

Money, Trade, & Power: The History of Capitalism

History 278 / Spring 2022

Our goal in this course is to explore the dynamic, restless nature of capitalism. Like every other aspect of human affairs, the economy has a history. Those who hope to shape the future will find it worthwhile to consider the many forms capitalism has taken over the past several centuries. How did banks and joint-stock companies emerge? Why did capitalism facilitate overseas expansion and imperial subjugation? What is “growth,” and why did it not accelerate until the era of industrialization? How did various societies seek to mitigate the business cycle and enhance social welfare? How did modern corporations emerge, and what role did they play in driving the globalization of capital?

This course seeks to balance between *historical* and *conceptual* approaches. The textbook readings and most class sessions will emphasize historical narrative, while the written assignments will focus on schools of economic thought.

Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

Students will enhance their ability to synthesize complex themes and contemplate dynamic global systems. They will deepen their experience in reading non-fiction by working through highly regarded trade-press books. A series of short papers will provide experience in analyzing historical primary sources and articulating views about economic issues.

Course requirements

Reading quizzes (10% of course grade). You will be expected to keep up with the readings and demonstrate your familiarity with them during class sessions. The occasional in-class quiz will be administered to help keep you on track.

Reaction papers (40% of course grade). These four short papers, to be submitted online, will ask you to respond to primary sources with well-reasoned, well-written arguments. Each paper will be due at the end of a weekend (Sunday @ 11:59 pm) unless otherwise noted.

Midterm examination (20% of course grade for each). This in-class exam, scheduled for February 28, will feature handwritten essays asking you to synthesize key themes.

Final exam (30% of course grade). This take-home final will feature two portions. One essay will cover course themes since the second midterm; the other will ask you to reflect on the semester as a whole.

Course Readings

Jeffrey A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century, and Its Stumbles in the Twenty-First* (New York: Norton, 2020). ISBN (paperback): 978-0-393-35825-4.

Jürgen Kocka, *Capitalism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). ISBN (paperback): 978-0-69117-822-6.

Benjamin C. Waterhouse, *The Land of Enterprise: A Business History of the United States* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017). ISBN (paperback): 978-1-47676-665-2.

In addition, there will be a substantial set of primary and secondary sources posted on-line on the course Brightspace page.

Course Policies

Attendance is essential. You are allowed six unexcused absences; after that, each absence will be counted against your participation grade. It is not my job to “approve” absences one way or another, but if you expect to be representing the university in an official capacity (sports, band, etc.), please let me know in advance.

Common courtesy suggests that you should arrive on time. If you must leave early, please inform us ahead of time and then raise your hand at the appropriate time. A classroom discussion is not the same thing as a television viewing! Your coming and going may represent a significant distraction.

Contemporary students are tempted by all kinds of electronic distractions that inhibit their ability to learn effectively in class. I am going to ask that you refrain from using any electronic devices during class: no laptops, no tablets, and no phones will be permitted during class. This is your opportunity to perfect the art of note-taking by hand!

Classroom safety: Students (and professor) must be remained masked at all times, with the mask covering mouth and nose securely.

Academic integrity: The assignments in this course require you to formulate complex thoughts in your own words. Attempts to pass off another’s words as your own – be it on an exam or in your primary source exercise – will carry harsh penalties. Plagiarized papers will earn a “zero” for the assignment and may lead to further consequences, including notification of the Dean of Students Office. The “University Regulations” handbook contains further information on dishonesty. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778.

Disclaimer: In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email or phone.

Contact Information

Prof. Gray (wgray@purdue.edu)
Office hours in University Hall 328:
Thursday 11:30 am – 1:30 pm or by Zoom appointment
Office phone (765) 496-2772

Discussion and Reading Schedule**Read for Class**

January 10	Introduction	
January 12	What is Capitalism?	Kocka 1-24
January 14	Medieval Europe: Guilds & Bankers	Kocka 25-53
January 17	NO CLASS (MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY)	
January 19	Portugal, Spain, France	
January 21	The Culture of Consumption	
January 24	The Dutch Republic	Kocka 54-94
January 26	The Atlantic Trade: Sugar and Slaves	Collingham 41-55
January 28	Debating British Mercantilism	Smith documents (BB)
	PAPER #1 due Jan. 30 @ 11:59 pm	
January 31	The Cotton Textile Boom	Freeman 1-42
February 2	Atlantic Revolutions	Waterhouse 1-24
February 4	Full Steam Ahead	
February 7	Opium, Tea, and... Free Trade?	Collingham 145-158
February 9	Manchester Liberalism	Cobden documents (BB)
February 11	Industrialization in Europe	
February 14	Marx and the workers	Marx/Engels (BB)
February 16	Film clips: <i>The Young Karl Marx</i>	
	PAPER #2 due Feb. 17 @ 11:59 pm	
February 18	Early industry in the USA	Waterhouse 43-59
February 21	The "Market Revolution"	Waterhouse 61-77
February 23	Slavery and Westward Expansion	Waterhouse 25-41
February 25	The Civil War and Global Capitalism	
February 28	MIDTERM EXAM	

March 2	The Age of Entrepreneurs (I)	Waterhouse 79-95
March 4	The Age of Entrepreneurs (II)	Kocka 95-161
March 7	Forging a Global Economy	Frieden 1-55
March 9	The Electro-Chemical Revolution	Frieden 56-79
March 11	Mass Retail and the Modern Corporation	Frieden 80-104, Whouse 97-116
March 21	The Gold Standard and the Birth of the Fed	Frieden 105-123
March 23	The Great War and Its Aftermath	Frieden 127-172
March 25	Automobile Age	Waterhouse 117-133
March 28	1929 and the Great Depression	Frieden 173-194
March 30	The New Deal – a Reinvention of Capitalism?	Waterhouse 135-156
April 1	Keynes and his Critics	Keynes excerpts (BB)
	PAPER #3 due April 3 @ 11:59 pm	
April 4	Autarky and Aggression in the 1930s	Frieden 195-228
April 6	Social Democracy in Power	Frieden 229-250
April 8	Bretton Woods & the New International Economy	Frieden 253-277
April 11	The Postwar Boom	Frieden 278-300, Wh 157-175
April 13	Import Substitution: The Periphery Lags	Frieden 301-320
April 15	The End of Bretton Woods	Frieden 321-360
April 18	Crisis & Recovery: Capitalism in the 1970s	Frieden 363-91, Wh 177-194
April 20	Origins of the “Washington consensus”	Frieden 392-412; BB docs
	PAPER #4 due April 21 @ 11:59 pm	
April 22	A New Market Revolution: the 1990s	Frieden 413-56, Wh 195-215
April 25	The “Battle for Seattle”	Frieden 457-72
April 27	Trans-Atlantic Crises and the Politics of Bailouts	Frieden 473-505, Wh 217-243
April 29	Populism vs. capitalism	Kocka 162-169

