

Syllabus - History 247 / F04

American Business History / Prof. Dunlavy

Course mechanics

Course name

American Business History

Course number

448-247-[sec. # 301-304]

Day/time/location

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-5:15 p.m., 22 Ingraham

Sections: 301 - 12:05 W - 2637 Mosse Humanities, 455 North Park St

302 - 2:25 W - 1221 Mosse Humanities

303 - 9:55 R - 2231 Mosse Humanities

304 - 11:00 R - 2211 Mosse Humanities

Pre-requisites

Sophomore standing. Honors credit is available by individual arrangement with Prof. Dunlavy.

Prof. Dunlavy's office hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., 5109 Mosse Humanities Building; or by appointment: call 263-1854 or email cdunlavy@wisc.edu.

Teaching assistant

Ryan Quintana

Office: 4271 Mosse Humanities

Telephone: 263-1939

Mailbox: (by the 4th-floor elevator in the History corner of the Humanities Building)

Email: raquintana@wisc.edu

Office hours: xxxx

Course description

Three themes

This lecture course explores the dramatic changes that have marked American capitalism since the mid-eighteenth century. Throughout the semester, we will emphasize three themes:

changes in the world of business as a social world;

changes in the role of government, without which business life would be -- in Thomas Hobbes' words -- "nasty, brutish, and short" (witness the problems of Enron, WorldCom, etc.); and

the increasing importance and power of the corporation.

Three questions

As we explore these themes in the lectures, the readings, and your writing assignments, we will address three broad issues:

the facts: how and when the nature of American business changed;

causation: why these changes (and not others) took place; and

consequences: what impact -- social, political, economic -- these changes had.

Three goals

The course is designed to pursue three goals:

to give you basic factual knowledge of changes in American capitalism from one era to the next;

to sharpen your intellectual skills -- that is, to improve your powers of

critical analysis (your ability to read closely, to reason soundly, and to express your thoughts clearly in writing); and

historical analysis (your ability to analyze and interpret complex, dynamic events with imperfect information -- if you do well in the course, you may list that valuable skill on your résumé).

to perform the mental feat of "de-naturalizing" American business. As you develop an understanding of the forces that pushed change in certain directions but not others, you will begin to see that "business as we know it" is the product of specific historical forces, not an inevitable, pre-determined outcome. This insight, in turn, helps in making sense of the changes underway in American capitalism today and in understanding the extent to which human agency can make a difference.

Course materials

Required readings

The assigned readings (see Semester Schedule for details) are of two kinds: our focus will be on "primary sources," documents produced by participants in or observers of the historical events that we will study, and we will use a textbook for valuable background or contextual reading.

The primary sources take the form of articles, essays, or excerpts from books written either by business people or by other observers about controversial developments in American business. Primary sources provide the grist for an historian's mill. Read them carefully and actively; think not only about what a reading tells you but about who wrote it, why they did so, and what else you would like to know. If more than one primary source is assigned in a given week, they will make more sense if you read them in the order given on the schedule. Discussion sections will focus closely on the primary sources.

The textbook, available for purchase and on reserve, is:

Mansel G. Blackford and K. Austin Kerr, *Business Enterprise in American History*, 3d. ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994).

You will be assigned two or three chapters at a time. Read and digest them quickly; then review them in subsequent weeks, as indicated on the Semester Schedule. Bring questions to lecture and section or to me in office hours.

Recommended readings

If you plan to work actively to improve your analytical and writing skills -- and I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to do so in this class, the following works are indispensable (the specific edition is less important):

William Strunk, Jr., and E.G. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2002) or a 1999 online edition. This gem, long a classic, is only 70-some pages long; memorize it!

M. Neil Browne and Stuart M. Keeley, *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2004).

Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2002). Note especially the section on different modes of writing.

Where to find the readings

E-Reserves1 Copy Center UBS3 College Lib.4
Blackford & Kerr N N Y Y
Primary sources Y Y2 N N
Recommended books N N Y Y

1 Access E-Reserves (electronic reserves) through your UW portal, <http://my.wisc.edu>, only.

2 Would you prefer a course pack? If so, I will order copies after I take a head count at the first lecture. The first week's reading will be available only on Electronic Reserves. When the course pack is available, you will be able to purchase a copy at the L&S Copy Center in 1650 Humanities; hours: 7:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. - 4:10 p.m.

3 UBS = Textbooks Department of University Bookstore on Library Mall.

4 Hard copies of books only are available in the Reserves Stacks on the first floor of College Library (Helen C. White). The Reserves Room no longer makes available paper copies of scanned materials on electronic reserves.

Course requirements

Discussion sections

This course includes mandatory discussion sections. Please attend the section for which you are registered, so that the sections remain at a size suitable for fruitful discussion. If you need to switch sections, see your teaching assistant, Ryan Quintana, as soon as possible. If you must occasionally attend a different section, be sure to let him know that you need to do so.

Discussions will focus on the primary sources and the paper assignments, although you should feel free to raise questions about lectures, the keywords, and the textbook assignments as well. Each week you will receive a set of questions to guide your reading for the subsequent week. Use these! Your teaching assistant, Ryan Quintana, will provide more details in sections.

Twenty-five percent of your course grade will be based on participation in sections. Participation is comprised of several elements.

Attendance -- vital but not sufficient for a good grade.

Preparation: Be sure to do the assigned reading, discussion questions in hand, before section. Come with answers to the discussion questions as well as your own questions about the readings, lectures, or writing assignments. Occasionally you will also be given specific assignments to prepare for sections.

Engaged discussion: Active and informed discussion of the readings and lectures enhances the value of your section for all concerned. You can make a difference! Be sure to review the course description occasionally to focus your response to the readings and assignments.

See Course Mechanics for the days, times, and locations of the discussion sections.

Written work

Even in a digital age, it is impossible to overstate the importance of being able to write well. You may have the most interesting, innovative thoughts in the world, but if you cannot express them well in writing, how many people will know? Writing is also an indispensable tool in sharpening your analytical skills, since it is usually in the process of putting your ideas on paper that you figure out where your ideas work and where they don't. And don't assume, because your native language is English, that you are fluent. Everyone can improve his/her writing and most of us need to work at it.

You will have several opportunities to hone your skills this semester -- three take-home papers, occasional section assignments, and a blue book exam. All ask you to apply your powers of critical thinking to the lectures and assigned readings and then to convey the results on paper. Writing good essays in this class requires you to listen/read closely and to think critically, historically, creatively, and coherently (more on these qualities in lecture and sections).

The three paper assignments (constituting 10%, 15%, and 25% of your course grade) require you to digest and synthesize progressively more primary sources, and their maximum length increases accordingly from three to seven pages. You should bump up against these limits, and you may find the page limits quite constraining. If so, know that they are intended to encourage the valuable habit of expressing your thoughts directly and succinctly. Prune and pare your paper draft until it meets the page limit and its quality will improve.

Each week, you will have two or three keywords to master; these are drawn from the lectures and primary-source readings. Your goal is to be able to define or describe each term, place it in time (by date or decades), and to explain its significance in American business history -- and to do so in a paragraph that takes about five minutes to write (e.g., on the final exam). Over the course of the semester, you will have several opportunities to practice writing keyword responses. Note that you may reach a complete list of the keywords by clicking on any instance of "Keywords" on the Semester Schedule.

The final exam (25% of the course grade) will be two-hour, closed-book, blue-book exam, which will take place on Saturday, December 18, at 5:05 p.m. at a location to be announced later. You will be asked to write brief IDs on six of the keywords and to respond to two essay questions. The Schedule includes a few keywords each week; the IDs on the final will be drawn from this cumulative pool. On Tuesday, Dec. 7, we will hand out in lecture the two essay questions that will appear on the final exam.

Our Learn@UW site

This class has a password-secured Learn@UW site, which you can reach through your UW portal at <http://my.wisc.edu> or directly at <https://uwmad.courses.wisc.edu>. Use your UW NetID and password to log in.

On the site for History 247, you will find a link to this syllabus and a calendar of course events. As they become available, I will also post images from lectures, the weekly discussion questions, and the paper assignments. You might also want to try out the chat tool or launch a discussion thread. At any time during the semester, feel free to suggest ways that we might use Learn@UW to facilitate learning in this class.

Your grades will also be available on the Learn@UW site and they will be submitted electronically to the Registrar at the end of the semester. Check them periodically to ensure that what I have recorded matches your information.

Course policies

Do your best work -- anti-discrimination policy

I am committed to creating and maintaining a bias-free learning environment that allows everyone to do his or her best work. Please note carefully the following excerpt from UW policies:

"The University of Wisconsin-Madison, in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to protect its students from discrimination. S. 36.12 of the Wisconsin Statutes reads in part:

No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or [be] discriminated against in any service, program, course, or facility of the (UW) system or its institutions or centers because of a the student's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, or parental status."

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please feel free to talk with me.

For more information on the university's policies, contact UW-Madison's Equity and Diversity Resource Center, 179A Bascom Hall, 500 Lincoln Drive, Madison, WI 53706; (608) 263-2378.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be calculated as follows:

- Participation in sections 25%
- Writing assignments
 - Paper #1 (max. 3 pp.) 10%
 - Paper #2 (max. 4 pp.) 15%
 - Paper #3 (max. 7 pp.) 25%
- Final exam (blue book) 25%
- Total 100%

Grades will be assigned according to the standard UW format (A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F), except that we will also use pluses and minuses to give you more nuanced feedback during the semester. At the end of the semester, however, final grades must be reported without pluses and minuses. Note that a plus or minus will not change your final grade. That is to say, an overall average grade with a "plus" (e.g., B+) will not translate into the next higher grade (i.e., B+ will be reported as a B). By the same token, a "minus" grade (e.g., AB-) will not result in a lower grade (i.e., AB- will be reported as an AB).

For a discussion of performance expectations in the discussion sections and on the writing assignments, see "Sections" and "Written Work" above.

We will use Learn@UW's "Grades" tool this semester, so you will be able to check your grades whenever you log onto our site.

Absences and late assignments

How faithfully you attend lecture is your choice. Obviously, the more regularly you attend, the more you will get out of this course -- or, more concretely, the better prepared you will be for the written assignments and final exam. In that sense lecture attendance inevitably affects your grade indirectly.

Attendance in discussion sections is mandatory, since your section grade depends on participation, and an indispensable element of participation is attendance. As a general rule, students are permitted one unexcused absence from sections; after that, absence will affect your section grade. The best policy is to keep your teaching assistant and Prof. Dunlavy closely apprised of any difficulties that you run into during the semester.

Late assignments will be accepted only in the case of dire circumstances and we may require evidence to substantiate those circumstances (this is a history class, after all).

Plagiarism = fraud!

From Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed.) -- plagiarize: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; . . . present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

Plagiarism has become an increasingly serious offense as Western society has become increasingly property-oriented. The very notion of "stealing" ideas or words implies private-property rights in them -- a concept made explicit in the term intellectual property rights, a matter of great controversy in the computer/media world today. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, an excellent source of information is Turnitin.com's pages on plagiarism (or you may download here a pdf copy of Turnitin's manual on plagiarism). Also, please feel free to talk with me, with your teaching assistant, or with the Dean of Students, 117 Bascom (3-5700). Plagiarism can result in expulsion from the university -- not a good way to begin the rest of your life!

Here are my general tips on avoiding plagiarism:

Notice that plagiarism encompasses ideas as well as words. This means that you need to document (by citing your sources in footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetically) not only the source of quotations (i.e., borrowed words) but also the source of borrowed ideas that you express in your own words.

If you have trouble deciding what you need to document and what does not require it, that's because it is not always easy to know. A good rule of thumb: if in doubt, document.

Submitting an entire paper that someone else has written, even if they have given their permission, is fraud on a grand scale and completely beyond the pale.

Study Tips

#1: Take notes, take notes, take notes . . . in lectures and discussion.

#2: Don't let yourself be lulled by my PowerPoint lectures into passively writing down only what appears on the screen. Take an active stance. Flesh out the outline from the ppt slides with details in your own words.

#3: Review, review, review . . . your notes as well as the keywords and readings.

#4: Come and talk with Prof. Dunlavy or your TA about any questions or curiosities you may have.

#5: Remember that writing and analysis are intimately linked. For many students, understanding comes from the attempt to write about a topic in a coherent way. So don't be frustrated if the written assignments seem difficult -- you're doing much more than merely writing!

#6: UW-Madison's Writing Center is one of the best in the country. Located in 6171 Helen C. White Hall, it offers individual writing instruction, noncredit classes, and an online writing center. Take advantage of it!

Semester schedule

Era of Proprietary Capitalism

- Sept. 2 (T) - Lecture: Introductions, course mechanics
Read: Blackford and Kerr, Introduction + chapter 1
- Sept. 7 (T) - Lecture: On the periphery of the world economy (#1)
- Sept. 8-9 (W-R) - Sections: introductions, useful information
Keywords: mercantilism, Eliza Pinckney
Read: Selected letters of Gerard G. Beekman from Philip L. White, transcriber and ed., *The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746-1799* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1956). [on e-reserves]
- Sept. 9 (R) - Lecture: The world of colonial business (#2) + 1st paper assignment handed out
- Sept. 14 (T) - Special workshops on writing history papers at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- Sept. 14 (T) - Lecture: Post-colonial business from the revolution to the Panic of 1819 (#3)
- Sept. 15-16 (W-R) - Sections: analyzing the Beekman letters as historical sources
Keywords: colonies, bill of exchange, War of 1812
Read: Blackford and Kerr, ch. 2
- Sept. 16 (R) - no lecture; 1st paper assignment due Friday, Sept. 17, 12 p.m.
- Sept. 21 (R) - Lecture: A new institutional power: the corporation (#5)
- Sept. 22-23 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
Keywords: limited liability, general incorporation
Read: Daniel Raymond, *Thoughts on Political Economy* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jun'r., 1820), 425-433 - chapter on "Corporations".
Read: Letter, on the Use and Abuse of Incorporations, Addressed to the Delegation from the City of New-York, in the State Legislature. By One of Their Constituents (New York: G. & C. Carvill, 1827), pp. 3-14, 50-59.
Read: [Theodore Sedgwick, Jr.], *What is a Monopoly? Or Some considerations Upon the Subject of Corporations and Currency* (New York: George P. Scott & Co., 1835), pp. 4-14, 35-37.
Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 3-4
- Sept. 23 (R) - Lecture: Land and capital in early America: how much for whom? (#6)
- Sept. 28 (T) - Lecture: Origins of the myth of American "laissez-faire" (#7)
- Sept. 29-30 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
Keywords: General Survey Act of 1824, Second Bank of the United States, domestic manufacturing
Read: American Society for the Encouragement of Manufactures, "Address to the People of the United States (1817)," in *The Philosophy of Manufactures: Early Debates over Industrialization in the United States*, eds. M. Brewster Folsom and Steven D. Lubar (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 199-224.
Read: James Swan, "Address on the Question for an Inquiry into the State of Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce (1817)," in *ibid.*, pp. 225-240.
Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 3-4
- Sept. 30 (R) - Lecture: Social limits of property rights: race and gender in antebellum business (#8)

Era of Industrial Capitalism

- Oct. 5 (T) - Lecture: The "industrial revolution" - what was it? (#9) + 2d paper assignment handed out
- Oct. 6-7 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
Keywords: Free Frank, property rights, industrial revolution
Read: Documents re. plantation management from John R. Commons et al., *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol 1, *Plantation and Frontier* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1910), pp. 122-126, 134-147.
Read: Ch. 4, "The Old-Time Barber Shop" in James P. Thomas, *From Tennessee Slave to St. Louis Entrepreneur: The Autobiography of James Thomas*, ed. by Loren Schweninger (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 73-86.
Read: Selections from William Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez: The Ante-bellum Diary of a Free Negro*, ed. by William Ranson Hogan and Edwin Adams Davis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, [1951]).
Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 3-4
- Oct. 7 (R) - Lecture: American railroads: disorderly development (#10)
- Oct. 12 (T) - Lecture: The Civil War: birthing a national economy (#11)
- Oct. 13-14 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
Keywords: railroads, national banking acts
Read: Excerpts from the annual reports of the directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to their shareholders in 1827, 1847, 1867, 1881.

- Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 5-6
- Oct. 14 (R) - Lecture: New managerial strategies: vertical and horizontal integration (#12) + 2d paper due
- Oct. 19 (T) - Lecture: The paradox of American corporations: plutocracy ascendant (#13)
- Oct. 20-21 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: integration, plutocracy, Homestead
 Read: "The Homestead Strike" (in 3 parts), North American Review, September 1892, 355-375.
 Read: The Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920), 228-239 (ch. 17, "The Homestead Strike").
 Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 5-6
- Oct. 21 (R) - Lecture: The new work environment (#14)
- Oct. 26 (T) - Lecture: Social barriers to entry: race and gender at the turn of the century (#15)
- Oct. 27-28 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: white-collar work, Booker T. Washington
 Read: Booker T. Washington, The Negro in Business (orig. pub., 1906), ch. 1.
 Read: W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (orig. pub., 1903), ch. 3 - "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others".
 Read: Rheta Childe Dorr, What Eight Million Women Want (1910), ch. 5 - "Women's Demands on the Rulers of Industry".
 Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 5-6
- Oct. 29 (R) - Lecture: Alternatives to the large corporation (#16)

Era of Organized Capitalism

- Nov. 2 (T) - Lecture: Competition policy goes national (#17)
- Nov. 3-4 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: producer cooperatives, "race to the bottom," Sherman Anti-Trust Act, scientific management
 Read: Frederick W. Taylor, Principles of Scientific Management (1911), ch. 2.
 Read: Selections from Hearings before Special Committee of the House of Representatives to Investigate the Taylor and Other Systems of Shop Management . . . (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), pp. 3-33.
 Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapter 7
- Nov. 4 (R) - Lecture: Consolidating the power of big capital: the new century/the Great War (#18)
 + 3d paper assignment handed out
- Nov. 9 (T) - Lecture: The growth of technological systems (#19)
- Nov. 10-11 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: Council of National Defense, technological systems, diversification
 Read: Stuart Chase, The Tragedy of Waste (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929; orig. publ. 1925), 1-40, 108-125.
 Read: Earnest Elmo Calkins, Business the Civilizer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1928), 1-46.
 Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 8-9
- Nov. 11 (R) - Lecture: Why the great slide into depression? (#20)
- Nov. 16 (T) - Lecture: Another world war . . . or, forging the modern American political economy (#21)
- Nov. 17-18 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: Bretton Woods, technological unemployment
 Read: Selections from Impact of Automation on Employment, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Unemployment and the Impact of Automation . . . House of Representatives, 87th Cong., 1st sess., March-April 1961:
 pp. 1-2 (intro)
 pp. 2-10, 20-27, 56-66 (David J. McDonald, Pres., United Steelworkers),
 pp. 67-82 (John Diebold of the Diebold Group),
 pp. 353-78 (R. Conrad Cooper, Exec. Vice Pres., United States Steel Corp.).
 Note: This is on E-Reserves in two parts.
 Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 10-11
- Nov. 18 (R) - Lecture: The surprise of postwar prosperity (#22) + 3d paper assignment due
- Nov. 23 (T) - Lecture: Conglomerates: the end of the road (#23)
- Nov. 24-25 (W-R) - No sections this week
 Keywords: Highway Act of 1956, conglomeration, multinationals
 View: Primary source in lecture on Tuesday, November 30
 Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 10-11
- Nov. 25 (T) - No lecture (Thanksgiving)
- Nov. 30 (T) - Lecture: Multinationals: the "global reach" of American business (#24)
- Dec. 1-2 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week
 Keywords: OSHA

Read: Kimberly-Clark Corporation annual reports, 1952-53, 1963, 1973, 1983. For a sense of the company's public face today, check out its website, <http://www.kimberly-clark.com/aboutus/history.asp>, as well.

Review: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 10-11

Dec. 2 (R) - Lecture: Convergence: the "new regulation" (#25)

A new era of capitalism?

Dec. 7 (T) - Lecture: Crisis again: the 1970s (#26) + final exam prep sheet handed out

Dec. 8-9 (W-R) - Sections: for discussion this week

Keywords: stagflation, pseudo-professionalism, core business

Read: Robert H. Hayes and William J. Abernathy, "Managing Our Way to Economic Decline," Harvard Business Review 58 (July-August 1980): 67-77.

Read: John E. Schwartz and Thomas J. Volgy, "The Myth of America's Economic Decline," Harvard Business Review 63 (Sept/Oct 1985): 98-107.

Read: William Diebold, Jr., "The United States in the World Economy: A Fifty Year Perspective," Foreign Affairs 62:1 (1983): 81-104.

Read: Blackford and Kerr, chapters 12-13.

Dec. 9 (R) - Lecture: Against the grain of history - late-20c strategies and structures (#27)

Dec. 14 (T) - Lecture: 21c technological and regulatory revolutions? Info-, bio-, nano-tech + globalization (#28)

Dec. 16 (R) - Review session, 2:00 p.m., location TBA

Dec. 18 (S) - Final exam (blue book), Saturday, 5:05 p.m., location TBA