History 1807 (001)

History of Business and Commerce

2024-25

Instructor: Dr. Peter V. Krats

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Office: Department of History, Stevenson Hall, Room 2123

Office Hours: Each week I will be available for student questions and concerns. Hours tba but immediately after class or by appointment.

This is a draft syllabus. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

Course Description

This course examines the history of business and commerce from the earliest exchanges to Covid-19’s impact. Particular attention will be paid to the history of credit, banking, the stock market, corporations, and globalization. But we extend beyond institutions of business to examine the rise of trade and business; the global evolution of business and the various consequences, good and bad, of business practices.

Antirequisite

History 1803E

Course Syllabus

Expectations: Attending lectures is expected; they should provide broad themes and ideas that students can, with the addition of careful reading of course materials, facilitate successful participation and written results. Participating in weekly tutorials is mandatory: if more than 50% of tutorials are missed, students will fail the course. The tutorial and lectures should also aid student preparation for the final examination, which relies on a student’s familiarity with course issues and an understanding of larger themes of the course. In short, student success relies significantly on your thought and effort in the course.

Methods of Evaluation

Course grading offers a range of opportunities to show skills in written and oral communication, thought, synthesis of ideas, and spontaneous collaboration with classmates. Dates tba.

Early Course Reaction paper: 10 %. [October] Your main thoughts on material covered thus far. Two to three pages double-spaced; no need for any outside research. Proper English.

Tutorial Reaction Papers: 10 % (2.5 % each) [2 each term] – one page [double-spaced] reaction
to ideas raised by reading[s] that week – offer ideas not just a summary. Proper English.

Tutorial: 25 % - based on active presence in Tutorial – the quality of ideas and information is more significant than the quantity, but you need to be heard. Students will be assessed on the regularity of their attendance throughout the year, their knowledge of assigned readings, and their ability to discuss reading within the broader themes of the course.

Lecture Considerations: (5 %) On random occasions a lecture will be devoted to discussion of topics arising from materials “at play” in lectures and/or tutorials. Group-based participation and, it need not be said, attendance factor into the grade.

“History Taught Me” paper – 20 % -- [March] three to four double-spaced pages on what you deem the most significant idea occurring to you from the lectures / tutorials to this point of the course. This paper will be due in the latter part of the course [March] No outside research required but proper English is expected.

Final Exam (April) 30% - 3 hours; the exam will test students’ awareness of events and concepts from the course – good papers feature sound ideas and useful historical examples.

Make-up exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Extensions for late papers worth less than 10 % and allowance for missed tutorials will only be available for reasons deemed suitable under the regulations established by the University. See the information at the end of this paragraph. Be sure to consult with your Tutorial leader and/or the Professor as soon as possible. Longer absences or missed work of greater mark value will require documentation be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean’s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted. For more detail: Social Science Academic Counselling on Absence & Academic Consideration, the university’s policies on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness, and the Department of History’s own Undergraduate Policies and Statements).

Course-specific conditions
Students must submit the Early Course Reaction paper and History Taught Me paper to pass the course. Students must attend at least half of the tutorial meetings to pass the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments.

Course Materials

[TENTATIVE]
The course features assigned readings for most tutorials. Most readings will be available online, most through Weldon Library URL links, or the Course OWL site. In addition, these brief books may be assigned to support and contrast with the lecture material.

**Course Schedule**

**TENTATIVE LECTURE TOPICS**

**INTRODUCTION // Modern Definitions & Ideas**

**PRECURSORS TO CAPITALISM**
Rise of Economic Systems and Pre-Capitalist Economies – Historical Contexts and Debates

**THE ORIGINS OF CAPITALISM**
Mercantilist Globalization at Work Eurocentric Views
Mercantilist Globalization: The View from Beyond Europe

**INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**
The Concept of Divergence
Divergence from the “Other” Side: Industrialization Missing? Or Different?
Unfree Labour & the Spread of Capitalism. Indigenous Genocide, Slavery, and Other Forced Labour

**TOWARD “UNFETTERED INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM ?: THE LONG 19th Century**
The Modern Corporation / Capitalist Institutions
Reshaping Production – New Technologies and Concepts
Laissez-faire? -- Examining the Role of Government & the Regulation of Business
Workers Challenge the New Models

**MODERN TIMES: The World of Keynesianism**
Crises: War, Booms & Busts & Great Depression
Business-Government Symbiosis – Capitalism in Action
Consumerism and Affluence – A Better Globalization?

**[POST??]-MODERN GLOBAL CAPITALISM?**
Japan, South Korea, Taiwan & more
China and India: Re-emergent Giants
Globalization for Struggling Economies?

**OIL SHOCKS: STAGFLATION, RE-IMAGINED CAPITALISM AND FINANCIAL CRISES**
De-Industrialization / New forms / Deregulation – The Collapse of the Postwar System
Neoliberalism Takes Hold // Neo-liberalism and its Paradoxes of Deregulation
Globalization, Work and Workers’ Lives

**WHERE ARE WE // WHERE ARE WE HEADED ?**
The Economic Meltdown 2008 -- Financial Crisis & Inequality
The Future of Global Capitalism post Covid?
Conclusions / Exam Considerations
**Additional Statements**

**Use of Electronic Devices:**

No electronic devices will be permissible for use for the Final examination. Use in lectures at the discretion of the professor – objectionable or distracting use forbidden.

Students must obtain permission before using generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignments in this course. Using these tools without my permission puts your academic integrity at risk. Even if permitted, **any** use of such tools must be clearly acknowledged. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification.

**Important Department Policy Note:**

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.