

## **Economics 315**

### **American Economic History**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a survey of American economic history from colonial times to the present. The course is organized chronologically and selectively. Certain topics and themes will be stressed while other topics will be discussed only briefly or even ignored. This is not a reflection on the importance of those topics; rather, it reflects the need to cover a great deal of material in a single semester.

#### **MEETING TIME AND PLACE**

3:00 – 3:55 Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
Simons Hall G10

#### **MY OFFICE AND OFFICE HOURS**

Office: Main 333  
E-mail: [LJohnston@csbsju.edu](mailto:LJohnston@csbsju.edu)  
Office Hours: 1 – 2:30 pm on Tuesdays and  
Thursdays  
To make an appointment: please contact Sue  
Zimmer ([szimmer@csbsju.edu](mailto:szimmer@csbsju.edu))

#### **ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The CSB|SJU Economics Department has developed the following goals and objectives for student learning in the department:

Goal 1: Students of economics will be able to apply economic theory to understand economic issues and policies by:

- 1.1: Analyzing interactions between human values and economic life;
- 1.2: Demonstrating a knowledge of and ability to apply appropriate analytical tools; and
- 1.3: Recognizing the diversity of methodologies practiced in conducting economic analysis.

Goal 2: Students of economics will be able to evaluate evidence bearing on those economic issues and policies by:

- 2.1: Identifying, locating, and assessing the necessary quantitative and non-quantitative information, facts and arguments; and
- 2.2: Employing both quantitative reasoning and computing skills where appropriate.

Goal 3: Students of economics will be able to communicate effectively the results of their economic analysis through:

- 3.1: Clear writing, appropriately supported and documented;
- 3.2: Effective participation in discussion; and
- 3.3: For majors, polished oral presentations.

## COURSE LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course, students will:

- Have a clear sense of the long run development of the U.S. economy ;
- Understand how economic theory can be applied to understanding historical issues;
- Understand how historical episodes can be used to develop and test economic theory;
- Improve their ability to read journal articles and monographs critically.

## PREREQUISITES

Economics 111 is required for this course. Any additional courses in economics and history will also be helpful.

## TEXTBOOK

Jonathan Hughes and Louis P. Cain. *American Economic History*. Eighth Edition. Pearson Addison Wesley, 2011.

This book is required for the course and available at the SJU bookstore both in paper and as an e-book.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS AND CLASS NOTES

All additional readings and class notes will be posted on the CSB|SJU Moodle site. You should already be enrolled in the course; simply go to <https://moodle.csbsju.edu/login/index.php>, enter your CSB/SJU network username and password, then click the **Login** button. Click **My Courses** then click on **ECON 315-01A American Economic History (Johnston)** to access course materials.

## GRADES IN THIS COURSE

The *Academic Catalog* states, “Intellectual achievement is more important than grades. Grades, however, are necessary for advisory purposes, for determination of the quality of academic achievements and for transfer of credit to other institutions. Grades are designated by letters. In order to compute averages, numerical values called honor points have been assigned to the grades as follows:”

Letter grade	Interpretation	Honor points for each credit
A	Excellent	4
AB		3.5
B	Good	3
BC		2.5
C	Satisfactory	2

CD		1.5
D	Minimum Passing	1
F		0

I will apply this scale AND the interpretation of each grade to all of your work.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Economic history is a subject in which each topic builds on earlier topics. Thus, it is essential for you to keep up with the reading and class discussions in order understand the material. I will encourage this process by basing 20% of your course grade on class participation.

The format of the class is a blend of lecture and discussion, so class participation is essential. This means that you should come to class prepared to ask questions and to take part in the discussion. I will use the Socratic method, i.e. I will choose a student at random and ask her/him questions concerning the day's material. I do not do this to be hostile, but simply to keep people on their toes and to encourage students to keep up with the class material.

STUDENTS WHO ARE CALLED ON AND WHO ARE NOT IN CLASS WILL RECEIVE FEW POINTS (IF ANY) FOR CLASS PARTICIPATION. Thus, if you know that you will be absent from class, please tell me in advance so that I can note this and not call on you.

### **QUIZZES**

There will be three quizzes. They will be given on September 13, October 4, and November 15. These will be 25 minute, in-class, closed-book quizzes, consisting of terms and multiple choice questions. The three quizzes together will count for 30% of your course grade.

The first quiz will cover material from August 26 through September 11, the second quiz will cover material from September 13 through October 2, and the third quiz will cover material from October 16 through November 11.

### **EXAMS**

There will be two exams, a midterm exam and a final exam. Both exams will be in-class, closed-book exams consisting of terms and essay questions.

The midterm exam will be given on October 25 and will cover material from August 26 through October 23. It will count for 20% of your course grade.

The final exam will be given on Thursday, December 19, at 1 pm. It will count for 30% of your total grade. It will be a comprehensive exam.

## GRADING OPTIONS

Some students may choose to take this course on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis rather than for a letter grade. The college policy regarding who may or may not take the course S/U is in the current *Academic Catalog*. You *must* inform me that you intend to take the course S/U by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 13.

## PLAGIARISM

I will apply the institutional policy on plagiarism in this course. The complete policy is available here: <http://www.csbsju.edu/Documents/Academic%20Advising/Academic%20Misconduct%20Policy%201-25-12.doc>

## CLASS CANCELLATION

I may need to cancel class during the semester due to weather, illness, etc. If class is canceled, there will be a note in your e-mail telling you that class is canceled. If you arrive at our classroom and find a note written on the board saying that class is canceled, you should contact the Economics Department office (Simons 250, phone number 363-3516) and confirm this with the department secretary. **DO NOT ASSUME THAT THE NOTE IS CORRECT!**

## DISABILITY INFORMATION

The colleges have support systems in place for those students who have an official diagnosis for a Learning Disability or a Physical Disability. If a student has had a diagnosis for a specific Learning Disability or a Physical Disability, the Office of Academic Advising will notify me and will provide information on current CSB|SJU accommodations. If a student volunteers information regarding a Learning or Physical Disability I will contact Academic Advising.

## CLASS CALENDAR

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
August 26	Introduction to the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Syllabus</li></ul>
August 28	Introduction to economic history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hughes and Cain, Introduction (pp. xix-xxi)</li><li>• Neal, "A Shocking View of Economic History."</li></ul>
August 30	A new world: Europeans, Africans and Americans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diamond, "Why Did Human History Unfold Differently On Different Continents For The Last 13,000 Years?"</li><li>• Hughes and Cain, pp. 4-7</li><li>• Engerman and Sokoloff, "Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World."</li></ul>
September 2	Population, labor force and wealth in British North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hughes and Cain, pp.7-22</li></ul>
September 4 September 6	Economic growth in British North America: From subsistence to exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapters 2 and 3</li></ul>

September 9	The American Revolution: Causes and consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 4</li> <li>• Egnal and Ernst, “An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution.”</li> </ul>
September 11	Public lands and the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 5</li> </ul>
<b>September 13</b>	<b>Quiz #1</b>	
September 13 September 16	Antebellum economic growth and regional specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapters 6 and 8</li> <li>• Haines, Craig, and Weiss, “The Short and the Dead: Nutrition, Mortality, and the “Antebellum Puzzle” in the United States.”</li> </ul>
September 18	The South: Cotton and slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, pp. 170-180 and Chapter 10</li> </ul>
September 20	The West: Grain and family farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, pp. 180-186</li> </ul>
September 23 September 25	The East: Early industrial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 11</li> </ul>
September 25 September 27	Banking, finance and international trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 12</li> <li>• Rolnick and Weber, “Free Banking, Wildcat Banking, and Shinplasters.”</li> </ul>
September 30 October 2	The Civil War: Economic causes, economic consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 13</li> <li>• Ransom, “War and Cliometrics: Adventures in Economic History.”</li> </ul>
<b>September 30</b>	<b>Clemens Lecture, 8 pm, Stephen B. Humphrey Auditorium, SJU</b> <b>Dr. Nancy Folbre, University of Massachusetts, Amherst,</b> <b>“Woman Up: How Feminist Theory Can Strengthen Economics.”</b>	
<b>October 4</b>	<b>Quiz #2</b>	
October 4 October 9	The revolution in transportation and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 14</li> </ul>
October 11 October 14	Northern and western agriculture from the Civil War to World War I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 15</li> <li>• Rothstein, “America in the International Rivalry for the British Wheat Market, 1860-1914.”</li> </ul>
October 16 October 18	The Atlantic Economy and the first era of globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 16 and pp. 406-413</li> <li>• Williamson, “Globalization, Convergence, and History.”</li> </ul>
October 21 October 23	The rise of big business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 17</li> <li>• Meyer, “Midwestern Industrialization and the American Manufacturing Belt in the Nineteenth Century.”</li> </ul>
<b>October 25</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
October 28 October 30	The backlash against big business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapters 18 and 21</li> </ul>
November 1 November 4	Money, banking, and finance from the Civil War to the founding of the Fed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 19 and pp. 413-419</li> <li>• Odell and Weidenmier, “Real Shock, Monetary Aftershock: The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and the Panic of</li> </ul>

		1907.”
November 6 November 8	World War I: origins and effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynes, <i>Economic Consequences of the Peace</i>, Chapter 2</li> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 22</li> <li>• Sargent, “The Ends of Four Big Inflations.”</li> </ul>
November 11 November 13	The Roaring Twenties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, pp. 455-466</li> <li>• Devine, “From Shafts to Wires: Historical Perspective on Electrification.”</li> </ul>
<b>November 15</b>	<b>Quiz #3</b>	
November 15	The Great Crash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, pp. 466-473</li> <li>• White, “The Stock Market Boom and Crash of 1929 Revisited.”</li> </ul>
November 18 November 20	What caused the Great Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 24</li> <li>• Romer, “The Nation in Depression.”</li> </ul>
November 20 November 22	Government policy and the Great Depression: Help or hindrance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 25</li> <li>• Romer, “What Ended the Great Depression?”</li> </ul>
November 25	World War II: Aggregate demand and potential output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 26</li> <li>• Field, “The Most Technologically Progressive Decade of the Century.”</li> </ul>
December 2	Macroeconomic policy, 1946 to 1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 27</li> <li>• DeLong, “Keynesianism, Pennsylvania Avenue Style: Some Economic Consequences of the Employment Act of 1946.”</li> </ul>
December 4 December 6	Civil Rights Revolutions and the American Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 28</li> <li>• Wright, “The Civil Rights Revolution as Economic History.”</li> <li>• Goldin, “The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family.”</li> </ul>
December 9	The Great Inflation and its aftermath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hughes and Cain, Chapter 30</li> <li>• DeLong, “America’s Peacetime Inflation: The 1970s.”</li> </ul>
December 11	The Great Recession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnston, “Economy 2009 Update.” (From Frank, Bernanke, and Johnston, <i>Principles of Economics</i>, 4e)</li> <li>• Eichengreen and O’Rourke, “A Tale of Two Depressions.”</li> </ul>
December 13	Past, Present, and Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fogel, “Catching up with the Economy.”</li> </ul>
<b>December 19</b>	<b>Final exam, 1 - 3 pm</b>	