

ECON 404RR

American Labor History

Spring 2025

UMKC - Department of Economics

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Office Hours: 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

This course first examines the economic growth of the United States and the technological progress made by the country, along with the interplay between this growth and the evolution of the labor market. It explores the history of work and the working class in the U.S. from 1750 to the present. We will focus on the transformation of the workplace, the rise of the union movement, slavery, and the nature of cultural and political organizations. Additionally, we will examine workers' relationships with other social groups and the role played by gender, race, and ethnicity in uniting or dividing the working class. We will also analyze key historical events, such as the Civil War and the Great Depression, and their widespread effects on the labor market. In this course, we will use economic models and statistical tools to better understand U.S. history, and we will apply this historical knowledge to gain insight into current debates about issues like immigration policy, economic inequality, taxation, and government spending.

Course Topics Overview

- The initial lectures will provide an overview of global economic growth and its key determinants, with a particular focus on the period following the Industrial Revolution, which distinguishes it from earlier growth phases in human history.
- Subsequent lectures will explore the origins of the major migration from European countries to the United States and the early development of a formal labor market. We will examine two main types of labor markets: one based on slavery and the other based on wage labor.
- The impact of technological advancements and industrialization on labor demand will be discussed in the upcoming lectures.
- We will also examine the effects of discrimination based on ethnicity, race, and gender within labor markets in future lectures.
- Finally, we will address the significance of unionization in the workplace throughout U.S. history.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Have a detailed understanding of the evolution of the US economy from colonial times to the present in terms of industrial composition, growth rates, methods of production, and living standards
- Become familiar with important measures of economic performance (output measures, income measures, inequality measures, etc.) and sources of these measures
- Be able to interpret current economic issues (unemployment, immigration, discrimination, inequality, the pace of growth) in the context of related historical phenomena
- Be better able to write about and discuss economic content in a way that is engaging and persuasive

Required Materials

There are no required materials for this course. We will primarily be using journal articles that will be provided through Canvas.

Tentative Course Outline

This serves as the provisional course outline, and I will assess our progress as we proceed. If I observe that individuals are becoming proficient with the material, I may introduce additional and more advanced applications as the class progresses. The readings listed here are the primary texts for each chapter. Additionally, we will cover several other readings, which will be introduced in each lecture.

■ Week 1: Covering Pre-Requisites

Readings: In-class slides

■ Week 2: Introduction & Overview of Growth

Readings: Property Rights and Parliament in Industrializing Britain (Bogart & Richardson, 2011)

■ Week 3: American Colonial History

Readings: The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis (Galenson, 1984)

■ Week 4: Demography in US Economic History

Readings: Stature and the Standard of Living (Steckel, 1995)

■ Week 5: Early Industrialization in the US

Readings: Inventive Activity in Early Industrial America: Evidence From Patent Records, 1790-1846 (Sokoloff, 1988)

■ Week 6: Immigration & the US Economy

Readings: Immigration in American Economic History (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2016)

■ Week 7: Slavery & the South

Readings: Turnover Cost and the Distribution of Slave Labor in Anglo-America (Hanes, 1996)

■ Week 8: The Post-Civil War South

Readings: Sharecropping As An Understandable Market Response: The Post-Bellum South (Reid, 1973)

■ Week 9: Change in Industrial Structure

Readings: American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation, 1875-1890 (McCurdy, 1978)

■ Week 10: Spring Break**■ Week 11:** The Evolution of Labor Markets in the 19th Century

Readings: The Extent of the Labor Market in the United States, 1870-1914 (Rosenbloom, 1998)

■ Week 12: Female Labor in the Twentieth Century

Readings: Men and Monotony: Fraternalism as a Managerial Strategy at the Ford Motor Company (Lewchuk, 1993)

■ Week 13: African American Labor in the 20th Century

Readings: African Americans in the Twentieth Century (Maloney, 2002)

■ Week 14: Unionization in the 20th Century

Readings: Unions, Workers, and Wages at the Peak of the American Labor Movement (Callaway & Collins, 2018)

■ Week 15: Great Depression and its Effects on Labor Markets

Readings: Avoiding Default: The Role of Credit in the Consumption Collapse of 1930 (Olney, 1999)

■ Week 16: 20th Century Performance

Readings: Two centuries of economic growth: Europe chasing the American Frontier (Gordon, 2004)

Evaluation & Grading

Assignments

It is your responsibility to follow emails and announcements sent through Canvas, and to stay up to date with the deadlines and course material. The grade breakdown for this class is as follows:

1. **In-Class Weekly Tests (25%)** - A simple in-person weekly quiz, consisting of 2–3 questions based on the material covered in the previous week (not multiple-choice questions). These quizzes will be open book and straightforward but will require effort.
2. **Paper Presentations (35%)** - All students will be required to present a paper in the semester.
3. **Survey (40%)** - Of the 14 topics we will study in class, you will have to choose one of them, and write a comprehensive survey on the topic. What is a survey? A survey article, also known as a review article or overview article, is a type of academic or scholarly paper that provides a comprehensive and systematic summary of existing research and knowledge on a specific topic. Each student will write a 10-page survey and it will be checked not just via Turnitin but also ChatGPT detectors. More on what a survey is, will be sent in a separate email.

Grading Scale

Percentage of Points Earned	Letter Grade Earned
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

Basic Needs

It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, UMKC is here to help. The UMKC Basic Needs webpage has information on resources for food assistance, housing assistance and financial literacy. The Kangaroo Pantry is a free resource for all UMKC students that provides food and other items to those in need. Check out the Kangaroo Pantry website for details on

hours and locations. I strongly encourage you to set up an appointment with UMKC Basic Needs and/or me if you have a need for this type of assistance.

Academic Calendar

Students are encouraged to review important add, drop or withdraw dates in the UMKC Academic Calendar site.

Date	Description
January 21	Classes Begin (full 16-week session and first 8-week session)
January 27	Last day to add courses without an instructor signature (full 16-week session)
January 27	Last day to change a course from audit to credit (full 16-week session)
January 27	Last day for a 100% refund (full 16-week session)
January 27	Last day to register without paying late registration fee
February 17	Last day to drop a course and not have it appear on your transcript (full 16-week session)
February 17	Last day for a 50% refund (full 16-week session)
February 17	Last day to change a course from Credit to Audit (undergraduate - full 16-week session)
March 14	Last day for a 25% refund (full 16-week session)
March 14	Last day to withdraw with a "W" (graduate/professional - full 16-week session)
March 24	Spring Break
March 31	Deadline to apply for Spring 2025 graduation
April 7	Fall 2025 Priority Registration Begins
April 18	Last day to withdraw with a "W" (undergraduate - full 16-week session)
April 28	Fall 2025 Open Registration Begins
May 5	Finals Week (Law - full 16-week session)
May 8	School of Humanities and Social Sciences Reading Days
May 9	School of Humanities and Social Sciences Reading Days
May 9	Last day to withdraw with a "W" or "WF" (graduate/professional - full 16-week session)
May 9	Last day of classes (full 16-week session)
May 9	Finals Week (Law - full 16-week session)
May 12	Finals Week (All Academic Units, except Law - full 16-week session)
May 12	Finals Week (Law - full 16-week session)

Table 1: Spring 2025 Academic Schedule

Academic Integrity

The Board of Curators of the University of Missouri recognizes that academic honesty is essential for the intellectual life of the University. Faculty members have a special obligation to expect high standards of academic honesty in all student work. Students have a special obligation to adhere to such standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of artificially generated content or sabotage, is adjudicated through the University of Missouri Student Conduct Code and Rules of Procedures in Student Conduct Matters.

Academic Support and Mentoring

The department of Academic Support and Mentoring (ASM) offers a wide range of services and programs to help students meet their academic goals. ASM offers peer tutoring, writing and presentation assistance, SI study groups, instructional videos and many more resources that are valuable to your success in this class. Information can be found on the ASM website. You can use RooLearning+ for scheduling appointments and viewing when support for this class is available. Access RooLearning+ by downloading the app from the App Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android) and sign in with your SSO. The URL for the RooLearning+ site is umkc.tedu.app/student.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in classes as indicated by the course modality (Classroom based, Online, etc. available on Pathway). For more information on UMKC course modalities, please visit the Registrar's page.

In order to comply with federal regulations associated with eligibility rules for federal financial aid, students not attending/participating a course during the first three weeks of the term will be administratively dropped from the specific course. Advance notice of attendance policies of academic units and individual instructors should be given, and such notice should be in writing. Students should notify instructors of excused absences in advance, where possible. Students who have an excused absence are expected to make arrangements with instructors for alternative or make-up work. Such arrangements should be made in advance of the absence, where possible. Instructors should accommodate excused absences to the extent that an accommodation can be made that does not unreasonably interfere with the learning objectives of the course or unduly burden the instructor. Attendance policies shall be applied in a non-discriminatory manner. Enrollment as a student is required to attend any class unless otherwise pre-approved by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for verifying student attendance and participation within the first three weeks (16 week course) through the Attendance Verification Survey (administered through UMKC Connect) as well as maintain records of participation throughout the term so that the last date of attendance for students with recorded "F" or "W" final grades may be submitted.

Campus Safety

Inclement weather, mass notification, and emergency response guide can be found on the UMKC Alert page.

UMKC Connect

Important information is available to undergraduate students in UMKC Connect, a central location for faculty, advisors, student services and students to communicate and collaborate on a strategic plan for each student's academic success. Throughout the term, students may receive emails regarding course grades or academic performance. Students should regularly check their Connect dashboard and are expected to address information posted in a timely manner. This information may be shared with the student's Success Network made up of his or her academic advisor(s) and other campus resources so that UMKC may fully support the student's success. Students may schedule appointments to meet with members of their Success Network through UMKC Connect.

Grade Appeal Policy

The University grade appeal procedure is available only for the review of allegedly capricious grading and not for review of the instructor's evaluation of the student's academic performance. Capricious grading, as that term is used here, comprises any of the following:

- The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than the performance in the course
- The assignment of a grade to a particular student according to more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the course (Note: Additional or different grading criteria may be applied to graduate students enrolled for graduate credit in 300- and 400-level courses.)
- The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards

Student Accessibility Services and Accommodations

To obtain disability related accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible by calling 816-235-5612. Once verified, our office will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. You are also welcomed to contact the Student Accessibility Services office via email at disability@umkc.edu.

Counseling Services and Student Health & Wellness

UMKC students may experience many challenges in their lives while attending college – stress, depression, suicidality, trauma, relationship issues, health concerns, etc. As an institution, we care about your success and well-being, and want to make you aware of some helpful resources on campus.

UMKC Counseling Services, located at Brookside 51 Building, 5110 Oak Street, Suite 201, offers a wide range of supportive services to students. Appointments can be made by calling 816-235-1635.

UMKC Student Health and Wellness, located at Brookside 51 Building, 5110 Oak Street, Suite 237, offers a full range of health care and promotion services. Appointments can be scheduled online or by calling 816-235-6133.

The MindBody Connection is located in the Student Union, 3rd floor, room 303G & 303H. The MindBody Connection provides space for students to learn how to relieve stress and learn more about mindfulness. Featuring massage chairs, art supplies, and a quiet space, the MindBody Connection is a great place for students to unwind and get back in touch with their minds and bodies and offers a variety of stress-reduction services.

Students are encouraged to review UMKC's Policy on Suicide Prevention Resources, which provides resources, referral information, and training opportunities to help recognize signs of distress in yourself and your peers as well as how to make appropriate referrals for support and assistance.

Students may contact the UMKC Student HelpLine (or call 816-235-2222) with any questions or concerns. Students may also utilize the Complaint Policy to file a complaint online.

Equal Opportunity & Educational Access

UMKC is committed to providing equal opportunities to all students without unlawful discrimination on the basis of a protected identity, including race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable state or federal law.

Discrimination & Harassment

Compliance with UM System Collected Rules and Regulations (CRRs) 600.000 is monitored by the Office of Equity & Title IX, but it is the responsibility of the entire university community to provide equal opportunity through relevant practices, initiatives, and programs. If you or someone you know has experienced discrimination or harassment based on their protected identity, we encourage you to visit Making a Report.

CRR 600.010 prohibits protected identity discrimination and harassment. It also prohibits sexual harassment and sexual misconduct by a student, employee, volunteer, or visitor that is not covered under CRR 600.020 and Title IX (see below), that occurs within a UMKC educational

program or activity, on- or off-campus, including when the conduct occurs off-campus and interferes with or limits the ability of any person to participate in or benefit from UMKC's educational programs or activities or employment. For those who have experienced discrimination or harassment, please see the Support and Connections pages of our Equity & Title IX website for a list of campus and community support services.

Sexual Harassment under Title IX

UM System Collected Rules and Regulations (CRRs) 600.020 prohibits all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors from engaging in sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, in a university education program or activity against a person in the United States. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, please visit the Support and Connection pages of our Equity & Title IX website for a list of support services on campus and in the community. For information on how to make a report to the university, visit Making a Report.

Failure to Accommodate Students with Disabilities

UM System Collected Rules and Regulations (CRRs) 600.010 prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities and ensures these students receive educational accommodations as issued by Student Disability Services. If you believe an employee of the university has failed to accommodate your disability, visit Making a Report or contact the Office of Equity and Title IX at (816) 235-1771 or eqtix@umkc.edu.

Accommodating Pregnancy & Related Conditions

UMKC provides reasonable accommodations to students related to pregnancy and childbirth, including adjustments to attendance requirements, course due dates, leaves of absence, and other accommodations. If you have questions or would like to request arrangements, please visit Pregnancy & Related Accommodations or contact the Office of Equity & Title IX at (816) 235-1771 or eqtix@umkc.edu.

Nearly all UMKC employees, including your course instructors, advisors, and other support staff, are required to report all information related to any known or suspected discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct to the Office of Equity & Title IX and cannot offer confidentiality. However, students may seek confidential support from RISE: Resources, Intervention, Support, & Education, Counseling Services, and Student Health & Wellness.

Employees of these offices are exempt from mandated reporting so long as the disclosure of prohibited conduct occurs in a confidential communication while they are acting as support advocates, professional counselors, or medical personnel. An exemption does not extend to these employees when the disclosure is made in non-confidential setting. If you have a question about confidentiality when making a disclosure to RISE, Counseling Services, or Student Health & Wellness, you should first ask whether the exemption applies.

Right to Free Expression

It is vitally important for UMKC to foster and maintain an educational environment that promotes free discussion, inquiry and expression by students inside the classroom and beyond, without fear that their exercise of such rights will have negative repercussions in areas over which the university has responsibility. It is equally important that students understand the narrow line separating their First Amendment rights and the legal and privacy rights of others so that students can exercise those rights within appropriate boundaries.

Per UM System Collected Rules and Regulations (CRRs) 200.015 your instructors should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression in courses, conferences and meetings. Student performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

Classroom Expectations

In exercising your right to free expression, UMKC requests students adhere to these five guidelines:

- Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation, leaving sufficient time for others to engage in the discussion. Listen respectfully, avoiding interruptions or distractions.
- Recognize how your own identity and experiences inform your opinions and reactions to others. Be open to changing your perspectives when exposed to the ideas of others.
- Speak with care, acknowledging that your words may be perceived as disrespectful, marginalizing, biased, or harmful.
- Understand that everyone makes mistakes; view these mistakes as valuable in the learning process. Notice your own defensive reactions, and channel them into furthering a productive discussion.
- Differentiate between safety and comfort; accept discomfort as necessary for learning and exploring ideas through a social justice lens.

Although your right to free expression is protected, your instructors have the authority to take action under CRR 200.010 when they believe the conduct of any student unreasonably disrupts the classroom environment and prevents others from learning or threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person. If you feel your instructor was in error in taking action under CRR 200.010 related to your right to free expression, visit Making a Report.

Expressions of Perceived Bias

UMKC is committed to equity, diversity, inclusion and respectful interaction. In support of our campus community, the university provides the opportunity for students, employees, volunteers, and visitors to report expressions of perceived bias and to request UMKC respond to such expressions.

An expression of perceived bias may occur when someone believes that they have been subjected to harassment, bullying, stereotyping, microaggressions, abuse, marginalization, or any other

form of targeted misconduct because they identify or are associated with a particular group. If you believe you have experienced an expression of bias or you become aware of such an expression, visit Making a Report.

Support: If the conduct of others prevents you from fully participating in the classroom or in university activities, UMKC offers confidential support through Counseling Services and RISE: Resources, Intervention, Support, & Education. Additional campus and community support services are listed on the Support and Connections pages of our Equity & Title IX website.