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| Sven Beckert | History 1457 |
| Department of History, 119 Robinsonbeckert@fas.harvard.eduOffice Hours Mondays, 2-4pm, book online through | Tue-Thurs Noon – 1 PM Harvard Hall 104 |
| https://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/sven-beckert | Weekly Section to be Arranged  |

**History of American Capitalism**

How did capitalism emerge, expand and transform daily life in North America over the past 500 years? In this course, students will gain an in-depth understanding of how North America turned from a minor outpost of the Atlantic economy into the powerhouse of the world economy. In the process, they will come to learn how contemporary capitalism is the result of centuries of human engagement, struggle, and aspirations—and not a fact of nature. Topics range from the structure of Native-American economies to the economic consequences of the Civil War; from the impact of capitalism on gender relations to the changing structures of American businesses; and from the position of the United States in the world economy to the role of the government in channeling economic development. Boston merchants and Georgia sharecroppers, cotton-growing slaves and reforming statesmen, workers at the Ford assembly line and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs will all appear in the story. The course will put particular emphasis on the global context of American economic development and situate it deeply in the political and social changes of the age. Ultimately, students will gain an understanding of how the contemporary capitalism that so powerfully shapes all of our lives has emerged over the course of several centuries.

**Reading Assignments**

The following books should be purchased, and are available at the COOP. If you are unable to purchase all of the books, be sure to request them from the Harvard libraries or through borrow direct well in advance.

* Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*
* Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution*
* William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*
* W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*
* Malcolm Harris, *Kids These Days: Human Capital and the Making of Millennials*
* Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*
* Paul Johnson, *Sam Patch, the Famous Jumper*
* Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*
* Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*
* Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*

A [**virtual sourcebook**](http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k99866&pageid=icb.page636185) of primary sources and short excerpts will be available on Canvas.

**Course Policies**

1. Engage with the questions raised in the course.
2. Regular attendance at lectures is essential; you need to master the materials covered in lecture to do well on the midterm and final exams.
3. Participation and oral presentation in section meetings, demonstrating engagement with course materials (**20 percent)**.
4. Laptops and cell phones are not permitted in lecture or section. Please come prepared to take notes by hand.
5. A 600 word paper, modeled on a newspaper Op-Ed. Due Sunday, April 8th by email to your TF. (**10 percent**).
6. A Midterm (**15 percent**) and a Final Exam (**30 percent**).
7. A 2000 word page final paper. (**25 percent**). Due on April 26, 2018 at 5PM. Topics to be announced.

**Late Assignments**

Late papers will be downgraded one grade increment per day (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.).

**Section Participation**

Section attendance is required, and participation is 20% of your grade. If you must miss a section, you should contact your TF *in advance* to arrange for make-up. If you are sick and cannot attend section, contact your TF as soon as possible. Section participation will be evaluated by TFs as follows:

A: No unexcused absences, thought leader and frequent participant, shows engagement with readings

A- to B+: No more than one unexcused absence, regular participant, shows some engagement with readings

B: No more than one unexcused absence, limited participation and/or engagement with readings

B- and below: Unexcused absences or excessive lateness, limited participation

**Academic Honesty**

You are encouraged to discuss the readings and ideas in the course with your fellow classmates, and others. Your written work should be planned, developed and written by you alone. Plagiarism -- the representation of ideas or words by another source as your own -- is cause for failing this course, and will be reported to the Ad Board. Words taken directly from another source (whether the item was found in published or unpublished print material, manuscript source, or the internet) should be presented in quotation marks, with the source clearly indicated in parentheses or footnotes. Ideas paraphrased from another source should likewise be footnoted. If you received any help on your writing (comments, feedback on drafts, etc), this must be acknowledged in a note at the end of the assignment.

**Gen Ed**

This course, when taken for a letter grade, meets the General Education requirement for United States in the World, or the Core area requirement for Historical Study B. It fulfils the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engage substantially with the Study of the Past.

**Teaching Fellows**

Samantha Payne—spayne@g.harvard.edu

Aaron Bekemeyer—bekemeyer@g.harvard.edu

Rachel Steely—rsteely@fas.harvard.edu

Marion Menzin—mmenzin@fas.harvard.edu

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

**Week 1**

*January 23:* Intro

*January 25:* Native American Economies

No assigned reading

**Week 2**

*January 30:* The Expansion of Europe

*February 1:* The Economy of the American Colonies: Plantation Agriculture

**\*First section this week\***

Reading:

* William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, Preface, Chapters 1-5 and 8, pp. 1-106, 159-170.

Primary Sources:

* Richard Hakluyt, “An Argument for Colonization” (1584)
* John Cotton “On the Just Price” (1639)

**Week 3**

*February 6:* The Economy of the American Colonies: Free-labor Agriculture

*February 8:* Commerce and Manufacturing in Colonial America

Reading:

* Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (1986) Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 19-150.
* Kenneth Pomeranz, “Without Coal? Colonies? Calculus? Europe, China, and the Industrial Revolution,” in *Unmaking the West: “What if” Scenarios that Re-write World History*, pp. 241-276

Primary Sources:

* Planter William Fitzhugh and his Chesapeake World (1686)
* Gerald G. Beekman, New York Merchant (1749)

**Week 4**

*February 13:* The Struggle for Economic Independence

*February 15:*  The Political Economy of a New Nation

Reading:

* Paul Johnson, *Sam Patch*
* Christine Stansell, *City of Women*, chp. 6, pp. 105-130

Primary Sources:

* St. John De Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, letter IX (1782)
* Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIX: Manufactures (1781)
* Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures” (1791)

**Week 5**

*February 20:*  The Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and Beyond

*February 22:* The Rise of King Cotton

Reading:

* Sven Beckert, Katherine Stevens and the students of the Harvard and Slavery Research Seminar, *Harvard and Slavery*, at http://www.harvardandslavery.com/
* Claudio Saunt, “Stocks, Bonds, and the Deportation of Native Peoples in Antebellum America.”
* Caitlin Rosenthal, “From Memory to Mastery: Accounting for Control in America, 1750-1880” in *Enterprise and Society*, 2013, pp. 732-748

Primary Sources:

* Tench Coxe, “A Memoir… upon the Subject of the Cotton Wool Cultivation, the Cotton Trade, and the Cotton Manufactories of the United States of America” (1817)
* Solomon Northup, “Cotton Growing” in Twelve Years a Slave, Ch. XII, pp. 162-175 (1854)
* James Henry Hammond, “Cotton is King” (1858)

**Week 6**

*February 27*: The Industrial Revolution in the United States

*March 1*: The Origins and Economic Consequences of the American Civil War

Reading:

* W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction,* chps. 4, 7, 14

Primary Sources:

* Thaddeus Stevens, “[Black Suffrage and Land Redistribution](http://studylib.net/doc/7713857/thaddeus-stevens--black-suffrage-and-land-redistribution-...),” (*Congressional Globe,* 3 January 1867), excerpts
* Ida B. Wells, chapter 1, “The Case Stated,” *The Red Record*
* Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872. Excerpts: “The Beginning of the End” and “Submission the Only Hope of the Indians.”

**Week 7**

*March 6:* From Railroads to Steel Mills: The Rise of Big Business

Reading:

* Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, chps. 7-9, 207-292
* Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, pp. 207-286.

Primary Sources:

* Preamble to the Constitution of the Knights of Labor (1878)
* Samuel Gompers defends the Right to Strike (1899)
* Preamble of the IWW Constitution (1905)
* A Chinese Immigrant Recalls the Dangers of Railroad Work

**\*March 8: Midterm\***

**\*\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\*\***

**Week 8**

*March 20:* The Problem of Capital and Labor in the Age of Industrialism

**First paper assignment announced.**

*March 22:* The Emergence of the West

Reading:

* William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, chp 3., pp. 97-147
* Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, chapter 6, pp. 176-225
* Noam Maggor, “To Coddle and Caress These Great Capitalists: Eastern Money and the Politics of Market Integration in the American West,’ *The American Historical Review* 121, pp. 55-84

Primary Sources:

* Frederick Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, pp. 39-48 (1911)
* Matthew Josephson, “Again the Robber Barons,” *The Robber Barons* Ch. 15 (1934)

**Week 9**

*March 27*: From Ford to Sears: Mass Production and Mass Consumption

*March 29:* The Depression

Reading:

* Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol,* intro and chps. 3-7, pp. xiii-3, 67-231

Primary Sources:

* Arthur A. Robertson, “A Wall Street Broker Remembers 1929,” in Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*, pp 72-77

**Week 10**

***\* First paper due April 8th at 5pm to your TF \****

*April 3:* Big Capital, Big Government: Forging Modern American Capitalism

**Screening of movie “Modern Times" on Tuesday evening, 7pm.**

*April 5:* America and the Globalization of Capital

Reading:

* Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 257- 320, 403-433
* Thomas Piketty, *Capital: in the Twenty-First Century*, intro, pp. 1-35

Primary Sources:

* C. Wright Mills, “Introduction,” *White Collar*, pp. ix-xx (1951)
* William H. Whyte, “The Decline of the Protestant Ethic,” The Organization Man, pp. 14-31 (1956)

**Week 11**

*April 10*: Affluence and the Pax Americana

**Long paper assignments distributed.**

*April 12*: The Crisis of the New Deal Order

Reading:

* Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of Urban Crisis*, intro and chps. 2-5, pp. 1-14, 33-152

Primary Sources:

* Sam Walton, “Ten Rules That Worked for Me” (1992)
* Congressman George Miller explores Wal-Mart's Labor Practices (2004)
* Bill Gates on the new economy (2000)

**Week 12 \*\*GUEST SPEAKERS ON CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM\*\***

*April 17:* **George R. Hoguet**,Global Investment Strategist, Investment Solutions Group

*April 19:*  **Malcolm Harris**,author of *Kids These Days*

Reading

* Malcolm Harris, *Kids These Days: Human Capital and the Making of Millennials*
* Bhashkar Mazumder, 2005, “Fortunate Sons: New Estimates of Intergenerational Mobility...” The Review of Economics and Statistics 87 (2), 235-55. (online)

Primary Sources:

* “Statement on Visit to the USA, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Raporteur on extreme poverty and human rights” (December 15, 2017) (online)
* “Inside Alabama’s Auto Jobs Boom: Cheap Wages, Little Training, Crushed Limbs,” *Bloomberg*, (March 23 2017) (online)

**Week 13**

*April 24*: On the 2008 Crisis

**No section!**

**End of Semester**

**Long Papers Due:** April 26, 2018, at 5PM to your TF

**Final exam date:** May 9, 2018 at 2PM