

Economics 1740 Section 1: US Economic History  
Fall 2011 T-Th 2:00-3:20  
Location: OSH 202  
3 Credits, Fulfills American Institutions (AI) Requirement

Instructor: Alexander Kangas  
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Office: OSH Econ Dept., #8  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:20-4:30, other times by appointment

Course Description:

This class uses an economic framework to address the historical development of the United States from its colonial beginnings to the present. The economy is a system that harnesses human effort and other resources to provide material things for people and helps to create the social environment in which we live. As such, we not only will learn the important facts and institutions relating to US Economic History, but also the methods which will allow us to gain further insight. The course helps students better appreciate economic forces for historical change and better understand the economic consequences of historical events to the modern U.S. economic system.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, a student who is successful in this course will have gained an understanding of

- The sources of economic growth in the US, including natural resource endowments, innovation and technological change, institutional change, and intra- and international trade (including innovations in communication and transportation)
- The effects of economic growth for the US population as a whole and for sub-populations, including the evolution of living standards, changes in the nature of work, and the increasing role of markets in people's lives
- The measurement of important economic concepts and variables, including gross domestic product, income, wealth, unemployment, and inflation
- The evolution of US government policy as it relates to the economy, including the growth of the public sector over time, the regulation of the labor market (including the operation and abolition of slavery and the regulation of immigration), and the use of fiscal and monetary policy to mitigate the harmful effects of economic downturns
- The application of historical insights to contemporary policy debates
- The functioning of the modern U.S. economic system from an analysis of its past

Required text:

*The Economic Transformation of America: 1600 to the Present* by Robert Heilbroner and Aaron Singer, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ISBN: 0-15-505530-5

Other readings:

There will be four additional readings during the semester – which I will provide – that will be discussed in class and appear on the exams. These readings are

1. Karl Polanyi: *The Great Transformation*, Introduction and Chapter 3 (On Exam 1 and Final)
2. Howard Zinn: *A People's History of the United States*, Chapters 12 and 13 (On Exam 2 and Final)
3. Jeanne Boydston: *Home and Work*, Chapter 6 Pol. Econ. of Housework (On Exam 2 and Final)
4. Minqi Li: *The 21st Century Crisis: Climate Catastrophe or Socialism* (On Final Exam)

Requirements and Grading:

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. The exams are weighted as follows:

Exam 1 – 30%

Exam 2 – 30%

Final Exam – 40%

University of Utah		
Grading Scale		
	Score	GPA
A	93-100	4
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1
D-	60-62	0.7
E	0-59	0

Exams are held in our normal room except when otherwise noted. Your grade in the course will be based on your scores on these three exams. All exams will consist of a mix of “multiple choice” and true/false questions. Questions will address topics covered in lecture, video, textbook, and additional readings. In very rare cases of extreme, unavoidable, and **documented** scheduling conflicts, individual students may arrange to take exams **early** in the University testing center; these arrangements must be made well in advance of the scheduled exam time. Exams are not given after the scheduled time, except according to University policy. Failure to take an Exam at the scheduled time will result in a 0 for the exam. The highest possible grade you can achieve in this course if you miss a midterm exam is a C-.

Course website: On WebCT for this section you will find the syllabus, grades, and additional readings.

Video used in class:

1. The Gold Rush\*\* (call # TN 271 G6 G65 2006)
2. New York: A Documentary Film\*\* (call # F128.3 .N582 1999)
3. The Crash of 1929 (call # HB 3717 1929. C72 1991)
4. Guns, Germs, and Steel\*\* (call # HM626 .G85 2005)
5. The Iron Road (call # HE2763 .I76 1990)

\*\*Not the entire film, only select portions.

Class Policies:

Please feel free to talk with me during office hours regarding anything in the class, about economics, or the economics major in general.

Students should speak with me *in advance* to request special consideration of extenuating circumstance that prevent their taking an exam or submitting an assignment at the scheduled time. Exams may only be taken the day indicated in the course schedule.

No extra credit is given in this class; students have sufficient opportunities for learning and for demonstrating their knowledge of the subject and their effort and commitment in the class.

As a courtesy to everyone present, please turn off phones and arrive on time to class. Consistent attendance is recommended, but attendance is not taken.

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to

the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and with me to make arrangements for accommodations.

**This syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.**

#### Instructor Responsibilities:

The instructor will convene class at the scheduled time, ensure that the environment is conducive to learning, enforce the student code, grade and return assignments and exams in a timely manner, and inform students at the beginning of class of course content, requirements, evaluation methods, grading scale, schedule, and due dates. Please contact the instructor soon with any concerns regarding the way he facilitates learning this term.

Should the instructor be late for class or unable to arrive due to weather, sickness, or other reasons, the department will be notified and its representative will inform students of the situation. Students may inquire by calling the economics department at 581-7481.

#### Important Dates:

Aug-23 First Day of Class: Introduction to Economic History

Sep-22 Exam 1

Nov-8 Exam 2

Dec-12 Final Exam