



Department of Economics

HECO 303: Economic History of the United States

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Brendan Brundage

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Time: MW 3:05 pm-4:20 pm

Room: Leadership Building 154

Office Hours: Leadership Building Room 112. MW: 11 am-1 pm; TTh 1 pm-2 pm; Or by appointment.

Prerequisites: HECO 201 and 202 with a “C” or better

Course Material:

- **The required textbook of the course is Walton, G. & Rockoff, H. (2018). History of the American Economy, 13th Edition, Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1337104609; ISBN-10: 1337104604.**
- All other required readings (articles/book chapters) will be provided on canvas.
- A recommended supplementary text is: Siegler, M.V. (2024). *An Economic History of the United States: Connecting the Present with the Past* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 978-1350380981.

Course description: This course is an introduction to United States economic history. We will cover the application of economic methodologies — including theories of growth and analysis of data — to understand economic and institutional change from Colonial times through the Civil War, the emergence of the modern economy, and periods of crisis in American history (e.g., the Great Depression and World War II). We will consider the benefits and consequences of growth for different social groups as well as reasons for optimism or pessimism about the future of equality and growth. Emphasis will be given to the role of slavery, Jim Crow, and racial discrimination have played in shaping the economic outcomes for Black Americans in the past and present.

Learning Outcomes: The overall objective of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding and an appreciation for the importance of economic history. The hope is that

students will develop a critical understanding of the connection between what has past, what is present, and what will come and by the end of the course the student can:

- Apply economic theory and interpret data to understand historic events.
- Comprehend the power of historical perspectives and economic analyses for understanding the past and present, and for making informed conjectures about the future.
- Understand the evolution of the American economy and the sources of economic growth.
- Assess and attempt to better understand the effects of the evolution of historical economic events/processes on the economic outcomes of Black Americans.
- Recognize the relationship between economic growth, standard of living, shared prosperity, and the concentration of income and wealth among the rich.
- Put current policy issues in historical context and provide guidance to economic and social policy.

Class Attendance: For real learning to take place, you must first be intellectually humble, open, and courteous. After all, that is why we are all at this institution. I expect you to act in ways that reflect those values. All students in my class are required to attend class lecture regularly and maintain classroom etiquettes. According to Morehouse policy, students with more than 3 unexcused absences will be referred to the Office of Student Success and may be administratively withdrawn from the course. Failure to meet minimum attendance requirements may result in the loss of the student's financial aid in accordance with federal financial aid requirements. Attendance is worth 5% of your grade. Full credit will be given if you have 1 or 0 zero unexcused absences. More than two unexcused absences will result in a 0 for attendance. **Phones must be put away.**

Adequate causes for missing class include family emergencies, medical leave, official school business, military obligations, bereavement, court appearances, and conferences with faculty or staff. You must submit valid written documentation to justify class absences within five calendar days of the absence. Class excuses are not granted for public transportation issues, oversleeping, and vehicle breakdowns.

Assignments:

- **Readings:** You are required to read the assigned readings before each lecture. The reading schedule is located in modules on canvas.

- **Exams:** There will be two midterm exams (each worth 15% of grade) and one final exam (worth 20% of grade). The midterms will have 6 essay style questions and you are required to answer 5 out of the 6. The first midterm is on **Wednesday, September 24** and will cover all the material leading up to it. The second midterm is on **Monday, November 3** and will cover all the material taught after midterm 1. The final exam will be cumulative, and you will be required to answer 8 out of the 10 questions. Please see college final exam schedule for the date.
- **Group discussions:** Each course topic will cover readings from the textbook and readings from economic articles. Each class that covers article readings will be predominantly group discussions, therefore it is vital to read beforehand. In these discussions, students will form groups of three to four and discuss questions provided by the professor. Groups will have the opportunity to explain one answer to the rest of the class. Missing a group discussion without an excused absence will result in a 0. If your absence is excused you must answer the questions on your on time and turn it in. (Worth 10% of your grade)
- **Literature Reviews:** There will be three literature review assignments throughout the semester. Students are required to find a research article published in the Journal of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History, or Economic History Review for a topic covered in class. Students must identify table or figure from the article, attach it, give a brief description of the table or figure, and provide a proper citation. Length of document is not important but your description should take up at least 3/4 of a page. (Worth 10% of your grade)
- **Group Project:** There will be a group project throughout the semester. Groups of 3 will pick a current issue, discuss the debate surrounding it, and connect the issue with events or periods from the past using concepts and theories discussed in the course. The group project will consist of a topic proposal due on **October 1st**, a presentation on **Wednesday, November 12**, and a final paper on **Monday, November 24**. Rubrics for the presentation and paper will be provided. (Worth 25% of your grade)

Course Grading: The grade in the course will be determined as follows:

Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	15%
Final Exam	20%
Attendance	5%
Group Discussions	10% total
Group Presentation	10%

Group Paper	15%
Literature Reviews	10% total

Table 1: Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage		
A+	97	to	100
A	93	to	97
A-	90	to	93
B+	87	to	90
B	83	to	87
B-	80	to	83
C+	77	to	80
C	73	to	77
C-	70	to	73
D	60	to	70
F	0	to	60

Late Submission Policy: Late submissions are subject to a zero. Missed exams, unless you have an acceptable official excuse, can not be made up. There are no make ups for the final exam nor the group presentation.

Academic Integrity: Morehouse College students are always expected to conduct themselves with the highest level of ethics and academic honesty and abide by the terms set forth in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to plagiarism and cheating on examinations and assignments, are taken seriously and may result in a failing grade for the assignment or course and may be reported to the Honor and Conduct Review Board for disciplinary action.

In this course, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools and technologies, such

as ChatGPT, Dall-E, etc., may be used to enhance your learning experience and support your academic work. Your use of AI should be responsible, ethical, cited, and aligned with the student learning objectives of the course. Each student is responsible for assessing the validity, bias, and applicability of GAI usage and should acknowledge the use of GAI in submitted assignments. Please note that each instructor and course at Morehouse College will have different AI policies and standards; it is the student's responsibility to adhere to the expectations for each course. Violations of the AI statements will be considered academic misconduct, as stated in the College's core academic principles. The College's academic policies can be found here: [Academic Honesty Link](#)

Syllabus is not a contract: A syllabus is not a contract between instructor and student, but rather a guide to course procedures. The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus when conflicts, emergencies or circumstances dictate. Students will be duly notified.

Commitment to Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at Morehouse College: At Morehouse College, we cultivate equitable policies and inclusive practices which lead to a sense of belonging for all. We champion Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (EIB) as essential qualities of the College for building and advancing an empathic and respectful campus that fosters pathways to individual and collective successes. From people's daily experiences to operational decisions, EIB at Morehouse College must be infused throughout the College's decisions and operations.

Counseling Services: Morehouse Counseling Services assists students in the accomplishment of tasks that are essential to their personal and educational development. Our programming is designed to facilitate students' retention and graduation by providing quality, time-effective services through individual and group counseling; outreach/workshop services; individual, organizational, and departmental consultation; crisis intervention, training, data collection, and research. For non-emergency access to Morehouse Counseling Services, please call 470-639-0231, walk into the office in the basement of Brazeal Hall during business hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email counseling@morehouse.edu.

Accommodations: Morehouse College is committed to removing barriers and providing equal access for students in course instruction or design. If you have been diagnosed with a documented disability and reasonable accommodations are necessary to provide equal access, please contact the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) at sas@morehouse.edu. You should request accommodations as early as possible since they make take time to implement. Notify me by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in my inability to provide accommodations in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, except that I may have to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation. If adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed, you should notify OEA at any time during the

semester.

Table 2: Course Outline

	Monday Lecture	Wednesday Lecture	Important due dates
Week 1 (Aug. 20-24)	No class	Introduction/Growth	
Week 2 (Aug. 25-31)	Introduction/Growth	Introduction/Growth	
Week 3 (Sep 1-7)	No class (Labor Day)	The Colonial Economy	
Week 4 (Sep 8-14)	The Colonial Economy	American Independence	1st lit rev. (9/8)
Week 5 (Sep 15-21)	American Independence	Slavery	
Week 6 (Sep 22-28)	Slavery	Midterm 1	Midterm 1 (9/24)
Week 7 (Sep 29-Oct 5)	Civil War and Aftermath	Civil War and Aftermath	Topic Proposal for Group Project (10/1)
Week 8 (Oct 6-12)	No class (Fall Break)	The market and industrialization	2nd lit rev. (10/8)
Week 9 (Oct 13-19)	The market and industrialization	Labor, Immigration, and Migration	
Week 10 (Oct 20-26)	Labor, Immigration, and Migration	The Great Depression, New Deal, WWII	
Week 11 (Oct 27-Nov 2)	The Great Depression, New Deal, WWII	The Great Depression, New Deal, WWII	3rd lit. rev. (10/27)
Week 12 (Nov 3-9)	Midterm 2	The Global Superpower	Midterm 2 (11/3)
Week 13 (Nov 10-16)	The Global Superpower	Group Presentations	Group pres. (11/12)
Week 14 (Nov 17-23)	Race and Gender in the US	Race and Gender in the US	
Week 15 (Nov 24-30)	Race and Gender in the US	No class (Thanksgiving)	Final paper (11/24)
Week 16 (Dec 1-7)	Challenges for the future	Challenges for the future	
Final Exams (Dec 8-12)			See final exam schedule