

Economics 1740 Section 1: US Economic History

Fall 2000 T–Th 10:45–12:05 PAB 103

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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00–4:30, Thursday 12:30–2:00, other times by appointment

This course examines the economic and social history of the United States from the colonial period to the present day. While the course is broad in scope, we will direct special attention to particular topics. These topics include changes in US labor markets, determinants of population change and family structure, and racial and gender inequality. It is hoped that students in this class will gain a more detailed knowledge of US history, insight into how economic concepts can be used to study history, and a sense of how understanding history makes us better able to understand the present.

There are two texts and one short set of readings that you should purchase:

- Heilbroner and Singer, The Economic Transformation of America: 1600 to the Present (fourth edition). NY: Harcourt Brace, 1999 (referred to below as "H+S").
- Schor, The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure. NY: Basic Books, 1994.
- Current Issues Reader, available online through the Bell + Howell/Proquest coursepacks website.

Heilbroner and Singer and Schor are available for purchase in the bookstore. A copy of Heilbroner and Singer will also be kept on reserve at the Marriott Library. The Current Issues Reader must be purchased online – see the last page of the syllabus for details. Once you have purchased it, you will be able to print out the articles in the reader.

We will discuss a good deal of material that is not covered in the readings. To help you organize this material, I will periodically place short outlines on the class website and at the reserve desk in the library. Even if you make use of these outlines, it will still be necessary for you to come to class and to take good notes in order to keep up with the material.

The class website can be found at www.econ.utah.edu/maloney/1740home.html. You can get there either by going directly to this address, or by going to the econ department web site (www.econ.utah.edu), then clicking on "Faculty and Staff," then clicking on my name, and then clicking on the Econ 1740 link. In addition to lecture outlines, I will post copies of graphs and tables used in class, review questions, occasional announcements about the class, and other material on this site.

If you are just learning English or have any difficulty with the language, or if you have any disability or special concern regarding this course, **please meet with me early in the semester**. I will work with you to connect you with resources to help you with any particular needs you might have.

Requirements and Grading:

1. Exams

There will be three exams: two mid-terms and a final. **The first mid-term exam will be held on Tuesday, September 26. The second mid-term will be held on Thursday, November 2. The final exam will be held on Friday, December 15, at 9:15 a.m. in our regular room.** The mid-term exams will each be worth 25% of your grade. The final will be worth 30%. The final exam will emphasize material from the final few weeks of the course but will include some comprehensive material. All exams will consist of a mix of "multiple choice" and short essay questions. In very rare cases of extreme, unavoidable, and documented scheduling conflicts, individual students may arrange to take exams early, and these arrangements must be made well in advance of the scheduled exam time. Late exams may be given in cases of documented medical or other emergency. Otherwise, failure to take an exam at the scheduled time will result in a 0 for the exam.

2. H+S Reaction Essays:

Everyone is responsible for reading all of the assigned readings. In addition, everyone will write two short essays summarizing and reacting to two of the assigned readings from Heilbroner and Singer. These essays should include two or more substantial paragraphs summarizing the material in the reading, and at least one substantial paragraph indicating your reaction to the reading: was there anything that surprised you? are there issues or ideas raised in the reading that you would like to know more about? do you have any criticism of the reading? These essays are due on the day that the assigned reading is to be covered. You can choose to write on any two H + S reading assignments, but you must turn in at least one essay by October 31. These two essays are each worth 5% of your final grade.

3. Essays on Current Issues Readings:

One theme of this class is that the past remains relevant in our lives, both because specific historical events have long-lasting impacts and because many of our contemporary challenges appeared in similar forms earlier in our history. The Current Issues Reader contains recent newspaper and magazine articles that will help us make some of these connections between historical topics and contemporary issues. Everyone is responsible for reading all of these articles. In addition, everyone will write one short essay based on one of the topics in the reader.

Topic 1 (Due Thursday, September 28) – Measuring the Standard of Living:

As we will discuss, tracking changes in living standards in the US in the 1800s and 1900s is a very complicated matter. The two articles in this section of the reader describe ongoing efforts to develop better measures of living standards. Summarize and comment on these two articles. Your essay should deal with the following issues:

- What factors, other than income, are used by the UN and the Conference Board to measure standard of living? How do these additional factors alter our perception of relative living standards across nations and of international trends in living standards?
- What factors other than those mentioned in these articles might be useful to add to a "human development" or "standard of living" index?

Topic 2 (Due Tuesday, October 17) – Reparations for Slavery:

Though slavery ended in the US nearly 150 years ago, there are ongoing debates about whether the descendants of the slaves should be compensated for the work and suffering of their ancestors. Read the articles in this section of the reader and write an essay summarizing and commenting on them. Your essay should address the following issues:

- What are some of the arguments presented in favor of paying reparations for slavery?
- What are some of the arguments presented against such a policy?

- Do you think the federal government should do anything on this issue (apologize, pay reparations, create institutions that offer education funds or small business loans to the descendents of slaves)? If not, why not? If so, what would be the best policy?

Topic 3 (Due Tuesday, October 24) – Immigration:

Throughout US history, Americans have debated the impact of immigrants on the economy and the proper form of regulation of immigration. This is no less true today. Read the articles in this section of the reader and write an essay summarizing and commenting on them. Your essay should address the following issues:

- What beneficial effects have recent high levels of immigration had on the broader economy, according to these articles?
- Why should we be concerned about current and future waves of immigrants, according to Borjas? What sort of immigration policy does Borjas propose?
- Based on class discussion and these readings, what sort of immigration policy would you like to see the US follow in the coming years?

Topic 4 (Due Tuesday, November 14) – Labor Relations:

In the late 1800s, changes in technology, the structure of markets, and the structure of firms led to new kinds of conflicts between owners and workers. Such conflicts continue in the present, often with similar roots. Read the articles in this section of the reader and write an essay summarizing and commenting on them. Your essay should address the following issues:

- What strategies have workers used to deal with technological change?
- What does the resolution of the AWG strike tell us about how broader labor market conditions affect bargaining between workers and employers?
- What role did these issues of technological change and broader labor market conditions play in the Homestead strike?

Topic 5 (Due Tuesday November 21) – Labor Market Discrimination:

As we will discuss in class, the analysis of labor market discrimination must go beyond just observing differences in pay and employment. It must examine the causes of those differences in detail. Read the article in this section of the reader and write an essay summarizing and commenting on it. Your essay should address the following issues:

- Is the low level of representation of female workers in the Boston Fire Department due to discrimination? How do you know? What other factors affect the level of female employment in this field? (You might want to address issues of "disparate treatment" and "disparate impact" in your answer.)
- The article mentions several adjustments that need to be made in order to employ women as firefighters – changes in housing, uniforms, equipment, and fire-fighting techniques. Should employers be required to make such changes if they are necessary for the employment of women?

This essay is worth 10% of your final grade.

Some general rules apply to all of the writing assignments. First, all of these assignments should be typed, double-spaced, using standard font sizes and margins. Second, your grade will be based in part on whether or not you have expressed yourself clearly. Spelling, grammar, and organization matter.

Third, if you use material from any source, you must clearly indicate your source, and if you directly quote any material, you must clearly indicate what has been quoted (along with indicating your source). If you quote material without clearly indicating so, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. If you have any questions about this, please discuss them with me. Finally, you may **not** turn

assignments in late. If you know that you are going to miss class on the day an assignment is due, please make some arrangement for getting the work to me before class.

Weighting of assignments:

Two Mid-Term Exams	Each worth 25%
Final Exam	30%
<u>Two</u> H+S Reaction Essays	10%
<u>One</u> Current Issues Essay	10%

Course Outline:

Note that the precise schedule of topics may change slightly, but exam dates and assignment due dates are very unlikely to change. Any change in exam dates or due dates will be announced well ahead of time.

Th August 24

Introduction

T August 29

More Introduction.

Read H+S Introduction and Chapter 1

Th August 31

Colonial America

Read H+S Chapters 2 and 3

T September 5

More Colonial America

Th September 7

The Rise of Manufacturing

Read H+S Chapters 4 and 5

T September 12

More on The Rise of Manufacturing

Th September 14

Growth and the Standard of Living

Read H+S Chapter 6, pages 122-129

T September 19

More on Growth and the Standard of Living

Read articles in Current Issues Reader, Topic 1

Th September 21
The Rise of the Factory

T September 26
FIRST MID-TERM EXAM

Th September 28
More on the Rise of the Factory
FIRST CURRENT ISSUES ESSAY DUE

T October 3
Slavery and the Civil War
Read H+S Chapter 6, pages 129-147.

Th October 5
FALL BREAK – NO CLASS TODAY

T October 10
More on Slavery and the Civil War
Read articles in Current Issues Reader, Topic 2

Th October 12
Westward Movement and Early Utah

T October 17
Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Immigration
SECOND CURRENT ISSUES ESSAY DUE

Th October 19
More on Immigration
Read articles in Current Issues Reader, Topic 3

T October 24
The Rise of Big Business
Read H+S Chapters 7 to 9
THIRD CURRENT ISSUES ESSAY DUE

Th October 26
NO CLASS TODAY – I am out of town at a research conference

T October 31
Late 19th Century Industrial Labor Markets
Read H+S Chapters 10 and 11
EVERYONE SHOULD TURN IN AT LEAST ONE H+S ESSAY BY THIS DATE

Th November 2
SECOND MID-TERM EXAM

T November 7
More on Late 19th Century Industrial Labor Markets
Read articles in Current Issues Reader, Topic 4

Th November 9

Women in the Economy – Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

T November 14

Racial Inequality in the 20th Century

Read article in Current Issues Reader, Topic 5

FOURTH CURRENT ISSUES ESSAY DUE

Th November 16

The Great Depression

Read H+S Chapter 12

T November 21

The New Deal

Read H+S Chapter 13

FIFTH CURRENT ISSUES ESSAY DUE

Th November 23

THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS TODAY

T November 28

The Rise of the Public Sector

Read H+S Chapters 14–17

Th November 30

Growth, the Standard of Living, and the "Overworked American"

Complete reading of Schor by this date

T December 5

More on Growth, the Standard of Living, and the "Overworked American"

Th December 7

Review for Final Exam

EVERYONE SHOULD TURN IN THEIR SECOND H+S ESSAY BY THIS DATE

FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 9:15