

## UMBC UGC New Course Request: HIST 425, Making a Buck: The History of American Capitalism

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Proposed Effective Date: Spring 2017

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### COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	HIST4XX
Formal Title	Making a Buck: The History of American Capitalism
Transcript Title (≤30c)	History of Am. Capitalism
Recommended Course Preparation	HIST 101 or 102
Prerequisite <b>NOTE:</b> Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	None
Credits	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	<small>This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.</small>
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

### PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (no longer than 75 words):

The word "capitalism" immediately calls to mind foundational works of modern economics, particularly Adam Smith and Karl Marx. In this course you will indeed read some of the most important philosophers and economists of capitalism. We will supplement this intellectual framework with the work of historians who discuss the political and economic developments that have shaped American capitalism. Topics to be discussed include slavery, risk-taking, the rise of corporations, income inequality, and modern finance.

### RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

a) Why is there a need for this course at this time?

Prof. Christy Chapin was hired a few years ago to teach economic and business history. She wants to establish a number of courses, at different levels, that deal with these topics. She teaches a lower-level course, HIST 311: American Entrepreneurs: From Christopher Columbus to Steve Jobs, which tends to attract a lot of non-majors and ENTR minors, and which is focused specifically on entrepreneurship. She designed the 400-level proposed course to be an in-depth look at American Capitalism for history majors and advanced non-majors, focused on all aspects of the history of capitalism. She is currently writing a book about the History of American Capitalism, so this course falls squarely in her area of expertise. We expect that this course will appeal to students of American history and politics, as well as students who are interested in global history or global studies, as well as business majors.

b) How often is the course likely to be taught?

The course will be taught in Dr. Chapin's course rotation, so probably once every year or once every two years.

c) How does this course fit into your department's curriculum?

We have currently no 400 level economic history course so we are eager to add this course.

d) What primary student population will the course serve?

history majors and advanced non-majors in economics, political science, American Studies, and other allied disciplines

e) Why is the course offered at the level (ie. 100, 200, 300, or 400 level) chosen?

Dr. Chapin already teaches a course at the 300 level that deals with an important aspect of capitalism, entrepreneurship, but she wanted a course that discusses the history of capitalism at a more theoretical and advanced level.

f) Explain the appropriateness of the recommended course preparation(s) and prerequisite(s).

We thought about making her entrepreneurship a recommended course preparation but in the end decided not to. Dr. Chapin explains what the course is about very clearly on the first day of class and she would rather weed out students who signed up for a 400-level course unthinkingly herself. It is a 400 level class, and we rarely get first and second year students in those. We thought that it would help students to be familiar with the basics of American history, hence 101 or 102 but they are not required.

g) Explain the reasoning behind the P/F or regular grading method.

All History courses include the PF option.

h) Provide a justification for the repeatability of the course.

Course may not be repeated.

#### **ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):**

Making a Buck: The History of Capitalism

HIST 425

Professor Christy Chapin

Office Hours

Office in Fine Arts Bldg, 5th floor North, #521

#### **Course Themes**

In this course, we will explore the interaction of ideas and institutions. The word “capitalism” immediately calls to mind foundational works of modern economics, particularly Adam Smith and Karl Marx. We will therefore read some of the most important philosophers and economists who shaped our notions of capitalism. These readings will provide us with an intellectual framework as we examine secondary sources (narrative histories written by scholars) that discuss the political and economic developments that have shaped American capitalism. A principal objective of this course is to uncover how economies, in this case, what we label “American Capitalism,” are socially embedded and arise from complex interactions between the state and society.

#### **Required books**

William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, currently in 4th edition but any edition is acceptable

Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014)

Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (2007)

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (2012)

Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977)

Robert F. Bruner and Sean D. Carr, *The Panic of 1907: Lessons Learned from the*

*Market's Perfect Storm* (2009)  
Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A History of the Great Depression* (2007)  
John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Great Crash, 1929* (1955, 2009)  
Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods*, (2013)  
Louis Hyman, *Borrow: The American Way of Debt* (2012)  
Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (2011)  
Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014)

### **Grade Distribution**

Participation	25%
Reading responses	25% (Drop one grade)
Paper #1	25%
Paper #2	25%

### **Participation:**

Your participation grade will reflect your ability to display the following skills:

1. Actively and respectfully listening to the professor and your peers
2. Preparing for class, which includes having read the assignment, taken time to reflect on major themes, and considering the work's place in the scholarly literature
3. High-quality contributions to the discussion – your comments should demonstrate an analytical and curious mind at work and should help move the discussion forward by appropriately referencing the assigned reading as well as your peers' comments
4. Ability to respectfully participate at appropriate times and be generally engaged with the class.

### **Reading Responses:**

Each week, by 5 pm the day before class meets, you will post brief summaries of the reading with your reflections on Blackboard. These responses will be similar to book reviews, examples of which can be found in Library Databases such as JSTOR and Project Muse. Book reviews briefly summarize the book and present the author's main argument. They also evaluate the quality and use of evidence, the author's style and presentation, whether the author's argument is persuasive, and whether the author overlooked important themes or events. Reading responses will be 1-2 pages in length.

### **Paper Rubric:**

Students will write two 8-10 page historiographical essays on a theme of their choosing.

- In these papers, students should demonstrate their ability to identify scholarly arguments and to analyze, compare, and contrast them.
- Students should be able to write clearly with proper grammar and punctuation. Writing well also entails using identifiable introductory and concluding paragraphs and strong topic sentences.
- Students must accurately footnote and cite relevant source materials.

### **Academic Conduct**

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. The full Student Academic Conduct Policy is available in the [UMBC Student Handbook](#) (page. 7), the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 14.3), and (for graduate students) on the [Graduate School](#) website. For more information, see the Provost's website: [http://www.umbc.edu/undergrad\\_ed/ai/](http://www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/ai/)

### **In Addition, Please Note:**

At the beginning of the course, you will be required to watch a brief tutorial on plagiarism. Please be advised that in all UMBC History classes the penalty for plagiarism or any academic misconduct is an "F" for the course. Additionally, you will be reported to the university administration where additional penalties, such as suspension, may be applied.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Acquire historical knowledge about how the nation's economy developed and how politics, at both the federal and state level, shaped its evolution.
- Understand some of the most important historiographical discussions in the fields of the history of capitalism, economics, and politics.
- Develop critical thinking skills, including improving upon the ability to identify an author's main argument, evidence, historical approach, and narrative devices
  - Strengthen the ability to compare and contrast this information across numerous historical works.
- Refine oral and written communication skills

### **Week 1**

#### **Introduction**

### **Week 2**

#### **Why History of Capitalism?**

Seth Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Fall 2014): 439-66 in Project Muse.

Gordon Wood, "The Enemy Is Us: Democratic Capitalism in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (Summer, 1996): 293-308 in JSTOR.

"Interchange: The History of Capitalism," *The Journal of American History* 101 (September 2014): 503-36.

### **Week 3**

#### **Intellectual History**

##### **A Taste of the Foundational Works, Part I: Smith & Marx**

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, volume I, 1776, chapters 1-4, (approximately 30 pages), available at the Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/smith-an-inquiry-into-the-nature-and-causes-of-the-wealth-of-nations-cannan-ed-vol-1>

On page, scroll down and click on "Introduction and Plan of Work"

(Note: "corn" means "grain" & "stock" or "capital stock" means capital that is invested)

Karl Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital* (pamphlet, about 20 pages), (1849), read entire, "Introduction" through "Effect of capitalist competition on the capitalist class..."

available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/>

### **Week 4**

#### **Intellectual History**

##### **A Taste of the Foundational Works, Part II: Keynes & Hayek**

John Maynard Keynes, "The General Theory of Employment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 51 (February 1937): 209-223 in JSTOR.

F.A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *The American Economic Review* 35

(September 1945): 519-30 in JSTOR.

F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944, 2007), chapters 5-6, pp. 100-123 on Blackboard.

## **Week 5**

### **Slavery and Capitalism**

Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014), introduction, chapter 2, part of 3, chapters 5-6; part of chapter 7: ix-xxii; 29-55; 94-97; 98-135; 136-174; 196-98.

## **Week 6**

### **Capitalism in the Shadows**

Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (2007), prologue and chapters 1-3, pp. 1-156; part of chapter 4, pp. 157-60, "Note on Sources," pp. 428-35.

## **Week 7**

### **Capitalism and Risk**

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (2012), prologue and chapters 1, 3, part of 4, 7, part of 8, part of epilogue, 1-6; 7-20; 60-104; 104-07, 142-49; 231-63; 264-86; 310-11.

## **Week 8**

### **Spring Break**

## **Week 9**

### **Capitalism and Rise of the Corporation**

Victor P. Goldberg, "Review of *The Visible Hand*," 14 *Journal of Economic Issues* (September 1980): 797-801 in JSTOR.

Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977), chapters 3, 7, 8: pp. 81-121, 207-81; parts of chapter 12: 381-2, 411-14; part of chapter 13: pp. 415-33.

## **Week 10**

No class

Paper due by Thursday at 5:00 of this week

## **Week 11**

### **Finance Capitalism during the Second Industrial Revolution**

Julia Ott, *When Wall Street Met Main Street* (2011), introduction, chapters 1 & 2: pp. 1-54; parts of chapter 3: pp. 55-58, 73-74; parts of chapter 4: pp. 75-77, 100; images between pp. 100 & 102; chapter 5: pp. 101-28; part of chapter 6: 129-32; chapters 7 & 8: pp. 150-190.

## **Week 12**

### **Capitalism and the Great Depression: Dueling Accounts**

Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A History of the Great Depression* (2007), introduction, chapters 1-3, pp. 3-104.

John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Great Crash, 1929* (1955, 2009), author's 1990s introduction and chapters 1-3, pp. xiii-xvi, 1-66.

### **Week 13**

#### **Capitalism and the Global Monetary System**

Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods*, (2013), introduction, chapters 2 & 3, part of chapter 4, part of chapter 6, part of chapter 7, *skim* chapter 8, read epilogue, pp. 1-60, 85-93, 125-29, 147-54, 155-60, 192-99, *skim* 201-50, pp. 330-48.

### **Week 14**

#### **Financializing Modern Capitalism Part I**

Louis Hyman, *Borrow: The American Way of Debt* (2012), introduction and chapter 1-4, pp. 3-120; part of 6, pp. 176-79; chapter 7, pp. 180-216.

### **Week 15**

#### **Financializing Modern Capitalism Part II**

Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (2011), chapters one and two, pp. 1-50; chapter 4, pp. 74-100; part of chapter 8, pp. 176-90.

### **Week 16**

#### **Inequality: Picketty and Critics**

Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014), chapter 1, pp. 39-71; chapter 10, pp. 336-376.

Phillip W. Magness and Robert P. Murphy, "Challenging the Empirical Contribution of Thomas Picketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*," *Journal of Private Enterprise* (forthcoming), available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2543012](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2543012)

**Final paper due approximately one week after the end of classes**