

Business History Seminar

Course Syllabus

Walter Friedman

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Course Description

The Business History Seminar explores the history of firms, industries, business systems, and entrepreneurs. We will read about, and discuss, the different trajectories and interpretations of firm growth, industry development, and entrepreneurial activity from the late eighteenth century to the present. We will also analyze the integration of firms into the economic, technological, cultural, and political contexts of the time. Among the topics covered are the emergence of modern management, the rise of big business, the impact of government policies and legal frameworks on business, the transformation of industries, and the role of entrepreneurship in capitalist economies. The course provides a framework for understanding the emergence of business institutions, structures, and practices embedded in specific historical and geographical contexts. The overall aim of the course is to introduce graduate students to central issues in the history of business and of capitalism and to explore the relevance of this literature to other disciplines.

In each meeting we will discuss key literature by prominent authors in the field and explore the premises on which these works are based. We will cover some of the classic studies as well as recent research and publications.

A key component of the course is the research paper. The course provides an opportunity to develop analytical research skills through designing, researching, and writing a paper using original historical sources. Students are strongly encouraged to choose a topic relevant to their own research interests or dissertation project and will have the opportunity to work closely with the instructor during the semester on the paper.

The course is relevant for graduate students working in a range of fields, including history, economics, economic history, and business administration. Cross-registrants are welcome.

Class 1 Course Introduction

N. S. B. Gras, "Business History," *Economic History Review* 4:4 (Apr. 1934): 385-398.

Alfred Chandler, "Business History: A Personal Experience," Business History Conference's Presidential Address (1978).

Geoffrey Jones, "Business Enterprises and Global Worlds," *Enterprise & Society* 3 (2002): 581-605.

Sven Beckert, "Capitalism," in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, *American History Now* (Temple University Press, 2011), pp. 314-335.

Bernard Bailyn, "The Problems of the Working Historian: A Comment," in Sidney Hook, ed., *Philosophy and History* (1963).

Class 2 Early Merchants

Thomas M. Doeflinger, "Commercial Specialization in Philadelphia's Merchant Community, 1750-1791," *Business History Review* 57:1 (Spring 1983): 2-49.

David Jaffee, "Peddlers of Progress and the Transformation of the Rural North, 1760-1860," *Journal of American History* 78:2 (Sept. 1991): 511-535.

Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977). Part I (The Traditional Process of Production and Distribution)

John J. McCusker, "The Demise of Distance: The Business Press and the Origins of the Information Revolution in the Early Modern Atlantic World," *American Historical Review* (April 2005): 295-321.

Sharon Ann Murphy, "Selecting Risks in an Anonymous World: The Agency System for Life Insurance in Antebellum America," *Business History Review* 82 (Spring 2008): 1-30.

Class 3 The Rise of Big Business

Thomas K. McCraw, "Alfred Chandler: His Vision and Achievement," *Business History Review* (Summer 2008): 207-226.

Alfred D. Chandler, *Strategy and Structure* (1962), Chapters 1 (the Historical Setting), 2 (Du Pont), and 7 (the Spread of the Multidivisional Enterprise).

Alfred D. Chandler, "Institutional Integration: An Approach to Comparative Studies of the History of Large-Scale Business Enterprise," *Revue Economique* 27:2 (March, 1976): 177-199.

Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977). Part II (The Revolution in Transportation and Communication).

Richard John, "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents: Alfred D. Chandler's *The Visible Hand* after Twenty Years," *Business History Review* 71:2 (Summer 1997): 151-200.

Class 4 The Evolution of Marketing

Alfred Chandler, *Strategy and Structure*, Chapter 5 (on Sears, Roebuck & Company).

Walter Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America* (2004), Chapter on John H. Patterson and the Sales Strategy of National Cash Register.

Richard S. Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America* (1990), Introduction, “The Great Cola Wars: Coke v. Pepsi” and “Stocking America’s Pantries: The Rise and Fall of A&P.”

John A. Quelch and Katherine E. Jocz, “Milestones in Marketing”

Class 5 TOUR OF BAKER LIBRARY HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

Thomas K. McCraw, *American Business, 1920-2000: How it Worked* (2000).

Class 6 Automobiles and Mass Production

Thomas K. McCraw, ed., *Creating Modern Capitalism: How Entrepreneurs, Companies, and Countries Triumphed in Three Industrial Revolutions* (1996), chapters on Ford v. Sloan and on Toyoda/Toyota.

Christopher D. McKenna, “Writing the Ghost-Writer Back In: Alfred Sloan, Alfred Chandler, John McDonald and the Intellectual Origins of Corporate Strategy,” *Management and Organizational History* 1:2 (May 2006): 107-126.

Alfred Sloan, *My Years with General Motors*, selected chapters.

James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World* (2007 edition), selected pages.

Class 7 Telecommunications

Richard John, *Network Nation: Inventing American Telecommunications* (Harvard, 2010), selected chapters.

Tim Wu, *Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*, ch. 3 (Vail).

Louis Galambos, "Theodore N. Vail and the Role of Innovation in the Modern Bell System," *Business History Review* 66:2 (Spring 1992): 95-126.

Class 8 Credit Systems

Rowena Olegario, *The Nation that Credit Built: A History of Lending and Borrowing in America*, unpublished manuscript.

Lendol Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit* (Princeton, 1999), selected chapters.

Josh Lauer, "From Rumor to Written Record: Credit Reporting and the Invention of Financial Identity in Nineteenth-Century America," *Technology and Culture* 49:2 (April 2008).

Andrea Ryan, Gunnar Trumbull, and Peter Tufano, "A Brief History of U.S. Consumer Finance," *Business History Review* 85:3 (Autumn 2011): 461-489.

Class 9 Taylor and other Business Analysts

Walter Friedman, "Roger W. Babson: The Rule of Past Patterns," from *The Fortune Tellers* (Princeton 2013)

Louis Galambos, "The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern American History," *Business History Review* 44:3 (Autumn 1970): 279-290.

Richard Gillespie, *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments*, introduction and Chs. 1 and 4.

Daniel Nelson, "Scientific Management, Systematic Management and Labor, 1880-1915" *Business History Review* 48: 4 (Winter 1974): 479-500.

F. W. Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (Free Google book)

Pankaj Ghemawat, "Competition and Business Strategy in Historical Perspective," *Business History Review* (Spring 2002): p. 37-74.

Class 10 Entrepreneurs and Innovation

Thomas K. McCraw, "Schumpeter's Business Cycles as Business History."

Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics edition, 2008), introduction by Thomas K. McCraw and pp. 81-121.

Geoffrey Jones and R. Daniel Wadhvani, "Entrepreneurship," *Handbook of Business History* (Oxford, 2007): 501-529.

William Baumol, "Entrepreneurship: Productive, Unproductive, and Destructive," *Journal of Political Economy* 98 (Oct. 1990): 893-921.

Petra Moser, "Patents and Innovation: Evidence from Economic History," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27:1 (Winter 2013): 23-44.

Richard Nelson and Gavin Wright, "The Rise and Fall of American Technological Leadership," *Journal of Economic Literature* 30:4 (1992): 1931-1964.

Class 11 Family Business and Capitalism

David Cannadine, *Mellon: An American Life* (2008), parts 1 and 2.

Peter Dobkin Hall, "A Historical Overview of Family Firms in the United States," *Family Business Review* 1:1 (1988): 51-68.

Phillip Scranton, "Diversity in Diversity: Flexible Production and American Industrialization, 1880-1930," *Business History Review* 65:1 (1991): 27-90.

Andrea Colli and Mary Rose, "Family Business" in Geoffrey Jones and Jonathan Zeitlin, *The Oxford Handbook of Business History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 194-218.

Class 12 Organization Man and the Business Press

Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (2011), selected chapters.

William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1956), selected chapters.

Thomas C. Cochran, "The Organization Man in Historical Perspective," *Pennsylvania History* 25:1 (Jan. 1958): 9-24.

Class 13 Summary and Review

Louis Galambos, "Recasting the Organizational Synthesis: Structure and Process in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries," *Business History Review* 79:1 (2005).

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