History 141A
American Economic Development in a Historical Perspective (1600-1910)
Fall 2019

TIME & LOCATION – Haines A25, TR 330-445

Professor: Matthew J. Hill --- matthill@ucla.edu or emailofmatthill@gmail.com OH: TBD

Introduction

History 141A is the first of a two-sequence upper division survey of the history of American economic growth. The course will examine the growth of the United States from backwater to economic powerhouse. At the time of independence the United States was relatively poor and unimportant, and yet in just a little of 100 years it became a superpower. So how did the country grow so rapidly and become so important?

Economics is often presented as ahistorical. But to economic growth can only truly be grasped by understanding the historical and global context. Debates and conversation are encouraged. Some students may feel better equipped to tackle history than economics, others, with more extensive background in economics, may find the economics boring and the history more exciting. No matter, as long as students are open to learning from each other.

Course lectures provide the analytical core of the course, from which some of the examination questions will be selected; the texts yield other questions. I use power points to stimulate thinking rather than to promote rote memorization. None of the questions/policies delved into in this course are settled. Students should feel free to challenge the material presented and bring outside sources/data into discussions

In terms of knowledge, students will leave the course with a solid understanding of the economic forces that shaped America today and with an understanding of factors that have impacted economic development, historically. We will focus on the importance of institutions.

Specific Objectives
This course will help you to develop your critical thinking, analytic thinking, writing, and public speaking skills. By the end of the course, students will gain a basic understanding of the theories surrounding economic development of the US and challenges to US economic growth going forward.

Readings:

Required Texts
Srinivasan, Bhu. Americana: A 400 year History of American Capitalism. This book is affordable and available on Amazon or kindle.

Recommended TEXTS

Each topic will be supplemented with articles/podcasts.

**Workload Expectations:** The course requires substantial work outside of class. Please be prepared to spend an average of at least 9 hours outside of class every week on class-related activities. This includes re-watching the lectures, listening to podcasts, studying for quizzes/exams, researching and writing assignments, and drop-in tutoring.

**Grading Scale:**

For all tests, we will adhere to a standard grading scale, where 93% and up = A, 90-92=A-, 88-90=B+, 82-88% = B, 80-82=B-, 78-80% = C+, 72-78=C, 70-72 = C-, and so on.

**Course Enforced Policies**

- There are no make-up exams. Exam dates are indicated in the syllabus. Therefore, if you cannot take an exam on the specified date, you are advised to take the course in a different section.

- The use of electronic devices such as cellphones, tablets, and devices that allow you to communicate with others, is strictly banned during exams. You will be reported for cheating if caught using them during exams.

**Requirements and Grades:** Your final grade will be determined by—

3 Response Papers (Week 3, Week 5, Week 7) (20% total)

Midterm (Tuesday of Week 6) (20%)

Immigration Paper (Thursday of Week 8) (10%)

Final (Finals Week) (30%)

Reading Pop Quizzes (5%)

Attendance/Participation (10%)

Student Presentation (5%)

Assignments (detail)-

**Response Papers:**

After certain lecture topics, you will write a 1000 word paper trying to process what you learned. Details on the course website.
**Immigration Paper:**

You will profile an immigrant, identifying the institutions that helped/hurt her, and compare their experience to the experience of an immigrant to the US in the 19th Century. Details to follow on myUCLA.

**Student Presentation**

Each student will present once during the semester. The task is to find a news article or podcast that relates to class and present it to the class.

**General Course Plan†**

1. **Economic Growth: Overview**

   The primary explanations for economic growth fall under the categories of culture, geography, and institutions. We will have a primer on each.

2. **Types of Colonies**

   We cover the two types of colonies and their effect on subsequent growth.

   Additional Reading:


3. **Land Policies**

   How did the United States decide who got newly acquired land and what were the long run consequences of these policies?

   Reading:

   Hoyt Bleakly on Georgia land lotteries:


4. **Early Markets**

   How did early markets develop in the U.S.?

† This plan is tentative. It is subject to change during the semester.
5. Slavery

What role did slavery play in the growth of the US economy?

Readings:

Point---

https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1873


Counterpoint---

https://reason.com/2018/07/19/slavery-did-not-make-america-r/

https://pseudoerasmus.com/2016/06/16/eoc/

Ager et al on other forms of wealth :


6. The Industrial Revolution in the US

How did the Industrial Revolution influence US growth and how was the US experience different from the British experience?

7. Urbanization: Farm to City

In the late 19th century the US transitions from the Jeffersonian ideal of yeoman farmers to a much more urbanized nation. What role do cities play in growth?

Readings:


8. Immigration
Who were the immigrants in the 19th century and how do they differ from today’s immigrants?

Reading:


9. Monopoly

The late 19th century saw the first rise of big business. What were the consequences for consumers and what was the nation’s response?

Reading:

NPR Planet money on Antitrust
https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2019/03/20/704426033/antitrust-in-america

Cell Phone/LAPTOP Policy:

Please turn off and put out of sight all electronic devices including laptops during class-time. The interruptions and/or distractions they cause disrupt class and interfere with the learning process. Thank you in advance for the peace and quiet.

Academic Integrity:

I strongly encourage you to study with one another and discuss among yourselves the material from class. However, during quizzes and exams you will NOT be permitted to use any books, notes, or test answers of other students. Any violation of academic integrity will result in automatic failure of the quiz or exam and potential for failure in the course.