

AMERICAN BUSINESS HISTORY

Course: History 100AC, Spring 2017

Lecture times: MWF 12-1pm

Lecture location: 2060 VLSB

Office: 3422 Dwinelle

Instructor: Daniel Robert

Email: daniel.m.robert@berkeley.edu

Please do not use bCourses email

Office Hours: M and W 1-2pm, or gladly by appointment. Just send me an email with *your* available times.

Course Description:

When President Calvin Coolidge declared in 1925 that “the chief business of the American people is business,” he was not making a historical argument, though it would have been a defensible one. Nearly a century earlier, French visitor, Alexis de Tocqueville, made a similar observation. Indeed, America was colonized by joint-stock corporations! Understanding the history of American business can therefore unlock a great deal about America itself.

In particular, as an American Cultures (AC) course, this class will examine how various racial and ethnic groups in the United States have impacted, and been influenced by, business enterprises, markets, and business leaders. We will explore questions such as: What is the relationship between capitalism, race, gender, and economic class? Is the history of American business primarily one of creative entrepreneurs seizing available opportunities, or one of exploitative profiteers manipulating markets? In what ways have business and labor, risk and reward, been constructed socially and politically along categories of racial, ethnic, and sexual differences? These questions will recur throughout our chronological journey from the seventeenth-century to the present, and as they do, we another important question will be raised: Has the relationship between business and race, gender, and class mostly stayed the same, or changed, and how? By comparing the experiences of various groups across time, place, and industry we will develop an understanding of how race, ethnicity, and gender are related to the history of American business.

Required Texts (any version, new or used, paper or electronic):

Paul E. Johnson, *Sam Patch, The Famous Jumper* (2003)

Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

Lendol G. Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Credit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Paper One (formal assignment to be distributed):

Karl Marx once wrote that, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.” Do you think this statement is true for Sam Patch? Is Sam free to make his own choices and to live the life he chooses? If so, how? If not, why? Does the emergence of industrial capitalism provide opportunities for Sam, or rather constrain him?

Five to seven pages, double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1 inch margins, with Chicago Manual of Style footnoting.

Paper Two (formal assignment to be distributed):

In *Captains of Consciousness* Stuart Ewen argues that, “the corollary to a freely growing system of goods production, was a ‘systematic, nationwide plan’ ...of consumer production.” (25) Yet in *Financing the American Dream*, Lendol Calder views consumers as having more choice and control in the market. Did corporations, advertisers, lenders, and others strategize to mass produce consumers just as Henry Ford mass produced cars? Or did consumers want products and demand both products and the ability to pay for them? Who was in control in the creation of a mass consumer culture?

Five to seven pages of text, double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1 inch margins, with Chicago Manual of Style footnoting.

Learning Goals and Methods:

Course Learning Goals	Course Elements				
	Lecture content	Lecture discussions	Readings	Essays	Midquiz and Exam
Grasp an overarching narrative of American business history from colonial times to the present and understand how race and ethnicity are thoroughly integrated into this history.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Obtain and apply interpretation skills used by historians	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Produce clear, well-argued writing that contains an argument and evidence				✓	✓
Hone public speaking skills		✓			
Become a historically thinking individual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Grading:

Essay One: 20%

Essay Two: 25%

Mid-Quiz: 20%

Final Exam: 35%

Final grades will not be curved. Letter grades, with plus and minuses will correspond to 10-point number ranges with 3.333 gradations within that range. For example, 80 to 83.33 is a B-, 83.34 to 86.66 is a B, and 86.67 to 89.99 is a B+. If you are taking the class Pass/No Pass you must earn over 70.00% to pass. All students must complete all assignments to pass the course.

Late Papers and Completing Assignments:

A late paper will receive a deduction of 1/3 a letter grade for each 24 hours it is turned in past the due date and time. For example, a paper that would have received a grade of B+ will be dropped to a B after 24 hours past the due date and time. If the paper is late by less or more than 24 hours the deduction will be prorated accordingly.

bCourses:

Please save your assignments with the following format: “Last name, first name – Title of Assignment.” For example: Smythe, Joan – Source Analysis 1”

To turn in assignments via bCourses, select “Grades” browse to the appropriate assignment and upload the file.

Academic Integrity:

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: “As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others” (<https://asuc.org/honorcode/index.php>). The hope and expectation is that you will adhere to this code and that you will not engage in academic misconduct. The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” ([UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct](#)). Plagiarism, a subset of academic misconduct, is defined at the following link: <http://writing.berkeley.edu/students/academic-honesty>. We will discuss plagiarism further in class along with strategies on how to avoid it. Please see the following link for how to properly cite your sources: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/how-to-find/cite-sources#Plagiarism>. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in significant negative consequences, possibly including failure in the course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Expectations and policies:

Students are expected to be ready for class when class begins. Attendance in lecture is an important part of this course. Participation includes doing the reading, contributing your ideas during discussions, and listening to others’ ideas. Material from lecture and readings will be on the mid-quiz and final exam. The final exam will cover material covered during the entire course. Audio and video recording of lectures are NOT allowed

without written permission from the instructor, except in the case of DSP students with a DSP letter on file who may record the lectures for individual private use only. Students must take the final exam at the scheduled date and time. Please make travel plans accordingly. Incompletes will only be granted in extreme circumstances such as a documented family emergency or health crisis.

Digital devices:

Laptops and tablets can be used in lecture for note-taking purposes only. You are not permitted to distract those sitting around you by looking at images other than your note-taking software during class. Please turn cell phones off in class.

Accommodations:

If you are involved in extracurricular activities such as student athletics and have to miss class, if you need religious accommodations, if you are or soon will be a parent and need accommodations, or if you need ability-related accommodations please consult the appropriate university policies and inform me right away, preferably within the first week of class. You may see me privately after class or during office hours.

<http://www.dsp.berkeley.edu/>

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/academic-calendar-and-student-accommodations-campus-policies-and-guidelines>

In Distress?

If you are experiencing psychological or emotional distress, the following resources can be very helpful: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>

Safety: Useful campus safety information is available here: <https://warnme.berkeley.edu/>

Course Schedule and description:

Readings listed below the lecture title are to be read before that lecture. Unless otherwise stated, all readings are posted to the “Files” section of bCourses. Syllabus subject to change.

Week 1

W 1/18 – Introduction: What is Capitalism?

F 1/20 – Sugar, Slaves, and the Origins of Capitalism

Table from Slave Voyages (browse)

Voyage of the Slave Ship Sally (browse exhibit)

Week 2

M 1/23 – Native Americans, Colonists, and the Market

Exchange List for Pelts (1703)

Hudson’s Bay Factor Describes Merchandise Disliked by Indian Customers (1739)

W 1/25 – Cotton, Slaves, and the Industrial Revolution
Slave Solomon Northup, “Cotton Growing” (1854)
Alexander Telfair, Instructions to His Overseer (1832)

F 1/27 – Political Visions, Production Realities
Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures,” excerpt (1791)
Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia,” excerpt (1781)

Week 3

M 1/30 – From Artisans to Entrepreneurs
John Cotton, “On the Just Price” (1639)
Benjamin Franklin Coaches an Ambitious Tradesman (1748)

W 2/1 – Antebellum and Civil War Business
“A Factory Girl Leads a Tour of the Lowell Mills, 1845,” expert posted to
bCourses.

“Jewish Immigrant Abraham Kohn Laments His Wanderings as a Peddler, 1842-
1843,” excerpt posted to bCourses.

F 2/3 – Reconstruction
W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* [on reserve in Moffitt], read “The Black
Worker,” “The White Worker,” “The General Strike,” and “Back Toward
Slavery.”

Week 4

M 2/6 – Railroads
Ginette Verstraete , “Railroading America: Towards a Material Study of the
Nation” (2002)

W 2/8 – The Nature of Capitalism
Richard Walker, “California’s Golden Road to Riches: Natural Resources and
Regional Capitalism, 1848-1940.” (2001)

F 2/10 – The One Percent in the First Gilded Age
Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), [online via oskicat], read chapter 5,
“The Italian in New York,” 48-54.

Week 5

M 2/13 – Workers Unite!

“Unionized Workers in the Knights of Labor Demand a Fair Share of American Wealth,” (1878).

David Roediger, “Irish American Workers and White Racial Formation in the Antebellum United States,” in *The Wages of Whiteness; Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1999), online via Oskicat.

W 2/15 – Law against Labor

Lochner v. New York Supreme Court decision (1905)

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/198/45/case.html>

F 2/17 – Midquiz. Bring blue or green book(s) and pen.

Week 6

M 2/20 – NO SCHOOL

W 2/22 – Democratizing Desire

Browse images of the interior of John Wanamaker’s famous department store
http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Collection/Show/collection_id/35
Anne McClintock, chapter 7, “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995)

Film Clip, *Ethnic Notions*

F 2/24 – Sharecroppers, Populists, and Free Silver

“A Sharecropper Contract” (1882),

<https://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/122/recon/contract.htm>

People’s Party Platform (1892)

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/eamerica/media/ch22/resources/documents/populist.htm>

Week 7

M 2/27 – The Great Merger Movement and Anti-trust

Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom: A Call for the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People* (New York: Doubleday, 1913), excerpt.

W 3/1 – The Assembly Line

F 3/3 – Taylor and Scientific Management

Frederick W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, read excerpt regarding “Schmidt” and pig iron on pages 40-48, PDF posted to bCourses.

Essay #1 due Friday 3/3 at 5pm on bCourses

Week 8

M 3/6 – The Ambulance Service of Capitalism: Ethnic Savings Banks and Mutual Benefit Societies

W 3/8 – Welfare Capitalism

F 3/10 – Gender and Work

Margery W. Davies, [chapter 4] “Women Enter the Office,” in *Woman’s Place Is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 51-78, online via Oskicat.

Evelyn Nakano-Glen , “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor,” *Signs* 18, no. 1 (August, 1992): 1-43.

Week 9

M 3/13 – Manufacturing Consumers

W 3/15 – Debtors Prison

Lendol G. Calder, *Financing the American Dream* [online via Oskicat], read intro., chapter 2, and epilogue, 3-34, 74-104, 291-304.

F 3/17 – Gender, Race, and Customer Service

Jack Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), read recollections of Pullman porters selected from pages 71-86.

Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Fell about What They Do* (New York: New Press, 1974), read recollections of telephone operators Frances Swenson and Heather Lamb selected from pages 32-38.

Week 10

M 3/20 – Car Culture in America

Charles F. Kettering, “Keep the Consumer Dissatisfied,” *Nation’s Business*, January, 1929, 30-31, 79. Note: Each page has a separate link:

<http://digital.hagley.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A2037210>

<http://digital.hagley.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A2037186>

<http://digital.hagley.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A2037083>

W 3/22 – Sales and Public Relations in Pre-WWII America

F 3/24 – Race and Business Strategies

Jessica Gordon Nembhard, “Expanding the Tradition: Early African American-Owned ‘Cooperative’ Businesses,” in *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), read chapter 3, 60-78, online via Oskicat.

Week 11

M-F 3/27-3/31 – SPRING BREAK

Week 12

M 4/3 – Democratizing Stock Ownership and the Crash of 1929

Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* [online via Oskicat]; read entry for “Jim Sheridan” under “The March,” “Peggy Terry’s Story,” under “Hard Travelin’,” and “Arthur A. Robertson” under “Big Money.”

W 4/5 – The New Deal from the Top Down and ‘Special Interests’

Franklin Roosevelt, “First Fireside Chat: Banking” (1933)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9CBpbuV3ok>

Adolf Reed Junior, “Race and the New Deal Coalition,” *The Nation*, 2008

<https://www.thenation.com/article/race-and-new-deal-coalition/>

John J. Laukaitis, “Indians at Work and John Collier’s Campaign for Progressive Education Reform,” *American Educational History Journal* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 97-105.

F 4/7 – Workers Make a New Deal

Huey Long, “Share the Wealth” (1934)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hphgHi6FD8k>

Father Coughlin “Drive the money-changers from the temple!” (1936)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPBooPu28QY>

Week 13

M 4/10 – World War II, the Cold War, and the Reboot of Free Enterprise
Jennifer Burns, “Godless Capitalism: Ayn Rand and the Conservative Movement,” *Modern Intellectual History* 1 (2004): 359-385.

W 4/12 – Tupperware Documentary
An awesome film on the opportunities and limits of women-ran at-home sales parties in the 1960s and 1970s.

F 4/14 – A Consumer’s Republic
Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), excerpt on African American family William and Daisy Myers trying to move into Levittown, PA in 1957.

George Lipsitz, chapter 1, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness,” in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (1998), online via Oskicat.

Film Clip: *Eyes on the Prize*, part 2, “The House We Live In”

Essay #2 due Friday 4/14 at 5pm on bCourses

Week 14

M 4/17 – The Third Industrial Revolution
Manning Marable, “Introduction” in *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, revised edition (1999)

W 4/19 – Labor, Deindustrialization and ‘New’ Trade Deals

Rubén Martínez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), excerpts.

Grace Chang, chapter 2, “Undocumented Latinas: The New Employable Mother,” and chapter 4: “The Nanny Visa: The Bracero Program Revisited,” in *Disposable Domestic: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy* (2000).

Film Clip: *New World Border*

F 4/21 – It’s a Wal-Mart World for Us, or Is It?

Sam Walton, “10 Rules that Worked for Me,” excerpt posted to bCourses.

George Joseph, “Does Walmart Understaff its Stores in Minority Communities?,” *The Atlantic*, August 4, 2016.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/09/does-walmart-understaff-its-stores-in-minority-communities/498479/>

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), excerpt on working at Wal-mart.

Film Clip: *The Secrets of Silicon Valley*

Week 15

M 4/24 – Film: Prison in 12 Landscapes – Brett Story. (2016)

W 4/26 – This Ends Badly

Jordan Camp, chapter 5, “What’s Going On: Moral Panics and Militarization in Post-Katrina New Orleans,” in *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State*. 2015, online via Oskicat.

Vijay Prashad, “This Ends Badly: Race and Capitalism,” in *Policing the Planet, Camp and Heatherton* (2016), excerpt posted to bCourses.

F 4/28 – Conclusions and Review

Week 16

M-F 5/1-5/5 – Reading Week

Week 17

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday 5/10/2017, 3-6pm. Bring blue or green book(s) and pen. Location TBD. Students cannot take the exam early. Please make travel plans accordingly.