Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: HIST 371

Course Title: American Business History

Number of: Credit Hours: 3  Lecture Hours: 3  Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Analysis of American business from the colonial period to the present. The course traces activities of significant entrepreneurs and the firms they built. It will focus upon the managerial revolution that established a modern industrial order, wherein the corporation became the primary instrument for organizing the processes of production, distribution, and consumption. Significant attention will be given to systems of technology, transportation, communication, and labor indicative of America's free enterprise system. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission. Cross-listed as MGMT 371. Occasional offering.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior standing or instructor's permission.

Text(s): The required text must be assigned and supplemented with a minimum of two recommended texts. Additional primary and secondary sources may be assigned as well. Most current editions of the following:

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Zunz, Oliver. *Making America Corporate*.


Heilbroner, Richard & Aaron Singer. *The Economic*
Transformation of America. Wadsworth.


Other appropriate scholarly monographs may be assigned.

Course Objectives:

- To appreciate the American approach to enterprise, the principles of entrepreneurship, and the consequences of industrial supremacy.
- To explore the interrelationships between the managerial revolution in business and the scale and scope of corporate capitalism in the United States.
- To compare and contrast various historiographical perspectives on American business.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

- Describe the significant people, places, and events of American business history.
- Analyze the economic factors that shaped the transition from mercantilism to capitalism in North America.
- Explain the role of public and private investment in developing interstate commerce for the early republic.
- Differentiate the primary objectives, industries, and ethics of corporate executives during the nineteenth century.
- Study the experiences of businessmen and women at work from their first-hand accounts.
- Describe the impact of consumer capitalism on mass marketing during the early twentieth century.
- Analyze the economic impact of the Great Crash and the Great Depression.
- Describe the transition from manufacturing to service industries in the age of multinational corporations.
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and trends in the historiography of American business.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

Because the course represents an upper level history elective, it bears a distinctive responsibility for teaching advanced knowledge within the discipline. It must be distinguished as an advanced course by three structural components: extensive reading, intensive writing, and historiographical thinking. It must require advanced students to complete both in class and out of class projects (i.e., midterms, finals, team reports, quizzes, research papers). It must demand a minimum of 1000 pages of required text reading, 1000 words of type-written work, and a consideration of the range and variance of historical scholarship. Finally, it must develop student skills and abilities for researching diverse sources of knowledge and organizing findings through synthesis.

- The Firm in American History
- Business Enterprise in the New World
• Mercantilism and Capitalism in Colonial America
• Entrepreneurs in the New Republic
• Public and Private wealth in Antebellum America
• Industrial Expansion
• Slave Labor and the Plantation System
• The Rise of Corporate Managers
• The Age of Big Business
• Technological Innovation and Expertise
• Regulating the Industrial Giants
• The Emergence of a Consumer Market
• The Great Crash and the Depression
• Business Leadership in the Cold War
• Globalization and Multinational Corporations
• Post-Industrial America

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Brad Lookingbill

Date: May 10, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.