

ECON 101: U.S. Economic History and Institutions

Course Syllabus

Spring Semester, 2019

1. Basic Information

a. Lecturer

Zhixian Lin (Peter)

Email: zhixian.lin@csueastbay.edu (preferred way to contact me)

Telephone: (510)-885-4647

b. Lecture Time and Location.

- ECON 101-01: 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm; Tuesday & Thursday; Art and Education 0285

c. Office Hours.

- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm; Tuesday or by appointment; VBT 348

d. Exam Dates

Midterm Exam - in class, Thursday, March 14.

Final Exam

- ECON 101 – 01: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Thursday, May 16

2. Course Description

a. Course Topics

This 3-unit course covers important economic and political events in U.S. history from the colonial era to the great depression in the early 1930s. The course focuses more on the key institutional evolution, including the US Constitution and other economic legislation. We will discuss the causes and consequences of major economic events and policies in U.S. history. Selected topics include the colonial economy, the Revolutionary War, U.S. Constitution, Westward Expansion, the British institutional, legal, and economic legacy; Southern slave system, the Civil War, transportation innovations and railroads, immigration, antitrust acts, and the Great Depression.

b. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

- Describe important economic and political events in US history and the connections among them.
- Explain how the unique backgrounds and social experiences of groups within the US population shape different views toward economic policy.
- Identify key economic legislation, from the US Constitution to recent laws, and the historical context that motivated them.
- Analyze the various processes by which economic policy is made in practice and whom these processes tend to empower.
- Discuss the confluences and trade-offs between individual economic liberties and social objectives.

This course also satisfies the American Institutions Requirement in the G.E./G.R. areas US-1 (U.S. History), US-2 (U.S. Constitution), and D1-3 (Lower Division Social Sciences). The learning outcomes for these areas are listed below.

Area US-1 (U.S. History):

- Explain the significance or interpretation of major historical events in a period of at least a hundred years of American history.
- Describe the contributions of major ethnic and social groups in period of at least a hundred years of American history.
- Explain the role of at least three of the following in the development of American culture: politics, economics, social movements, and/ or geography

Area US-2 (U.S. Constitution):

- Describe the development of the Constitution from the political philosophies of its framers to its later interpretation and amendment.
- Explain how the Constitution influenced the development of American political institutions and government.
- Explain citizen rights and responsibilities under the Constitution

Area D1-3 (Lower Division Social Sciences):

- Specify how social, political, economic, and environmental systems and/or behavior are interwoven.
- Explain how humans individually and collectively relate to relevant sociocultural, political, economic, and/or environmental systems – how they produce, resist, and transform them.
- Discuss and debate issues from the course's disciplinary perspective in a variety of cultural, historical, contemporary, and/or potential future contexts.

- Explore principles, methodologies, value systems, and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry.

3. Course Resources

a. Recommended Textbooks

- Jonathan Hughes and Louis P. Cain, *American Economic History (8th edition)*
- Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History (2nd edition)*

These two textbooks are optional, though I think they help you to get more details on the materials covered in this course. The most important information in the lectures will be included in the handouts. If you would purchase or rent these books, any editions will serve the learning purpose well.

b. Course Website

We are using Blackboard to share course materials including the lecture slides, problem sets, reading list, study questions, etc. Scores of all problem sets and exams will also be posted on blackboard. Please make sure that you get access to this course in Blackboard. I suggest that you use Firefox or Safari as your browser.

4. Assignments & Exams

Three main components will determine your total score for this course: 6 graded problem sets, one midterm exam, and one final exam. In addition, you can earn up to 5 points with an extra-credit essay.

a. Problem Sets

6 problem sets account for 30% of your total score. Each problem set will be graded on a scale of 5. I will post them at least one week prior to the due dates (see part 7 for due dates). Each problem set will include some multiple-choice questions, true or false, and essay questions. You should submit your written answers in beginning of the classes on due dates.

b. Midterm Exam

The only one midterm exam accounts for **30% of your total score.** The midterm format will feature multiple-choice questions as well as essay questions requiring a written response.

The midterm will only cover the materials before it. I will post a practice midterm and hold a review section before it.

c. Final Exam

The final exam accounts for **40% of your total score**. The final exam will have questions of the same format with the midterm, but additional length. Also, the final exam will be cumulative, though more weight will be assigned on the materials after the midterm. Also, a practice final and a review section will be provided.

d. Extra-credit Essay

I would post some essay topics as the semester goes. You can pick one topic and submit an essay (two pages maximum in length) before the final exam. You can earn up to **5 points extra credit** in your total score. This is completely voluntary, and your total score won't exceed 100.

5. Grading

a. Curving

I won't curve every single problem set, midterm, or final exam. If needed, I may curve your total score, which your letter grade is finally based on. Your total score is the weighted sum of your scores of problem sets, midterm exam, final exam, and the extra-credit essay. An illustrative example is that if you get the following scores in each part:

problem set 1 - 6: 4, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5 respectively;

midterm exam: 75 out of 100;

final exam: 80 out of 100;

extra credit essay: 4 out of 5.

Then, your total score will be: $4 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 4 + 5 + (75 * 30\%) + (80 * 40\%) + 4 = 83.5$.

Traditionally before curving, letter grades are assigned based on your total score under the following scheme:

A \geq 93, A- \geq 90, B+ \geq 87, B \geq 83, B- \geq 80, C+ \geq 77, C \geq 73, C- \geq 70, D+ \geq 67, D \geq 63.

b. Late Problem Sets or Missing Exams

The late problem sets are not accepted for grading generally, except for special circumstances. Such circumstances can be unexpected medical conditions, family issues or

other fully justified situations. You should provide relevant proof, and I will evaluate it thoroughly.

There is no make-up exam. If you miss the midterm, I will assign the score weight to your final. In that case, your final score will account for 70% of your total score. If you miss the final, there is no way to adjust. So, you may receive a “WU”, “I”, or “F” grade, depending on each specific case. Check you are available for the scheduled final exam.

c. Re-grading

If you have a problem with the grading. You can request a re-grading for any assignment. You should submit your request within one week after the scores are released. I will review the entire assignment, not just the specific question. Unfortunately, I won't re-grade the extra-credit essay.

6. Policy Disclosures

a. Policy on Academic Dishonesty

In fairness to students who put in an honest effort, cheating and any academic dishonesty will be taken extremely seriously. The University has a published policy on cheating and academic dishonesty. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy and to abide by it. By enrolling in this class, the student agrees to uphold the standards of academic integrity described in the catalogue:

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/aps/academic-policies/academic-dishonesty.html>

Cheating will result in 1) a zero score on the test; and/or 2) an "F" grade for the course; and/or 3) referral to the Academic Vice President for expulsion from the University.

b. Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, or if you would need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation, please contact me as soon as possible. Students with disabilities needing accommodation should speak with the Accessibility Services.

c. Emergency Information

Information on what to do in an emergency (earthquake, electrical outage, fire, extreme heat, severe storm, hazardous materials, terrorist attack) may be found at:

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/af/departments/risk-management/ehs/emergency-management>

Please be familiar with these procedures. Information on this page is updated as required. Please review the information on a regular basis.

7. Tentative Course Schedule

Week of	Tuesday	Thursday
01/22	Intro / Topic 1	Topic 1
01/29	Topic 2	Topic 3 / PS 1 Due
02/05	Topic 3	Topic 4
02/12	Topic 4	Topic 4 / PS 2 Due
02/19	Topic 4	Topic 5
02/26	Topic 6	Topic 7 / PS 3 Due
03/05	Topic 8	Topic 8
03/12	Topic 8 / Review	Midterm Exam
03/19	Topic 9	Topic 9
03/26	Topic 10	Topic 10 / PS 4 Due
04/02	Spring Recess	Spring Recess
04/09	Topic 11	Topic 11
04/16	Topic 12	Topic 12 / PS 5 Due
04/23	Topic 13	Topic 13
04/30	Topic 14	Topic 14 / PS 6 Due
05/07	Topic 14	Review
05/14		Final Exam

Note: the topics listed below roughly follow Hughes and Cain. I also combine some topics from Atack and Passell. So, the topic sequence might not exactly match the textbooks.

Topic 01: American Economic Growth: A Long-Run Perspective

Topic 02: The Colonial Economy

Topic 03: Gaining Independence: The American Revolution

Topic 04: The Articles of Confederation and U.S. Constitution

Topic 05: Westward Expansion and Public Land Policy

Topic 06: The Law and the Rise of Classical American Capitalism

Topic 07: Agricultural Expansion (North vs South)

Topic 08: Southern Slave System and Civil War

Topic 09: Transportation, Railroads and Economic Development

Topic 10: Immigration

Topic 11: Labor and the Law

Topic 12: Big Business and the Antitrust Acts

Topic 13: The WWI and inter-war Economy

Topic 14: The Great Depression and Recovery