

California State University, Sacramento  
Department of Economics

**Economics 113-03: Economic History of the United States**  
Spring 2017

Section 3 Lecture: R 5:30-8:20 p.m. in Amador 217 (CRN# 35144)

Course Web Page: <http://www.csus.edu/sacct>

**Instructor:** Michael Dowell  
**Office:** Tahoe 3021  
**email:** [mdowell@csus.edu](mailto:mdowell@csus.edu)  
**Telephone:** (916) 278-7062

**Office Hours:** Monday 1:00-2:30 p.m.  
Thursday 1:00-2:30 p.m.  
and by appointment

**Please read this entire syllabus completely and thoroughly!!!**

I have devoted a significant amount of time and effort to developing it and you should consider it to be the ground rules. It is essentially a contract between you and me. "I didn't read the syllabus" is not an acceptable excuse for failing to abide by the rules and will not exempt you from the consequences.

**Catalog Description**

**ECON 113:** Consideration of the economic growth and development of the U.S. with emphasis on a theoretical analysis of the economic factors shaping the national destiny.

**Prerequisites**

The stated prerequisite is ECON 1A or ECON 104. I will expect you to have a reasonable understanding of concepts covered in these classes including, but not limited to, market and aggregate supply and demand, definitions and calculation of GDP, unemployment and inflation, economic growth, and the basics of monetary and fiscal policy. I will only very briefly review these concepts over the course of the semester as they become relevant, although I will post some tutorials and readings covering necessary economic concepts to the course web page. If you are weak on these concepts you should take full advantage of these resources. I will also expect that you have met the university admission requirements in math and are capable of utilizing simple arithmetic and algebra.

**Academic Rigor**

This is a demanding upper division university level class, for which, on successful completion, you will receive three credit hours (units of credit). The current edition of the University Catalog (available online) states:

As of July 1, 2011 federal law (Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 600.2 and 600.4) requires all accredited institutions to comply with the federal definition of the credit hour. For all CSU degree programs and courses bearing academic credit, the "credit hour" is defined as "the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates *not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester.*

This means two things. First, you must attend class and you must devote a minimum of six hours per week outside of class to reading and study for a minimum total of nine hours per week. (Weaker students will have to devote more time to do well.) Second, you must also pass course exams, demonstrating that you have actually learned something and have attained the course objectives (learning outcomes) stated below.

You should expect an average of approximately 50- 75 pages of reading each week with the precise amount varying depending on the difficulty of the material and topic being covered. Do not expect to receive a satisfactory grade unless you are willing to make the necessary commitment. You will be graded on your productivity, competency, and proficiency, not your effort, nor your intentions, nor any factor other than your performance on exams. This class is not graded on a curve and there will be no “extra credit” awarded.

### **Electronic Devices**

In an effort to reduce the multitasking which research shows at best reduces your productivity and at worst reduces your IQ, this course has a no-electronic-devices-during-lecture policy. Laptops should be closed. Phones, tablets, pads, pods, Apple or Google watches and other devices should be turned off and stowed in your pack or under your chair. **Students caught violating this policy will be assumed not to be fully engaged in the lecture and may be penalized with a 0.10 grade point reduction in their final grade for each offense.**

### **Scope and Objectives**

Economics 113 covers United States economic history and the development of the U.S. economy from colonial times to the twenty-first century. We will examine the evolution of the U.S. economy over this time period, addressing the forces that brought change and the roles that various institutions played. A key question will be what forces have driven the growth of the U.S. economy over time? By the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate

- a broad strokes (this does not mean superficial) understanding of the evolution of the United States economy from colonial times to the present;
- an understanding of how the tools of economics are used to enhance our understanding of historic events and also of how lessons from history can inform our study and understanding of current events;
- an understanding of factors that have contributed to the long-run growth of the U.S. economy and its evolution from a primary to predominantly secondary and ultimately tertiary sector economy;
- an understanding of some of the important debates in economic history including those surrounding slavery, immigration, the Great Depression and monetary issues;
- an understanding and appreciation for the importance of institutions in determining economic outcomes;
- a basic understanding of how data can be used to answer questions both from economics and from history;
- an ability to use and apply economic theories and models to explain historical events.

This course is not intended to offer a comprehensive coverage of U.S. economic history, but rather it focuses on various episodes and topics and hence is largely organized on a topical basis with the topics being addressed in approximately chronological order. We will, however, tend to jump around a bit in time as we tie various strands of economic history together.

### **Reading Materials**

The required book for the class, which is available in the campus bookstore, is *A New Economic view of American History: From Colonial Times to 1940*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, by Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, (W.W. Norton, 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0393963151).

In addition to the text there will be journal articles, working papers and book chapters posted on SacCT. Specific reading assignments will be made for each unit of the course and posted on SacCT as well. All assigned readings may be included on the exams. As part of the reading assignments for each topic there will be a paragraph that may provide some background information and will pose series of questions. These questions will serve to guide your reading and note-taking and help you prepare for the mid-terms and the final exam. Do not skip class and/or readings and instead use Google to find answers for the

questions as answers you find this way will likely be wrong, in part because on exams many questions will be qualified with phrases such as “as discussed in lecture” or “as argued in the assigned readings.” Take-home exams will also require specific substantive citations of assigned readings. For each unit I will list both assigned readings and additional references. *The additional references are optional and are not required reading* and are provided for those who might take a special interest in a topic or who miss class and may use them to help fill in the gaps from the missed lecture. For some, though not necessarily all topics, I will also provide you with a hard-copy outline which may include key figures, data or graphs. (These will not be posted to SacCT.)

Lectures will not simply be a rehash of assigned readings, but rather will weave together material from all the various assigned readings and at times may include a good deal of additional information. (Almost everything not from the assigned readings will be in the additional references tough.) In order to do well in the class you need to attend lectures on a regular basis, take careful notes, ask thoughtful questions and stay current with the reading assignments as there will be no single source you can consult at the last minute in an effort to squeak by with a minimal passing grade. Optimally, assigned readings should be completed before lecture and reread after lecture in conjunction with reviewing and rewriting your notes.

### **E-mail Communication and Etiquette**

The best way to contact me outside of class and office hours is via email. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during normal business hours. Keep in mind though that in an effort to reduce my own multi-tasking and its’ associated costs, I do not sit in front of a computer with internet access all day every day. I will send necessary class announcements by email using the SacSend messaging system or SacCT, so be sure your email on file with the University is correct, one you check regularly during the week, and that your inbox isn’t full.

You should view your e-mail as a professional business communication in which you are trying to impress me with your intelligence and ability to do well in my class, not as a text message to one of your friends or classmates. In the interest of achieving this goal, emails sent to me must meet the following requirements: Emails must have “Econ 113” in the subject line. Additionally, please address me in a more respectful manner than “Hey,” use proper grammar, capitalization and punctuation in your message and sign your emails with both your first and last names. Emails that don’t meet these minimum expectations will likely be discarded without being read. For further guidance on writing proper and effective emails to your professors, you should read the article at <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

#### **Attendance**

You are expected to regularly attend lectures and you are strongly encouraged to actively participate. While there is no explicit penalty for missing class, it is nonetheless the case that students who regularly skip class almost always do poorly. In the event you do miss class, you need to get notes from a classmate. Do not expect me to repeat the missed material for you either during office hours or through email. I also do not provide lecture notes to those who miss class. **You should exchange email addresses with at least two or three classmates so you have someone to contact for notes and information in the event you do miss a class.**

#### **Exams**

There will be two take-home midterm exams, each accounting for 32% of your course grade, and a comprehensive in class closed book essay final exam accounting for 36% of your course grade. Approximately half of the material on the final will be new material covered after the second midterm. Even though the final exam only accounts for 36% of your course grade, you must take the final and earn at least a solid D grade in order to pass the class. If you earn less than a solid D on the final or skip the final altogether, your course grade will be an F. Exams will be held/due according to the schedule on the course calendar below. There is no flexibility in these dates, so plan accordingly!

Each take-home midterm exam requires four to five double spaced pages of quality writing and will require specific citations of the assigned reading material. This means you absolutely must do the assigned readings and make notes on them on a regular basis as we proceed through the semester; if you wait until the last minute, there is no way you will be able to do all the necessary readings and write quality answers to the exam questions. You will submit your examinations to the Turnitin service for originality checking. The take-home midterms will be accepted late, but with a grade penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours or portion thereof which it is late.

On all exams, the emphasis of the questions will be on tying various topics and themes together in order to explain the historical development of the U.S. economy. Simply regurgitating what you have read or heard in lecture will not earn high marks. All answers will be graded on their content, clarity and quality of writing with each question being graded individually on a letter grade basis and the overall exam grade being a weighted average of the individual question grades. A grading rubric is posted on SacCT and gives specific characteristics typically associated with each letter grade. The intent of this grading system is that your course grade will indicate the degree of your attainment of course objectives consistent with CSUS defined grading marks, definitions of which are reproduced below for your reference:

### **Definition of CSUS Grading Marks**

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A	Exemplary achievement of the course objectives. In addition to being clearly and significantly above the requirements, work exhibited is of an independent, creative, contributory nature.
B	Superior achievement of the course objectives. The performance is clearly and significantly above the satisfactory fulfillment of course requirements.
C	Satisfactory achievement of the course objectives. The student is now prepared for advanced work or study.
D	Unsatisfactory achievement of course objectives, yet achievement of a sufficient proportion of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course unless required to do so by the academic department.
F	Unsatisfactory achievement of course objectives to an extent that the student must repeat the course to receive credit.

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### **Course Calendar**

The components of your course grade, weighting and due dates are listed on the Course Calendar given below. Note that the dates given are firm and will not be changed. If you have unavoidable conflicts with these dates you should not take the class!

Date	Activity or Assignment	Percent of Total Grade
3/2/17	First Take-home Midterm due at beginning of class (Exam will be released in SacCT at 5:00 p.m. on 2/24/17)	32%
4/13/17	Second Take-home Midterm due at beginning of class (Exam will be released in SacCT at 12:00 p.m. on 4/7/17)	32%
5/18/17	Final Exam (5:15 - 7:15 p.m.)	36%

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## Policies

### **Academic Honesty:**

Academic honesty is expected. ANY ACTS OF PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE IN THE COURSE PLUS REFERAL TO THE ADMINISTRATION WITH MY RECOMMENDATION YOU BE EXPELLED FROM THE UNIVERSITY. Please see the extended information on plagiarism posted to the course web page.

### **Drop Policy and WU Grades**

I strictly enforce Department and University drop policies posted at <http://www.csus.edu/econ/For%20Students/policies.html#1>. I will only assign WU grades to students who submit no work. Students who disappear after submitting any work will receive a grade of F.

### **Handouts and Return of Student Work**

In the event that there are handouts, I will only hand them out once. If you miss class, you will need to get this material from a classmate as I do not keep extra copies in my office after class is over. I also bring exams or other student work for return only once. After that, you must come to my office during office hours to retrieve it.

### **Talking in Class**

Please don't talk to each other during class. If you have questions, ask me, not the student sitting next to you. Talking in class is rude and distracting, both to me and to other students.

### **Punctuality**

Please do your best to arrive for class on time. If you must arrive late, please do so as inconspicuously as possible. Plan on staying for the entire class session as leaving early is rude and disruptive. If in some special circumstance you do need to depart early, let me know before class starts, though if you make a habit of leaving early, I will ask that you not return. You should also resist the urge to leave at the break. If you do this every night, you will miss 50% of the material. Of course, if you only learn 50% of the material, no matter how well you learn it, you will fail the class.

### **Recording of Lectures**

Audio and/or any kind of video recording of lectures is prohibited and is a violation of federal copyright laws unless you have a learning disability that requires such recording (see below).

### **Selling or Posting of Notes**

It is a violation of state law for you to either sell or publicly post lecture notes from my class. You are encouraged to freely (that means without monetary compensation) share notes amongst yourselves. You may not in any way profit financially from notes taken in my class though.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. They will determine your needs and provide you with the necessary forms to bring to me. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester. You must plan ahead for any necessary accommodations; do not expect me to provide accommodations if you wait until the last minute to tell me what you need. If your accommodation requires any kind of recording of lectures, you must not share, post, or in any other way make the recordings publicly available and must erase them once the semester is over.

## Tentative Course Outline

Below is a tentative course outline. On SacCT you will find an expanded version of this outline that includes an introductory paragraph to each section with a series of questions which should guide you in your reading and will also serve as a study guide for exams. The expanded outlines will also include specific reading assignments.

- I. Introductory Material**
  - A. Introduction to Economic History
  - B. Key Terminology, Methods and Basic Tools; Long Run Trends in U.S. Economic History and Brief Overview of the Key Questions.
- II. Early Roots: From the Colonial Period Through Revolution**
  - A. The Colonial Heritage and American Success: Luck, Geography or Institutions?
  - B. The Role of Founding Choices in American Success
- III. The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century I: Transportation, Agricultural, Industrial and Market Revolutions**
  - A. Transportation: Turnpikes, Canals and Railroads
  - B. Agriculture: Expansion, Productivity Gains, Mechanization and Biology
  - C. Technology and Industrialization
  - D. Market Revolution
- IV. The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century II: Money, Banking and Financial Institutions**
  - A. Early Monetary Issues and The Bank Wars
  - B. The Origins of American Private State Banking
  - C. The National Bank Act: A Design for Instability?
  - D. The Gold Standard and Monetary Questions after the Civil War
- V. Race and the South since the Civil War**
  - A. Slavery as an Economic System and its Legacy in the South
  - B. Southern Backwardness after the Civil War and beyond
  - C. Closing the Regional Gap
  - D. Race Issues since the Civil War
- VI. Immigration Then and Now**
  - A. Costs and Benefits of Immigration: Theory and Historical Evidence
  - B. Immigration Today: Is it Different from Earlier Immigration?
- VII. The Farm Problem and Agricultural Policy**
  - A. Farm Protest and Policy since 1870
- VIII. Macroeconomic History from the Founding of the Fed to Today**
  - A. The Crisis of 1907 and the Founding of the Fed; The Fed's Early Years
  - B. The Great Depression: Causes and Consequences
  - D. The Great Inflation and the Great Moderation; The Productivity Slowdown (and Rebound?)
  - E. The Great Recession: Causes and Consequences Evaluated in Light of the Great Depression
- IX. Issues of the Twentieth Century and Beyond (2 lectures)**
  - A. Changes in Inequality: The Roles of Education and Globalization
  - B. An Eye to the Future: Will Future U.S. Economic Growth Match that of the Past?