Professor: Angus Burgin
Office hours: Fridays 3:40pm–5:20pm (https://calendly.com/burgin/office-hours)

HISTORY OF CAPITALISM

Overview:

In recent years scholars have built upon the work of prior generations of business historians, labor historians, and economic historians to develop a new field that has become known as the “history of capitalism.” This seminar will consider the methodologies and substantive contributions of recent scholarship in the field, in conjunction with classic works on the history of political economy.

Assignments and Grading:

This is a readings seminar, and the primary expectation is that every student will arrive in class prepared to contribute to in-depth discussions of the assigned texts. Unless students request otherwise in the first two weeks of the semester, this course will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Texts:

A number of the course readings (denoted with an * in the syllabus) will be available on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, should be acquired separately:


Friday, September 4th: Introduction


Friday, September 11th: Historicizing Capitalism


Supplementary Readings:

Jerry Muller, *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Modern European Thought* (Knopf, 2002).

Friday, September 18th: Economic Histories of Industrialization

Supplementary Readings:
• Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (Norton, 1982).
• Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (Basic, 1986).

Friday, September 25th: Capitalism and Religion


Supplementary Readings:

**Friday, October 2nd: Slavery and the Market**


**Supplementary Readings:**

• Stephanie E. Jones–Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (Yale University Press, 2019).

**Friday, October 9th: The Political Economy of Industrializing America**


*Supplementary Readings:*

• Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (Hill and Wang, 1982).

Friday, October 16th: Class and Classlessness


Supplementary Readings:
• Nancy Isenberg, White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America (Viking, 2016).
• Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (Oxford University Press, 1982).

Friday, October 23rd: Race, Capitalism, and the Carceral State


Supplementary Readings:


**Friday, October 30th: Statemaking in an Age of Global Commerce**


**Supplementary Readings:**
Friday, November 6th: American Economics in a Changing World Order


Supplementary Readings:

Friday, November 13th: New Technologies of Capitalism


Supplementary Readings:
• Alex Sayf Cummings, Democracy of Sound: Music Piracy and the Remaking of American Copyright in the Twentieth Century (Oxford University Press, 2013).
• Margaret O'Mara, Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley (Princeton University Press, 2005).
• Richard Sennett, The Culture of the New Capitalism (Yale University Press, 2006).
• Judith Stein, Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies (Yale University Press, 2010).
• Fred Turner, From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism.

Friday, November 20th: The Neoliberal Turn

• *Quinn Slobodian, Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism (Harvard University Press, forthcoming), Introduction, ch. 3, and ch. 5 (pp. 1–26, 91–120, 146–181).

Supplementary Readings:
• Wendy Brown, Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution (New York: Zone, 2015).
• David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Friday, December 4th: Economic Inequality in a Financialized World

• Adam Tooze, *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World* (Viking 2018), Introduction; Part I; chs. 12, 13, and 18 from Parts II–III; Part IV.

Supplementary Readings: