

# AMERICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY SINCE 1900

Eco 327-HY1; CRN 12640

3 CREDIT HOURS

SUNY OSWEGO

SPRING 2021

*FINAL -- REVISED ON 12 APRIL 2021*

In this course we will learn about modern-day America by exploring America's economic and social development since 1900. Historians tend to look for continuity and change over time, and there are plenty of both here. Then as now, America was very rich overall, had a huge internal market, and had tremendous inequality. The changes are perhaps even more striking: the service sector is now larger than agriculture and manufacturing combined, as is the government; the population is vastly more educated; most married women work outside the home; and African Americans and non-European immigrants account for a sizable share of the professional and white-collar workforce. The economy is more stable and poverty is less widespread, yet financial crises and pandemics are back with a vengeance, and many communities are still reeling from the decline of local industry and the rise of opioids. Economic history contends that we can gain much insight into these social changes by studying both economics and history, which we will do. This class, as an upper-level expository writing class, will also provide many opportunities to work on and improve your writing.

*And you may ask yourself,  
"Well, how did I get here?"*  
— David Byrne

*For every complex problem there is an answer that  
is clear, simple, and wrong.*  
— H. L. Mencken

*Good questions outrank easy answers.*  
— Paul Samuelson

## Required texts

- There is no textbook. The readings, mostly journal articles and book chapters, are available on Blackboard.

## Optional texts that I cannot recommend strongly enough

**Prof. Ranjit S. Dighe** (Prof. Dighe)

### **Class meeting times and place:**

**MW 3:30–4:50**

**Lanigan 104 / Zoom\***

(\*This is a hybrid class, taught in Lanigan 104 and broadcast live and also recorded on Zoom. Lanigan 104 has a "covid capacity" of 41 and the class enrollment is under 30, so all students can attend every day. And all students are expected to take the exams in the classroom.)

### **Zoom link for class meetings:**

<https://oswego-edu.zoom.us/j/95300565328>

### **Zoom link for office hours:**

<https://zoom.us/j/3794230589>

My office: Mahar 416

Phone: 312-3484 (but email is preferred)

E-mail: [ranjit.dighe@oswego.edu](mailto:ranjit.dighe@oswego.edu)

Office hours: Mon Tues\* Wed 1–2:

(\*Tues office hours are Zoom-only; Mon and Wed I'm available in person and on Zoom)

The ECO 327 Blackboard site contains links to nearly all of the non-textbook readings, lecture outlines, course announcements, and more. If you need Blackboard assistance, try the SUNY Online Help Desk: 844-673-6786 or [help@oswego.edu](mailto:help@oswego.edu)

- Diana Hacker & Nancy Sommers. *Rules for Writers*. Any edition. Hopefully you already have it, as the college requires it for ENG 102. It's the best guide I've ever seen to writing, a comprehensive reference that works for writers of all levels. The more you consult books like this one, the better you'll write.
- William Strunk, Jr., & E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Any edition. This slim, inexpensive paperback is packed with valuable tips on writing, from basic to advanced. It's the best-known book about writing, and for good reason: it's quick and painless to read, and it will almost surely improve your writing.

**Two things you should not be without for this course:** 1. A laptop or tablet (please bring it to class). 2. A willingness to reach for a dictionary (print or online).

**Prerequisites:** ECO 101 (introductory microeconomics) and ECO 200 (introductory macroeconomics); also, ENG 102 (Composition II) or ENG 204 (Writing About Literature) or passage of exemption examination.

**Learning objectives:** Upon the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- describe several basic narratives of American economic history since 1900, including growth trends in the economy, inequality and division, and the broadening of economic citizenship;
- compare and contrast leading explanations of the Great Depression and its continuing legacy;
- describe and explain the growth of the government and the Federal Reserve, including both causes and effects;
- describe how social and economic changes have affected women, African Americans, Hispanics, blue-collar workers, immigrants, and other groups;
- describe the effects of the world wars, the Cold War, and war generally on the economy and on America's economic relationship with the rest of the world;
- research a particular topic in-depth as part of a group, and produce a paper that offers a comparative analysis of the leading research literature on that topic.

## Assessment

Since this course is an expository writing class, written work will constitute an important part of your grade, and the clarity of your writing will affect how it is graded. Your course score will be a weighted average of all this:

Weekly short papers and participation			50%
	Weekly discussion-preparation papers (300+ words, organized into paragraphs, submitted Mondays on Blackboard, starting in Week 1; 10 in all)	25%	
	Weekly one-sentence summaries (submitted Wednesdays on Blackboard, starting in Week 1; 10 in all)	15%	
	Class participation, in class and online discussion	10%	
Group project: Research paper			30%
	Paper (due in stages)	25%	
	Group participation	5%	

Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	10%

The grading scale is basically the standard one:

93-100% A;	90-92% A-;	88-89% B+;	83-87% B;	80-82% B-;
78-79% C+;	73-77% C;	70-72% C-;	68-69% D+;	63-67% D;
60-62% D-;	0-59% E.			

### Weekly short papers:

- **Discussion-preparation papers:** Each week you will write a discussion “prep” paper, containing questions and comments regarding all of the assigned readings for the current week. Each week’s prep paper is due on Blackboard before the start of class on **Monday**. These should be written as coherent, presentable short papers with two or three paragraphs and an interesting title. The minimum length is 300 words (yes, even in weeks when we only meet once). Keeping in mind that the purpose of these papers is to spark discussion, try to write about things you find interesting or which spark your curiosity. A prep paper should *not* contain much summary. It should contain at least one question.
  - \* A total of 10 prep papers are required. Since there are 14 weeks in the semester, you can either skip four prep papers or do up to four extra ones for up to 4 points of extra credit. You can decide for yourself which four weeks to skip. Prep papers can be rewritten for a higher score during the month of February. Papers with plagiarism or other forms of cheating are not eligible for regrading.
- **One-sentence summaries:** Each week you will write a set of one-sentence summaries, one summary for *each* of the readings for the current week. Each set of summaries is due on Blackboard at the start of class on **Wednesday**, typed and presentable. These are separate from the prep papers. They are designed to sharpen your reading-comprehension and writing skills and further prepare you for class discussion. Be sure to include the author’s name and the reading’s title with each summary, so that it is clear which reading is being summarized.
  - \* A total of 10 summaries papers are required. Since there are 14 weeks in the semester, you can either skip four summaries papers or do up to four extra ones for up to 3 points of extra credit. You can decide for yourself which four weeks to skip. Prep papers can be rewritten for a higher score during the month of February. Papers with plagiarism or other forms of cheating are not eligible for regrading.
- **Class participation:** Since this class thrives on discussion, class participation will be 10% of your final grade. A perfect class participation score would entail at least **10 helpful contributions to discussion**. Such contributions should relate to the readings and can be in the form of comments, questions, or replies, as long as they advance the discussion. Each contribution earns you a “participation point”; no more than 1 participation point can be earned in a single day, and none can be earned after our last day of class, May 5.
  - \* For class discussion, having your prep paper handy will help you remember what you had to say. On a typical day we will devote much of our class time to discussion. I will be counting on you to initiate at least *some* of the discussion and to reply to other students’ comments and questions.
  - \* **At least 2 of your 10 participation points need to come from the online Blackboard Discussion Forum, and at least 1 of those points needs to be earned by making a helpful reply** to someone else’s Blackboard post. (The idea is to have a conversation, not just a bunch of unrelated posts.) Online posts do not have to be about the class reading; an interesting post that relates to the course material, even tangentially, will do. Including a web link is usually a good idea if you are writing about something other than the readings.

**Group research paper:**

- **Paper:** A guidelines sheet will soon be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. For now, some basics: Each student will be assigned to one of about seven groups containing about four students apiece, and each group will research a major question in post-1900 American economic history, using scholarly sources from both economics and history. Groups will be assigned around the end of Week 2, and a significant portion of class time will be allotted for group meetings. Group work will continue through the last week of classes, when the final edits are due.
- **Group participation:** Your group participation score is separate from your class discussion score and not quite the same as your overall contribution to the group paper. It is about the basics of group participation: showing up for group meetings (both in class and outside of class), staying in contact with the group, and doing your share of the work. Some of that assessment will be based on my own direct observation, but I expect most of it will be from your fellow group members.

**Exams:** The exams will be part essay, part short answer, and possibly part multiple choice.

- The scoring on the exams will be “cumulative upwards” in that if you take both exams and do better on the final, your final exam score will replace your midterm score. Otherwise, the two exams count equally.
- Make-up exams will be an option only for students who have a valid, documented excuse for missing an exam. An unexcused absence on the midterm will count as a zero and will be ineligible for the “cumulative upwards” scoring described above.

**Extensions and late work:** Late work is accepted with a penalty of 25% per day (so if it’s more than three days late, there is no point in turning it in). Everyone is entitled to one extension on a prep paper and another extension on a one-sentence summaries paper, without penalty, provided that you give a day’s notice. Beyond that, extensions are not automatic, but you can always ask.

**Extra credit:** I do not offer emergency extra credit, but there are opportunities to write additional prep papers and one-sentence-summaries papers for extra credit (see above). There may also be extra credit for attending certain talks or campus events. Late extra credit work will not be accepted.

<p><b>Etiquette for the classroom and online</b></p> <p>Mutual respect is all-important. We can foster an environment of mutual respect by observing some basic classroom etiquette. This includes arriving on time and not leaving early, avoiding bathroom breaks, keeping our cell phones silent and not texting, not eating noisily or blowing bubbles, not wearing ear buds, and not having private conversations.</p>
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**Writing and other help:** The College Writing Center can offer valuable help in organizing, writing, and revising your papers. It is currently located on the first floor of Penfield Library. Assistance is available online and possibly in person (depending on pandemic protocols). For more information, including appointment scheduling, see <https://www.oswego.edu/ols/writing-center>

**Accessibility:** Students who have a disability that might interfere with their ability to complete this course successfully are encouraged to speak, confidentially, to me or to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, in 155 Marano Campus Center. <https://www.oswego.edu/accessibility-resources/accessibility-resources-1>

**Crime does not pay!**

Per College policy, students who are caught cheating will have their offense reported to the college authorities. Except in rare cases that seem to require a disciplinary penalty such as suspension, students who are caught cheating will typically receive an academic penalty. Students who are caught cheating on either exam or on the research paper will automatically fail the course. Students who are caught cheating on (e.g., plagiarizing) a prep paper or another item will be hit with “treble damages,” which means a zero not just for the item in question but zeroes for three times that amount. (For example, cheating on a prep paper weighted at 2.5% of the total course score would lower a student’s overall course score by 7.5, not 2.5, points out of 100.) A student who is caught cheating more than once will automatically fail the course.

For a full statement of the College’s policy on Intellectual Integrity, see the College catalog, or go to [http://catalog.oswego.edu/content.php?catoid=31&navoid=2603#inte\\_inte](http://catalog.oswego.edu/content.php?catoid=31&navoid=2603#inte_inte)

The most common form of cheating in classes like this one is plagiarism, which the College’s policy describes as follows:

“*Plagiarism*—One particular form of intellectual dishonesty is plagiarism (i.e., the representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own). While it is expected that a student who is engaged in writing will utilize information from sources other than personal experience, appropriate acknowledgment of such sources is required. Some examples of plagiarism include:

1. utilizing a direct quotation without citing the source;
  2. paraphrasing the ideas, interpretation, expressions of another person without giving credit; and,
  3. representing the thought of others as one’s own by failing to acknowledge or document sources.
- Sources of information should be credited or footnoted by following an English language style guide (e.g., Modern Language Association Style Sheet, The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association).”

### **Safety first**

SUNY Oswego is committed to enhancing the safety and security of the campus for all its members. In support of this, faculty may be required to report their knowledge of certain crimes or harassment. Reportable incidents include harassment on the basis of sex or gender prohibited by Title IX and crimes covered by the Clery Act. For more information about Title IX protections, go to <https://www.oswego.edu/title-ix/> or contact the Title IX Coordinator, 405 Culkin Hall, 315-312-5604, [titleix@oswego.edu](mailto:titleix@oswego.edu). For more information about the Clery Act and campus reporting, go to the University Police annual report: <https://www.oswego.edu/police/annual-report>.

## Course outline and schedule

Week	Dates	Course dates and coverage (not yet complete)
1	Feb. 1, 3	<p><i>America in 1900</i></p> <p>What to read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course syllabus (every word!)</li> <li>• H.W. Brands. “The Democratic Counterrevolution.” Epilogue (pages 604-621) of <i>American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900</i>. New York: Anchor Books, 2010.</li> <li>• Greg Grandin. “The Pact of 1898.” Chapter 8 (pages 132-147) of <i>The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America</i>. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019.</li> </ul> <p>Your first one-sentence-summaries paper and your first discussion-prep paper are both due Wed., Feb. 3. (Normally the prep papers are due Mondays and the sentence summaries Wednesdays.) Both should cover all of this week’s readings (except the syllabus). Each gets submitted on Blackboard in the respective drop box for that assignment.</p>
2	Feb. 8, 10	<p><i>Toil and Trouble</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leslie Woodcock Tentler. “Introduction” and “Women’s Wages.” Pages 1-25 of <i>Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.</li> <li>• Jon R. Moen and Ellis W. Tallman. “The Panic of 1907.” <i>Federal Reserve History</i>. December 5, 2015. <a href="https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/panic-of-1907">https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/panic-of-1907</a></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Wed., Feb. 10: Last day to add a class</p> <p>Reminder: Prep papers are due Monday, and one-sentence-summaries papers Wednesday, at the start of class and on Blackboard. The same goes for all future weeks, unless noted.</p>

3	Feb. 15, 17	<p><i>War and Pestilence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robert Higgs. "The World Wars" (edited to include only World War I). Pages 431-440 of Chapter 14 of <i>Government and the American Economy: A New History</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.</li> <li>Thomas A. Garrett. "Pandemic Economics: The 1918 Influenza and Its Modern-Day Implications." <i>Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review</i>. March/April 2008, pages 74-93. <a href="https://files.stlouisfed.org/files/htdocs/publications/review/08/03/Garrett.pdf">https://files.stlouisfed.org/files/htdocs/publications/review/08/03/Garrett.pdf</a></li> <li>Sergio Correia, Stephan Luck, and Emil Verner. "Fight the Pandemic, Save the Economy: Lessons from the 1918 Flu." New York Federal Reserve Bank blog post, March 27, 2020. <a href="https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2020/03/fight-the-pandemic-save-the-economy-lessons-from-the-1918-flu.html">https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2020/03/fight-the-pandemic-save-the-economy-lessons-from-the-1918-flu.html</a></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Fri., Feb. 19: Last day to drop a class</p>
4	Feb. 22 (Mon.)	<p><i>The Beginning of the Great Migration . . .</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carol Anderson. "Derailing the Great Migration." Chapter 2 (pages 39-66) of <i>White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide</i>. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">MON., FEB. 22: GROUP TOPIC PAPER DUE Wed., Feb. 24: Wellness Day – no class</p> <p>Prep papers and sentence-summaries papers are both due Monday this week.</p>
5	March 1, 3	<p><i>. . . And the End of Unrestricted Immigration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raymond L. Cohn. "The Economic History of Immigration." Chapter 23 (pages 265-276) of <i>The Routledge Handbook of Modern Economic History</i>. London: Taylor and Francis, 2013.</li> <li>Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers. "Ethnic Conflict and Immigration Restrictions" Chapter 4 (pages 73-95) of <i>Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration</i>. Fourth edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">FRI., MARCH 5: GROUP DATA APPENDIX DUE</p>
6	March 8, 10	<p><i>Public Health and Prohibition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John C. Burnham. "Physicians, Public Health, and Progressivism." Chapter 7 (pages 223-252) of <i>Health Care in America: A History</i>. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.</li> <li>Jack S. Blocker, Jr. "Did Prohibition Really Work? Alcohol Prohibition as a Public Health Innovation." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 96(2): 233-243 (February 2006).</li> </ul>

7	March 15, 17	<p><i>The Great Contraction, 1929-1933</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Fearon. "Banking, Money and Taxes." Chapter 6 of <i>War, Prosperity and Depression: The U.S. Economy 1917-45</i>. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987.</li> <li>• David M. Kennedy. Pages 37-42 and 65-94 of <i>Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">WED., MARCH 17: GROUP ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</p>
8	March 22, 24	<p><i>The New Deal Years, 1933-1941</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Fearon. "The New Deal: An Introduction." Chapter 10 (pages 165-175) of <i>War, Prosperity &amp; Depression: The U.S. Economy 1917-45</i>. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987.</li> <li>• Peter Fearon. "Banking, Money, and the Deficit Under the New Deal." Chapter 13 (pages 217-235) of <i>War, Prosperity &amp; Depression: The U.S. Economy 1917-45</i>. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">WED., MARCH 24: MIDTERM</p> <p>Prep papers and sentence-summaries papers are both due Monday this week.</p>
9	March 29, 31	<p><i>Social Security and Insecurity: The Legacy of the New Deal and World War II</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David M. Kennedy. "What the New Deal Did." <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 124(2): 251-268 (Summer 2009).</li> <li>• Robert Higgs. "World War II." Pages 440-451 of "The World Wars," Chapter 14 of <i>Government and the American Economy: A New History</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.</li> <li>• Melissa Thomasson. "Economic History and the Health Care Industry." Chapter 16 (pages 177-188) of <i>The Routledge Handbook of Modern Economic History</i>, edited by Robert Whaples and Randall Parker. London: Taylor and Francis, 2013.</li> </ul>
10	April 5, 7	<p><i>The Economic Plight and Progress of African Americans</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William Sundstrom. "African Americans in the U.S. Economy Since Emancipation." Chapter 27 (pages 316-340) of <i>The Routledge Handbook of Modern Economic History</i>, edited by Robert Whaples and Randall Parker. London: Taylor and Francis, 2013.</li> <li>• Gavin Wright. "The Economics of the Civil Rights Revolution." Pages 383-401 of <i>Toward the Meeting of the Waters: Currents in the Civil Rights Movement of South Carolina During the Twentieth Century</i>. Edited by Winfred B. Moore Jr. and Orville Vernon Burton. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008.</li> </ul>



11	April 12 (Mon.)	<p><i>Women in the Workforce</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudia Goldin. “The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women’s Employment, Education, and Family.” <i>American Economic Review</i> 96(2): 1-21 (May 2006).</li> <li>• Francine D. Blau &amp; Lawrence M. Kahn. “Why Do Women Continue to Make Less Than Men?” <i>Econofact</i>. September 22, 2017. <a href="http://econofact.org/why-do-women-continue-to-make-less-than-men?">http://econofact.org/why-do-women-continue-to-make-less-than-men?</a></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">TUES., APRIL 13*: GROUP RESEARCH PAPER DUE Wed., April 14: Quest – no class</p> <p>Prep papers and sentence-summaries papers are both due Monday this week.</p> <p>*You have some flexibility regarding the group paper deadline, as long as you contact me before Tuesday.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mon., April 12: Last day of course withdrawal period</p>
12	April 19, 21	<p><i>The Unraveling</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marc Levinson, “Introduction.” From <i>An Extraordinary Time: The End of the Postwar Boom and the Return of the Ordinary Economy</i>. New York: Basic Books, 2016. (13 pp.)</li> <li>• Irving Bernstein. “Launching the Great Inflation.” Chapter 14 of <i>Guns or Butter: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. (21 pp.)</li> <li>• Marc Levinson. “Chaos.” Chapter 3 of <i>An Extraordinary Time</i>. (10 pp.)</li> </ul>
13	April 26, 28	<p><i>Stagflation, Salvation (?), and Stagnation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marc Levinson. “The Great Stagflation.” Chapter 5 of <i>An Extraordinary Time</i>. (15 pp.)</li> <li>• Marc Levinson. Pages 173-176 and Chapter 13 (“Morning in America”) of <i>An Extraordinary Time</i>. (24 pp. total)</li> </ul>
14	May 3, 5	<p><i>Weed the People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard J. Bonnie and Charles H. Whitebread II. “The Alien Weed.” Chapter II of <i>The Marihuana Conviction: A History of Marihuana Prohibition in the United States</i>. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975. (21 pp.)</li> <li>• Emily Dufton. “Why the 1970s Effort to Decriminalize Marijuana Failed.” <i>Smithsonian</i>. April 25, 2019. (4 pp.)</li> <li>• Ranjit S. Dighe. “Legalize It – The Economic Argument.” <i>The Huffington Post</i>. January 30, 2014. (3 pp.)</li> <li>• (EXTRA CREDIT: “Sloth: I Am Not a Pothead.” From <i>Skipping Towards Gomorrah</i>. New York: Dutton, 2002. (35 pp.).)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">WED., MAY 5: REVISED DRAFT OF GROUP RESEARCH PAPER DUE</p>

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2:00-4:00: FINAL EXAM**

The final exam is mandatory and comprehensive, with extra weight on material after the midterm.

**EXTENSION COUPON – PREP PAPER**

This coupon entitles the student to a no-questions-asked extension of at least one day on a prep paper.  
The coupon can be presented to me in person or online.

**EXTENSION COUPON – ONE-SENTENCE-SUMMARIES PAPER**

This coupon entitles the student to a no-questions-asked extension of at least one day on a one-sentence summaries paper.  
The coupon can be presented to me either in person or online.