

Dominion: Economic History of the United States I
History HIUS 140/Economics ECON 158
Fall Semester 2008 Pepper Canyon Hall 109 TTh 8-9.20a

Grant Nebel, Lecturer grant.nebel@gcccd.edu
Office Hours at Espresso Roma W 9.30-10.30a
(please contact me by 6.30p Tu)

The Course:

This course is a study of the growth of North America as a collection of trading nations, as a colony for the production and trade of raw materials, as an agrarian society, and as an industrializing and industrialized nation. We will study this from a *historical* perspective—that is, we will ask, how was this *made* to happen? We will cover the time period from roughly 1250 to the First World War. Students are not expected to have training in economics, statistics, or history, although elements of all three will be used in class and in the readings.

Readings:

The following books are available at the University Bookstore in the Price Center:

(Required) Jeremy Atack, Peter Passell: *A New Economic View of American History*, 2nd ed. (AP)

Course Reader, available at Soft Reserves.

(Optional) Gary Walton, Hugh Rockoff: *History of the American Economy*, 10th ed.

Copies of the textbooks and of the course reader will be placed on reserve at the Geisel Library.

Requirements and Recommendations:

There will be two lectures per week. Students are *required* to write one essay, due as indicated in the schedule, with the details to be given by the beginning of the second week. There will be one midterm and one final examination, both of which will consist of short objective questions and longer essay questions. The essay and exams will be graded on a letter scale and be weighted as follows: **25% Midterm, 35% Essay, 40% Final for the final grade.** (The final exam will be comprehensive but slightly weighted towards material after the midterm.) Students must complete all assignments to receive a final grade in this class.

Students are *strongly encouraged* to attend the discussion sections, if available, throughout the quarter. These sections will be a chance for students to ask questions and work problems that will improve their ability to successfully complete the essay and the exams. The sections will also provide a chance to go into greater detail on the readings, which are not easy.

In accordance with UCSD policy, please note that the grade "A" is assigned to *outstanding* work only. Showing up on a semi-regular basis and answering questions adequately, by definition, gives you a C. Doing less than that gets you a D. Plan your quarter accordingly.

Grade Appeals and Make-Up Examinations:

Students who wish to appeal the grading of examinations and/or essays may do so *in writing* within two weeks of the return of the examination or essay. This should include an explanation of the specific reasons why the appeal is being made. Make-up examinations will not be offered except under extraordinary circumstances or medical emergencies. Such circumstances will need to be documented appropriately by a physician.

America was never innocent. We popped our cherry on the boat over and looked back with no regrets. You can't ascribe our fall from grace to any single event or set of circumstances. You can't lose what you lacked at conception.

James Ellroy

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to minor revision)

- 25 Sep Introduction to the Course; Disciplines of Economics and History;
reading: AP, Introduction and ch. 1; **Essay Assigned**
- 30 Sep (1300) The Precolumbian economy;
reading: Sahlins, "The Original Affluent Society"
- 2 Oct (1492) Credit and Corporations;
reading: Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance*, ch. 2
- 7 Oct (1602) Settlement and Trade; reading: Parry, ch. 13, 17
- 9 Oct (1690) America in the World Economy; Reading: AP, ch. 2
- 14 Oct (1754) The Road to the Seven Years' War; reading: AP, ch. 3
- 16 Oct (1783) Building the New Country; reading: *The Federalist*

- 21 Oct (1793) The Capitalist Manifesto: Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures*; reading: isn't it obvious?
- 23 Oct (1802) From Property to Capital;
reading: Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law*
- 28 Oct MIDTERM
- 30 Oct (1815) The Separate and Equal Station; reading: AP, ch. 4-5
- 4 Nov (1828) Regional Economies: the Northeast; reading: Vickers, "Fishermen, Farmers, and Manufactures. . . .," AP, ch. 10
- 6 Nov (1836) Expanding the American Economy; reading: AP, ch. 6-7
- 11 Nov(1846) Slavery and Debates About Slavery; reading: AP, ch. 11-12
- 13 Nov(1858) Economics and Political Culture:
reading: McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*
- 18 Nov(1792) Regional Economies: the West;
reading: Hackel, "Land, Labor, and Production," AP, ch. 9
- 20 Nov (1865) The Gold Rush, the Civil War, and Reconstruction;
reading: AP, ch. 13-14
- 25 Nov (1872) This Modern World (Corporate); **Essay Due**;
readings: Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, AP, ch. 16-17
- 2 Dec (1905) This Modern World (Labor);
reading: Brody, *Steelworkers in America*, AP, ch. 19
- 4 Dec (1914) This Modern World (Culture);
reading: Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*

Final Exam date and time: Tuesday 9 December 8-11a

O brave new world that has such people in it!

William Shakespeare

Essay Assignment due 25 November 8.20am NO EXCEPTIONS

Write a clear, organized, eight-page essay typed and double-spaced on *one* of the following questions:

- 1) The Industrial Revolution (the 5th Transition) was arguably more successful in America than in any other place. In what way was America *preadapted* for the Industrial Revolution—that is, what factors existing in America before the Industrial Revolution primed it for success?
- 2) Slavery is usually seen as a premodern or antimodern institution. Some Southern writers wished to see the South modernize in the period before the Civil War. Could slavery have persisted if the Civil War did not happen? Could a modern form of slavery have developed? Why or why not?
- 3) Discuss the evolution of an *economic identity* in America in the period 1250-1910. Economic identities include but are not limited to class. Discuss how the economic position of people shapes (does not determine) their values, their culture, and other aspects of their lifeways.

The best advice I can give you: get started now. You will need to present a clear and decisive thesis, and support it with arguments and evidence. (Writing, "there are many reasons for this" is neither clear nor decisive.) This is much more of an argumentative paper than a research paper; it is quite possible to do a good job with just the course materials. In grading these papers, we will be looking for original arguments and clear support for those arguments.

I will happily read and comment on any rough drafts that you have—if you send them to me via e-mail, you should cut and paste them into the message rather than attach a file.