

History of Early American Capitalism

Dr. Joshua R. Greenberg
Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:45am

This course examines the history of American capitalism as it developed from the colonial era through the mid-nineteenth century. We will focus on several types of labor and economic relationships: resource extraction, the economics of servitude and slavery, domestic service and household labor, politics and political economy, organized labor, gray and black market economic activity, and middle class consumption and labor. Themes will be covered in six sections of the class that combine lectures with secondary and primary sources.

Required Readings:

- Daniel Vickers, "Nantucket Whalers in the Deep-Sea Fishery: The Changing Anatomy of an Early American Labor Force," *Journal of American History* 72, No. 2 (Sept., 1985), 277-296.
- Emily Pawley, "The Point of Perfection: Cattle Portraiture, Bloodlines, and the Meaning of Breeding, 1760-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 36, No. 1 (Spring, 2016), 37-72.
- James M. Hutchings, *The Miner's Ten Commandments* (Placerville, CA: Sun Print, 1853).
- William Wright, *The Oil Regions of Pennsylvania. Showing Where Petroleum is Found; How it is Obtained, and at What Cost* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 61-78 and 206-227.
- Edward E. Baptist, "Toward a Political Economy of Slave Labor: Hands, Whipping-Machines, and Modern Power," in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman eds., *Slavery Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: U Penn Press, 2018), 31-61.
- Keith C. Barton, "'Good Cooks and Washers': Slave Hiring, Domestic Labor, and the Market in Bourbon County, Kentucky," *Journal of American History* 84, No. 2 (September, 1997), 436-460.
- Susan E. Klepp and Billy G. Smith, eds., *The Infortunate: The Voyage and Adventures of William Moraley, An Indentured Servant* (University Park, Penn State University Press, 2005).
- Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), Part 1: The Household.
- Howard B. Rock, "The Perils of Laissez-Faire: The Aftermath of the New York Bakers' Strike of 1801," *Labor History* 17, No. 3 (Summer, 1976), 372-387.
- John Larson, "Heartless Markets, Heartless Men," in *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 98-140.
- "A Working Man's Recollections of America," *Knights Penny Magazine* (1846).
- Hobart Berrian, *A Brief Sketch of the Origins and Rise of the Working Men's Party in the City of New York* (Washington DC: William Greer, 1840).
- Sharon Ann Murphy, *Other People's Money: How Banking Worked in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2017).

- Peter Way, “Evil Humors and Ardent Spirits: The Rough Culture of Canal Construction Laborers,” *Journal of American History* 79, No. 4 (March, 1993), 1397-1428.
- T.S. Arthur, “The Strawberry-Woman,” *Graham’s Magazine* 30, No. 6 (June, 1847), 345-347.
- Stephen Mihm, “The Alchemy of Self: Steven Burroughs and the Counterfeit Economy of the Early Republic,” *Early American Studies* 2, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), 123-159.
- Wendy Woloson, “In Hock: Pawning in Early America,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, No. 1 (Spring, 2007), 35-81.
- Brian P. Luskey, “Jumping Counters in White Collars: Manliness, Respectability, and Work in the Antebellum City,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, No. 2 (Summer, 2006), 173-219.
- Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener. A Story of Wall Street,” *Putnam’s Monthly* (1853).
- Elaine S. Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Course Requirements:

All assignments must be completed by the date on which they are due unless you have secured prior consent. Any paper received after class on the day a reading is due will be considered late and marked down one full letter grade, with later papers marked down even further.

1. Essay Exams. There will be an in-class midterm and a take-home final exam comprised of essay questions. Exams cannot be postponed or made up without prior approval.
2. Reading Reviews. You will hand in **six** short papers (3-4 pages) based on the weekly reading assignments this semester. You can choose which readings to review, but must write **three** papers before the midterm and **three** papers after the midterm. All papers must be double spaced, typed in standard font (e.g. Times New Roman 12), and uploaded to Blackboard. Responses will be graded on your ability to both distill the readings’ meaning and significance.
3. Class Participation and Attendance. All students must enroll in Blackboard for this course. Students are expected to actively participate in both discussions and lectures. Participation is extremely important, both for your own success in this class as well as for the success of the class as a whole. You must (1) complete all assigned reading before class, (2) bring the text to class with you, and (3) be prepared for discussion. A component of your class participation is attendance at BOTH lectures and discussions. Attendance will be taken and poor attendance will be reflected in your final grade. After four absences (excused or unexcused), each subsequent absence will result in your final grade being lowered by half a grade.

Course requirements will be weighted as followed:

Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Reading Responses	30%
Class Participation	10%

Class Schedule:

Section One: Resource Extraction

- * **Tuesday, January 28**
Lecture on Fishing, Whaling, and Colonial Farming
- * **Thursday, January 30**
Discuss Vickers
Discuss Pawley
- * **Tuesday, February 4**
Lecture on fur trapping, lumbering, and mining
- * **Thursday, February 6**
Discuss Hutchings
Discuss Wright

Section Two: Servitude and Slavery

- * **Tuesday, February 11**
Lecture on slavery and capitalism
- * **Thursday, February 13**
Discuss Baptist
Discuss Barton
- * **Tuesday, February 18**
Lecture on indentured servitude, convict, and contractual labor
- * **Thursday, February 20**
Discuss Moraley

Section Three: Domestic Economy

- * **Tuesday, February 25**
Lecture on domestic service and housework
- * **Thursday, February 27**
Discuss Jensen
- * **Tuesday, March 4**
Lecture on Market farming and gendered production
- * **Thursday, March 6**
Midterm

Spring Break -- No Class March 11 and 13

Section Four: Political Economy

- * **Tuesday, March 18**
Lecture on the colonial artisans and the Revolution
- * **Thursday, March 20**
Discuss Rock
Discuss Larson

- * **Tuesday, March 25**
Lecture on the Market Revolution, Panics, and Organized Labor
- * **Thursday, March 27**
Discuss Working Man
Discuss Berrian
- * **Tuesday, April 1**
Lecture on Banking and Monetary Policy
- * **Thursday, April 3**
Discuss Murphy

Section Five: Capitalism on the Economic Margins

- * **Tuesday, April 8**
Lecture on unskilled labor in the Early Republic
- * **Thursday, April 10**
Discuss Way
Discuss Arthur
- * **Tuesday, April 15**
Lecture on gray and black market economics
- * **Thursday, April 17**
Discuss Mihm
Discuss Woloson

Section Six: Corporate Capitalism and Consumption

- * **Tuesday, April 22**
Lecture on corporations, dry-goods clerks, and scribes
- * **Thursday, April 24**
Discuss Luskey
Discuss Melville
- * **Tuesday, April 29**
Lecture on Middle-class professionalism
- * **Thursday, May 1**
Discuss Abelson

****Take Home Final Exam Due****

Thursday, May 8, 10am