

Economics 412 - Summer I 2009

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Course Overview:

According to (George) Washington, once we appreciate how our own well-being, prosperity and liberties are all the products of living in **this** country, as opposed to any other, we will become natural patriots. Our defense of principle becomes a defense of hearth and home.

- Former Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, *The Spirit of America*, p.28

This is a class in American Economic History studying the period immediately following Independence up to the end of the 19th Century. We will explore how early decisions regarding the rules for land and labor usage led to different outcomes after the Civil War for the American North, South, and West regions.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- To be familiar with and objectively discuss the fundamentals of the economics of slavery, capital infrastructure improvements in transportation, and financial intermediation in the 19th Century United States.
- Apply basic economic models to economic and demographic data to explain relationships between social and political institutions and economic development in early American history.
- Acquire tools and knowledge useful in evaluating economic development and performance in a historical context.

Grading Policy:

There shall be one midterm and one final examination. The final examination shall be administered on the date and time specified in the schedule of classes; if such a time is not specified by the official University calendar, then the date and time shall be announced with at least two weeks notice. Your course grade shall be weighted 35% from the midterm and 45% from the final exam. **There shall be no extra credit - period.** Six quizzes shall be administered during the semester; three before the midterm and three after. The four best scores amongst the six shall count as 20% towards the final course grade. Class attendance and reading of course material, while not graded, is highly recommended.

Textbooks:

- *American Economic History (6th Edition)*, Jonathan R. T. Hughes, Louis P. Cain, Addison-Wesley Pub Co; ISBN: 0-321-08822-0; 6th edition (2003) - OPTIONAL, and note the 5th Edition is also fine and in some ways better.
- *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century*, Gavin Wright, W.W. Norton & Company; ISBN: 0-393-09038-8; (May 1978) – OPTIONAL

Other Readings (All available online - See my web page for the files or links):

- [Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind](#) - Benjamin Franklin, 1751.
- Land Clearing Under Nineteenth-Century Techniques: Some Preliminary Calculations - Martin L. Primack, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 22, No. 4. (Dec., 1962), pp. 484-497.
- Debt Peonage in the Cotton South After the Civil War - Roger L. Ransom, Richard Sutch, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 32, No. 3. (Sep., 1972), pp. 641-669.
- My 20 page summary of *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* by David S. Landes.
- Notes on Invention vs. Innovation and the nature of technological change according to Nathan Rosenberg from *Inside the Black Box*.
- My final project from Econ 611 on Mark Bills' Tariff Protection and Production in the Early U.S. Cotton Textile Industry paper.

Other:

A lecture schedule showing the reading assignment for each class meeting is available online on my page. You are expected to know how to do college level algebra and geometry, and have a basic understanding of ECON 130 and 131 topics (microeconomic supply and demand models, national income accounting, money supply, elementary game theory, and externalities/public goods). While not strictly necessary, some understanding of statistics, econometrics, and calculus may be helpful.

