INTRODUCTION

There cannot be a better time to take this course. Much of the media discussion of the current recession/depression harkens back to the Great Depression and to America’s economic past. There is also a questioning of the role of government and government spending. This course examines North America’s past from the perspective of economics. In designing the course, I had two objectives in mind. First, topics have been chosen to provide a perspective on the development of American economy from the Colonial period to the present. Second, this is a course in applied economics. To that end, topics have been chosen to illustrate how evidence and theory are combined and tested to further our understanding of particular historical events. The economist, by his or her training, tends to become expert in the construction and manipulation of theory or of hypothesis testing. The historian tends to become expert on sources, evidence, and their reliability. A satisfactory social science should combine both of these aspects. Economic history presents a nearly unique opportunity to observe the use of economics as a mode of explanation across a wide range of questions and issues and to see how the use of economics deepens and enriches our understanding of our past and our present.

Evaluation

Your grade will have the following components: one midterm exam (35% each); a final exam (35%); a group project (25%) – class presentation 10%, written evaluation 15%; and class attendance (5%).

Both the midterm and the final examinations will be take home examinations and will be posted on the class site at <http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/courses/4524>

All examinations must be double spaced, typed and meet the guidelines laid out.

Mid-term Exam   -   posted March 7   -   Due in class March 12
Final Exam      -   posted April 27  -   Due in my office by noon Monday May 7th

There will be NO make-up examinations and NO late papers will be accepted.
Information on the group project will be provided in class. You will be working in groups of 3-4 people.

**Cheating/Plagiarism**
Cheating and plagiarism are academic offenses and any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be sanctioned. If you are unsure or uncertain about what constitutes either cheating or plagiarism, please consult me, the University of Colorado catalog, or the honor code.

For all policies relating to disabilities, pre-requisites and religious holidays, see the Department of Economics, course tab.

**Required Reading**

Highly recommended: David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen, *Writing Analytically*, 4th, 5th or latest edition.

These are available in the bookstore or from Amazon. The textbook will be supplemented by journal articles and other readings which are available either through E-journals or on reserve in the Norlin. Book chapters will be available though e-reserves. The password will be announced in class. All journal articles can be accessed through Chinook using one of the online search engines. There will be a mandatory library class.

**TOPICS**

1. **Introduction: Thinking about Long-Run Economic Growth**
   - Atack and Passell (A & P), ch. 1
   - UNDP Annual Reports

2. **Colonial Economy and the Revolution:**
David Galenson, *Markets in History*, ch. 2  

**B. The Constitution as an Economic Document**  
A & P, pp 75-79  
The Constitution of the United States  

**3. The Other Side of the Frontier: Native American Issues**  
Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, ch. 8, ch. 9 and ch. 10  
Linda Barrington, ed, *Other Side of the Frontier*, Editor’s Introduction  

**Land Policy**  
A&P Chapter 9  
**Presentation 5:** David Wishart, “Evidence of Surplus Production in the Cherokee Nation Prior to Removal,” *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 55, no. 1, March 1995, pp. 120-38.  

**4. Revolution to the Civil War:**

**A. The Transportation Revolution**  
A & P, ch. 6, and ch. 16  

**B. Agriculture and Mechanization**  
A & P, ch. 5 and ch. 10  

**C. Southern Agriculture and Slavery**  
A & P, ch. 11 and ch. 12  

5. The Civil War to the First World War

A. Southern Reconstruction
A & P, ch. 14
Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South*, ch. 2 and ch. 3
Video: Eyes on the Prize - segments


B. The Rise of Big Business
A & P, ch.17
Mark Aldrich, *Safety First; Technology, Labor, and Business in the Building of American Safety*, 1870-1930 ch. 1 and ch. 5

Video: Mr Sear’s Catalogue

C. Banking and Finance
A & P, ch. 18

6. Interwar Period and Great Depression

A. The Market for Labor: Women, Children and Migrants
A & P, ch. 8 and ch. 19
Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap*, ch. 2 and ch. 3


B. The Roaring Twenties
A & P, ch. 20

C. The Great Depression
A & P, ch. 21 and ch. 22
Video: *Job at Ford’s No. 1*

7. **New Frontier and the Great Society**
