

**Economics 3310 (AMST 3230)**  
**American Economic History I**

**What you will study**

This course surveys economic issues in the history of the mainland British colonies, the American Revolution, and the United States to 1860. The economy of the South during 1815–60 is covered only briefly in this course (and in greater depth in Econ 3320).

**Learning objectives**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- (1) describe key economic events and trends during the periods studied, appealing to historical data as appropriate, and explain the significance of these events and trends in American economic development;
- (2) apply familiar economic tools to historical issues, adapting the tools as appropriate;
- (3) explain how interpretations of economic issues relevant to the periods studied have evolved, and evaluate competing interpretations of such issues;
- (4) construct interpretations of economic events and trends, by applying economic principles and appealing to historical evidence.

**Prerequisites**

Introductory micro- and macroeconomics (Econ 1110–1120, or equivalent).

**Readings**

The text for this course is *History of the American Economy*, by Gary Walton and Hugh Rockoff (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> edition). Apart from the text, you will be expected to complete a number of readings in journals and books, as shown on the reading list (distributed separately).

The reading list includes both required and optional readings. Required readings are marked with asterisks. Each of the required readings can be found in at least one of the following places: (1) two-hour reserve, Uris Library; (2) online, through the CU Library Catalog or as otherwise indicated on the reading list; (3) Blackboard, under *Course Reserves*.

You should complete required readings before the class meetings during which they are to be discussed.

**Grading**

The grade for this course will be based upon two prelims (30% each) and a final exam (40%). Exams are not cumulative.

On each of the three exams, the following sorts of materials are fair game: Required readings, whether or not covered in class; content of lectures, whether or not drawn from required readings; class handouts.

**Exam dates**

The two prelims are tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 26 and Tuesday, October 31, in class.  
The final exam will be given during finals week, in the time slot assigned by the university.

**Office hours**

Uris 428  
Tuesday, 10:15–11:45 a.m.  
Wednesday, 10:15–11:45 a.m.

**Academic integrity**

Cornell's Code of Academic Integrity applies to this course. You can find this code at:  
[cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm).

Videotaping, photographing, audiotaping, or otherwise making any picture or sound recording of an instructor is not permitted without the instructor's written consent. Failure to comply with this rule is a violation of Cornell's Campus Code of Conduct. Students are not authorized to replicate, reproduce, copy or transmit course materials, or "derivative" materials (including class notes), for sale or general distribution to others without the written consent of the faculty member, academic staff member, or class participant who is the original source of such materials.

**Accommodations for disabilities**

If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

## **Course Outline**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Modern and pre-modern economic growth
  - B. Before the colonies
- II. British Colonies
  - A. Settlers and land
  - B. Imperial policy and colonial government
  - C. Shipping and trade
  - D. The South
  - E. The North
  - F. Accumulation, growth, and distribution
  - G. Impact of the Navigation Acts
- III. From Revolution to Constitution; Federalists and Jeffersonians
  - A. The Revolution and the Articles of Confederation
  - B. The Constitution
  - C. Early federal policy
  - D. Embargo, war, trade, and growth
- IV. Antebellum Period (c1815–1860)
  - A. Overview: Growth, trade, and welfare
  - B. Land, population, and labor
  - C. Transportation: Roads, rivers, and railroads
  - D. Shipbuilders, shippers, merchants, and mariners
  - E. Northern and western agriculture
  - F. Southern agriculture
  - G. The industrial revolution
  - H. Labor and the early labor movement
  - I. Cities, regions, and interregional trade
  - J. Money and banking
  - K. Government and law