



History 329 The History of American Capitalism

Description

For many, capitalism and the United States are inseparable. However, capitalism is not a static, natural, or universal. Rather, History 329 examines capitalism as both historically specific theories and actions that heavily shaped U.S. over time. Students will grapple with questions such as how and why can capitalism change? How has capitalism served to justify political and economic activity? How have people from different backgrounds articulated and experienced capitalism's promises and pitfalls? And how has capitalism shaped relationships between the United States and the world? Though there are no easy answers, the history of capitalism will enrich understandings of American society, politics, and culture.

Meeting Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 AM Central

Lecture Location: Humanities 1641

Instructional Modality: In-Person

Credit Hours: 4

Credit Hour Policy: One credit is the learning that takes place in at least 45 hours of learning activities, which include time in lectures or class meetings, in person or online, exams, presentations, tutorials, reading, writing, studying, preparation for any of these activities, and any other learning activities.

Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction: This course engages students through direct instruction, providing feedback on student work, providing information about course content, and facilitating discussion of course content multiple times per week.

Professor Information

Dr. Paige Glotzer

Assistant Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Teaching Assistant Information

Dustin Cohan

Email: dustin.cohan@gmail.com

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Professor Office Hours

Time: Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 PM

Locations: Humanities 4116 or Zoom. The Zoom link can be found in Canvas.

Professor Glotzer holds office hours simultaneously in-person and on Zoom. You may choose either modality to drop in.

TA Office Hours

Time: Tuesdays, 11:30-1:30 PM

Location: University Club 324

Office Hours Explanation: The purpose of office hours is to provide a regular time where you can talk about any topic related to class. This may include questions about the reading or assignments, concerns about your grades, or chatting about a topic that sparked your interest during lecture. No appointment is necessary. I can also help with techniques for better succeeding in class. For example, come to discuss tips for how to take notes or study.

Course Designations, Attributes, and Requisites

Breadth: Either Humanities or Social Science

Level: Intermediate

L&S Credit: Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Grad 50%: Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement

Requisite: Sophomore standing

Course Learning Outcomes

- Analyze influences that shape historical narratives and debates about capitalism
- Explain complex changes over time at different levels of scale
- Understand the roots of persistent social, economic, gender, and racial inequalities across time and space
- Use evidence effectively to make a persuasive case in writing, speech, or other formats.

Grade Scale

93-100% A 78-82% BC 0-59% F

88-92% AB 70-77% C

83-87% B 60-69% D

Grades are not curved.

Grades

Discussion Section Attendance - 12.5%
Discussion Section Participation - 12.5%
Lecture Attendance – 5%
Reading Quizzes - 5%
Short Essay - 15%
Midterm Exam - 20%
Observing Capitalism Assignment - 15%
Object Biography Assignment - 15%

There is no final exam.

Grade Explanation

Discussion section attendance and participation: As a four-credit class, History 329 includes a mandatory discussion section run by your TA, Dustin Cohan. These smaller meetings are where you will collaboratively engage with the material through conversation and activities. Discussion sections are not only integral for your learning; they require a tremendous amount of effort for Dustin to prepare and facilitate. It is expected for you to take them seriously. Therefore, they heavily factor into your grade.

Lecture attendance: Our class is too large to take full attendance each week. In lieu of calling out names, Professor Glotzer will set aside several minutes at the beginning of random lectures for you to answer a brief writing prompt. The contents of the prompt are ungraded but will serve to mark you present or absent. They will also help Professor Glotzer get to know you and check in on your learning.

Reading quizzes and the midterm exam: these will be open book, untimed, and entirely run on Canvas. They will not take place in the classroom. You will have windows of several days and can pause as often as needed. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions while the midterm will consist of a mix of different types of questions. If you use the testing center, please contact Professor Glotzer to begin the scheduling process.

Short essay: Your short essay will consist of a 2-3-page prompt asking you to take a stance on your assigned readings. It will help you think like a historian. Specifically, you will practice analytic and argumentative skills.

Observing capitalism: You will complete an assignment in which you observe all the ways capitalism is working around you on your typical route between home and

campus. There will be different options for the mode of this assignment, including creative options.

Object biography: You will complete an assignment in which you research and/or imagine the entire life of an everyday object of your choosing, including its materials, capital, labor, and journey. There will be different options for the mode of this assignment, including creative options.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Professor Glotzer is committed to creating a class where everyone can feel welcomed, included, and ready to learn. Disability will not be stigmatized in History 329 and should not be treated as something “bad” or “less than” in general. Accommodations are all about acknowledging that default university and workplace settings might have been created with a narrow vision of who might use them; accommodations help alter those short-sighted decisions to be more reflective of human diversity. If you have or think you may have a disability (e.g. attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) speak directly with Professor Glotzer and/or contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, where staff members can unlock possibilities.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Contact: The McBurney Disability Resource Center

Website: <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Phone: (608) 263-2741

Address: 702 W. Johnson Street, Suite 2104

Email: mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu

Dependent Care Policy

I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of diversity, including diversity in parenting and caretaking status.

1. All breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary.
2. Children are always welcome in Professor Glotzer's office hours.
3. You do not need to inform me ahead of time if you are bringing a child to class. We can think of them as junior scholars auditing to determine if they want to study history.
4. Finally, I understand that the fatigue caused by caretaking can be a barrier to completing coursework. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students

regardless of caretaking status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for balance.

To learn more about UW-Madison's pregnant and parenting student policies and resources, see <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/guide/accommodations-for-life-events/pregnancy-and-parenting-students/>

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Lecture Schedule

All readings are available on Canvas unless otherwise noted. It is recommended you read in the order they are listed.

Week 1 Overview and Vast Early America

January 24, 26

Reading:

- Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2009), 1-19.
- K-Sue Park, "Race, Innovation, and Financial Growth: The Example of Foreclosure" in *Histories of Racial Capitalism*, eds. Destin Jenkins and Justin Leroy (New York: Columbia, 2021): 27-52

Week 2 The Market Revolution

January 31, February 2

Reading:

- Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2012), 7-20.
- Dana Ramey Berry, "'Broad is de Road dat Leads ter Death': Human Capital and Enslaved Mortality" in *Slavery's Capitalism: Human Capital and Enslaved Mortality*, eds. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016): 146-162.

Week 3 Slavery and Territory

February 7, February 9

Reading:

- Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2013), 18-45, 151-175.

Week 4 The Rise of the Corporation

February 14, February 16

Reading:

- David Schley, *Steam City: Railroads, Urban Space, and Corporate Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore* (Chicago, University of Chicago, 2020), 11-39.
- Colleen Dunlavy, "From Citizens to Plutocrats: Nineteenth-Century Shareholder Voting Rights and Theories of the Corporation" in *Constructing Corporate America: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. Kenneth Lipartito and David B. Sicilia (New York: Oxford, 2004): 66-93.

Week 5 Capital and Labor

February 21, February 23

Reading:

- Chad Pearson, *Capital's Terrorists: Klansmen, Lawmen, and Employers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2022), 119-144
- William C. Oates, George Ticknor Curtis and T. V. Powderly, "The Homestead Strike," *North American Review* 155 (Sep., 1892): 355-375.

Week 6 Competing Ideologies: Making Sense of Capitalism in the Late Nineteenth Century

February 28, March 2

Reading: This week's readings are not on Canvas. They are online in the American Yawp Primary Source Reader, Chapter 16. [Click here to access.](#))

- William Graham Sumner on Social Darwinism
- Henry George, *Poverty and Progress*
- Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth*
- Grover Cleveland's Veto of the Texas Seed Bill
- The Omaha Platform of the People's Party
- Lucy Parsons on Women and Revolutionary Socialism

Week 7 Midterm Review and Exam

March 7 – Review Session

March 9 – No lecture. Catch up on readings and work on your midterm.

Week 8

Spring Break

Week 9 Empire at Home

March 21, March 23

Reading:

- Kristin Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010), 1-56.

Week 10 The US in the World

March 28, March 30

Reading and Podcast: The podcast is linked through Canvas. The link here also includes a transcript and option to download the audio file.

- Peter James Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2017), 81-116.

- “Fordlandia,” *99% Invisible*, Episode 298. Link: <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/fordlandia/>

Week 11 Dime Novels and Nickelodeons: Capitalist Subjectivities

April 4, April 6

Reading and Film (Both available through Canvas):

- “A Lucky Deal or, The Cutest Boy in Wall Street, by a Self-Made Man” in *Fame and Fortune Weekly: Stories of Boys Who Make Money* 1 (Oct. 6, 1905). Pdf pages 1-95.
- OPTIONAL: Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times* (Universal, 1936)

Week 12 The Great Depression and the Second World War

April 11, April 13

Reading:

- Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940* (New York: New York University, 2013), 76-101.
- James Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119-159.

Week 13 The Rise and Fall of Postwar Prosperity

April 18, April 20

Reading:

- David K. Johnson, *Buying Gay: How Physique Entrepreneurs Sparked a Movement* (New York: Columbia, 2019), 1-22, 53-79
- Bryant Simon, *The Hamlet Fire: A Tragic Story of Cheap Food, Cheap Government, and Cheap Lives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2020), 161-189.

Week 14 Race, Place, and Policy

April 25, 27

Reading:

- Destin Jenkins, *The Bonds of Inequality: Debt and the Making of the American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2021), 217-229.
- Andrew Kahrl, “Capitalizing on the Urban Fiscal Crisis: Predatory Tax Buyers in 1970s Chicago,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, No. 3 (2018): 382-401.
- Chris Moran and Daniel Petty, “What Private Equity Firms Are and How They Operate,” *ProPublica* (Aug. 3, 2022). Link: <https://www.propublica.org/article/what-is-private-equity>

Week 15 The Lives Behind Your Stuff

May 2, 4

Reading:

- Gabriel Mac, "I Was a Warehouse Wage Slave," *Mother Jones* (Mar./Apr., 2012)
Link: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/02/mac-mcclelland-free-online-shipping-warehouses-labor/>
- Joshua Clark and Olivia Araiza, "Economic Opportunity and Inequality" in "Margins in Movement," (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley Othering and Belonging Institute, 2021) Link: <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/margins-in-movement/economic-opportunity-and-inequality>
- Stacey Marion and Dustin Cohan, "From Veracruz to Wisconsin: Circular Migration in the Era of Border Militarization," (Feb. 9, 2021) Link: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/67e04bf9d4da49a3ac3555d3ddd63ec7>

There is no final exam