

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

ECON 20H - Honors Economic History of the U.S.

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 2 or concurrent enrollment and Admission to the Honors Program

Recommended Prep: NONE

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

51 hours Lecture

This is an Honors level introductory course examining American economic history. The focus of the course is to examine traditional economic development theory in the context of the growth of the American economy. As an honors course, stress is placed upon the understanding of the basic economic models that seek to describe individual and collective economic behavior. Through a process of critical thinking, primary document analysis, and discussions, students will study the origin and development of the American economy from colonial times to the present. Graded only.

II. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Analyze and synthesize significant global ideas and primary original works and writing.
- B. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in seminar-type discussions.
- C. Demonstrate advanced writing skills and critical, creative thinking in composing a minimum of 5,000 words in analytical papers and reading responses.
- D. Generate creative, original responses to course material.
- E. Analyze the development of land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship from colonial time to the present.
- F. Analyze how the factors of production (land, labor, capital) contributed to the growth and prosperity of the American economy.
- G. Analyze the role that slavery played in the American society from an economic perspective.
- H. Explain the contributions of key innovators and their contribution to technology and growth.
- I. Describe how organizations such as labor unions, trusts, banks, federal, state and local governments influenced the development of the American economy.
- J. Identify and analyze the factors that contributed to the Great Depression.
- K. Analyze the changing role of government in the economy.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. The merging of economics and history; the meaning of economic history	6.00
2. The Colonial Era, 1607 - 1776	6.00
3. The Revolutionary, Early National, Agricultural Eras, 1776 - 1860	11.00
4. The Reunification Era, 1860-1920	12.00
5. Prosperity, Depression, and World Wars, 1914-1945	9.00
6. The Postwar Era, 1945 to present	7.00
Total Hours	51.00

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Class Activities
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Discussion
- E. Reading Assignments
- F. Multimedia Presentations

V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Quizzes
- C. Papers
- D. Homework
- E. Written Assignments
- F. Essays and research papers

VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. Read the first chapter of Gregory Clark's, "A Farewell to Alms," titled, "A 16-page Economic History of the World." Be prepared to discuss the apparent contradictions experienced by those who lived in a "Malthusian" economy and what measures were needed to emerge from it.
2. Read the chapter entitled, "Economic Rights and American Capitalism," in David M. O'Brien's "Constitutional Law and Politics" first edition. Pay specific attention to the discussion regarding "liberty of contract" and its use in establishing "corporate personhood." Be prepared to discuss the distinctions between the Conservative Social Darwinism and Reform Social Darwinism in terms of the Justices' opinions regarding "corporate personhood."

B. Writing Assignments

1. There will be two essays due in this course in addition to a final exam that is essay based. Each essay will be 3 to 5 pages long; please cite references and only use authored sources. First essay: After approval of your topic by instructor, write an essay regarding an event, issue, or person that/who helped shaped our modern economic system. This essay needs to have a thesis statement that is defended throughout.
2. After approval of your film by instructor, write an essay 3-5 pages in length examining a feature film in terms of how it demonstrates the attainment or lack of attainment of 1) private property rights, 2) efficient capital markets, 3) fast and efficient transportation and communication technology, and/or 4) scientific rationalism. These four characteristics are William Bernstein's "formula for economic development" from his book, "The Birth of Plenty: How the Prosperity of the Modern World was Created." Make the connection in your essay between the attainment or lack of attainment of "Bernstein's formula" and their impact upon the level of economic development shown in the film.

C. Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Take online multiple-choice quiz covering the assigned chapter of Gary Walton's "History of the American Economy," 12th edition.
2. Watch assigned chapter of PBS series "Commanding Heights" online. Be prepared to summarize your chapter to the class, drawing distinctions and/or parallels to our textbook's perspective on that chapter's theme.

VII. **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION**

Textbooks:

A. Walton, Gary M. History of the American Economy. 12th Edition. Cengage, 2013.

Created/Revised by: Steve Price

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