University Avenue; two copies are also available on reserve at Helen C. White Library.

All students are required to attend not only the lectures but also a weekly, 50-minute discussion section (times to be arranged during the first week of class). As a rule the discussion sections will run one week behind the syllabus. In other words, the reading assignments and lectures scheduled for one week will be discussed in sections the following week.

There will be two midterms and one final exam, all with the same basic "essay" format. Grades will be based on participation in sections (25%), the two midterm exams (20% each), and the final exam (35%).

### REQUIRED BOOKS

Hugh G. J. Aitken, Scientific Management in Action: Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal, 1908-1915 (Princeton University Press, 1985; orig. pub. 1960).

Mansel G. Blackford and K. Austin Kerr, Business Enterprise in American History (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986).

Robert Sobel, The Great Bull Market: Wall Street in the 1920s (Norton, 1968).

Kurt Vonnegut, Player Piano (Dell, 1986).

## LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Sept. 6 Introduction to American Business History  
 Sept. 8 The 18th-Century World Economy

\*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 1-35 only.  
 Joyce Oldham Appleby, Economic Thought and Ideology in  
 Seventeenth-Century England (Princeton: Princeton  
 University Press, 1978), pp. 73-98 (Ch. 4, "The Dutch as a  
 Source of Evidence").

- Sept. 13 Colonial Business in the North and South  
 Sept. 15 The Revolutionary War

\*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 36-80.  
 Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise:  
 Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary  
 Philadelphia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina,  
 1986), pp. 135-64 and 335-64 (Ch 3., "Enterprise and  
 Adversity," and Ch. 8, "American Economic Development and  
 the Case of Philadelphia").

- Sept. 20 Business in the Constitution  
 Sept. 22 The War of 1812 and the Business Revolution

\*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 82-121 (Ch. 3, "The Expansion of  
 American Business: Agriculture, Commerce, and  
 Industry").  
 Mobil Corporation, "The Second American Revolution" (1987).  
 6 pp.  
 Oscar Handlin and Mary F. Handlin, "Origins of the American  
 Business Corporation," Journal of Economic History 5 (May  
 1945): 1-23.  
 "Speech of Mr. Lawrence of Belchertown, in the Senate of  
 Massachusetts, on the Amendment Offered by Mr. Cushing  
 to the Lowell Rail-Road Bill," February 18, 1836. 20 pp.

- Sept. 27 The Industrial Revolution: What It Was and What It Wasn't  
 Sept. 29 Divisive Issues: Internal Improvements, the Tariff,  
 Banking, and Slavery

\*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 122-50 (Ch. 4, "Government and  
 Business").  
 John F. Kasson, Civilizing the Machine: Technology and  
 Republican Values in America, 1776-1900 (Penguin Books,  
 1977), pp. 3-51 [Ch. 1, The Emergence of Republican  
 Technology].

- Oct. 4 Precursor of "Big Business": Textile Manufacturing  
 Oct. 6 The Railroad, Part I: A Worrisome New Technology
- Kasson, Civilizing the Machine, pp. 55-106 (Ch. 2, "The Factory as Republican Community").  
 Paul Faler, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," Labor History 15 (Summer 1974): 367-94.
- Oct. 11 FIRST MIDTERM EXAM (covering readings and lectures through Sept. 29 and discussion sections through Oct. 7)  
 Oct. 13 The Railroad, Part II: Administering the "Octopus"
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 152-93 (Ch. 5, "The Emergence of Big Business").  
 [David C. McCallum], "Superintendent's Report," March 25, 1856, in Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., comp. and ed., The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business, Sources and Readings (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), pp. 101-108.  
 Walter Licht, Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 79-124 (Ch. 3, "Working to Rule").
- Oct. 18 The Civil War: Turbulent Transition to an Industrial Economy  
 Oct. 20 Organized Capitalism, Part I: Vertical and Horizontal Integration
- Jonathan Hughes, The Vital Few: The Entrepreneur and American Economic Progress, expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 220-73 and 399-454 (Ch. 6, "Carnegie and the American Steel Industry," and Ch. 9, "J. Pierpont Morgan, the Investment Banker as Statesman").
- Oct. 25 Organized Capitalism, Part II: Bureaucracy, Oligopoly, and Imperialism  
 Oct. 27 Regulating Big Business: From the ICC to Trust-Busting in the Progressive Era
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 196-264 (Ch. 6, "Government and Business in the Gilded Age").  
 Wallace D. Farnham, "'The Weakened Spring of Government': A Study in Nineteenth-Century American History," American Historical Review 68 (April 1963): 662-80.
- Nov. 1 Rationalizing Labor: Welfare Capitalism as Backward Integration?  
 Nov. 3 Mobilizing for the First "Great War"
- \*Aitken, Scientific Management in Action, pp. 3-48 and 85-185.

- Nov. 8 Big Business Triumphant: The 1920s  
 Nov. 10 Strategy and Structure: Diversification and the M-Form
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 266-301 (Ch. 8, "The Diversified, Decentralized Company").  
 Hughes, The Vital Few, pp. 274-355 (Ch. 7, "Henry Ford and the Automobile Age").
- Nov. 15 SECOND MIDTERM EXAM (covering readings and lectures through Nov. 3 and discussion sections through Nov. 11)  
 Nov. 17 The Long, Slow Slide into Depression, 1929-1932
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 302-16 only (first part of Ch. 9, "The American Political Economy in Transition").  
 \*Sobel, The Great Bull Market (complete)
- Nov. 22 The New Deal  
 Nov. 24 HOLIDAY (begin reading the Vonnegut novel)
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 316-37 only (last part of Ch. 9, "The American Political Economy in Transition").  
 Thomas K. McCraw, Prophets of Regulation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 153-221 (Ch. 5, "Landis and the Statecraft of the SEC").
- Nov. 29 Mobilizing for the Second Great War  
 Dec. 1 In the Aftermath of World War II: Return to Normalcy?
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 340-425 (Ch. 10, "The Company in the Postwar World," and Ch. 11, "The Political Economy After World War II").  
 Richard J. Barnet and Ronald E. Müller, Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), pp. 13-26 and 72-104
- Dec. 6 Business in a New Socio-Political Context: Modern Managers and the "New Regulation"  
 Dec. 8 The Troubled 1970s: OPEC and Stagflation
- \*Vonnegut, Player Piano (complete).
- Dec. 13 Structural Changes in the 1980s: International Competition and Domestic Deregulation  
 Dec. 15 Review
- \*Blackford and Kerr, pp. 426-45.  
 Robert H. Hayes and William J. Abernathy, "Managing Our Way to Economic Decline," Harvard Business Review 68 (July-August 1980): 67-77.  
 Charles F. Sabel et al., "How to Keep Mature Industries Innovative," Technology Review 90 (April 1987): 27-35.

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Dec. 13-15, continued.

Daniel P. Kaplan, "The Changing Airline Industry," in  
Regulatory Reform: What Actually Happened, ed. by  
Leonard W. Weiss and Michael W. Klass (Boston: Little,  
Brown and Company, 1986), pp. 40-77.

Paulette Thomas, "Airline Amity: Rivals' Aid to Braniff in  
Leaving Dallas Hub Suggests New Coziness," Wall Street  
Journal, August 31, 1988, pp. 1, 14.

Dec. 17 FINAL EXAM (10:05 a.m.)