

**From Safety to Where? Economic History of the United States II
(HIUS 141/Econ 158b UC/San Diego Spring 2006)**

Lecture: TTh 8-9.20am, Center Hall 115
Office Hours: Grove Caffé, TTh 9.30-10.30ish
and by appointment

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The Course:

HIUS 141/Econ 158b covers the American economy and its role in American life from approximately the end of World War One to the present day. We will focus on the growth and maintenance of this economy, and the role (or lack thereof) of ideology and public policy. We will also study the cultural and social consequences of this economy. Students are not expected to have training in economics, statistics, or history, although elements of all three will be used in class and in the readings; students *are* expected to have skills in writing and reading.

What does it cost to create and maintain an artificial ownership class?

Who pays?

Who benefits?

What happens when that class stops being useful?

Joan Didion

Readings:

The following books are available at the University Bookstore in the Price Center:
(*Rise and Fall*) Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds. *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*.

(*Decline*) Michael A. Bernstein and David E. Adler, eds. *Understanding American Economic Decline*

HIUS 141/Econ 158b Course Reader, available at Soft Reserves.

Copies of the textbooks and of the course reader will be placed on reserve at the Geisel Library.

Requirements and Recommendations:

There will be two lectures per week. Students should complete the readings by the beginning of each lecture. Students are required to write two essays, each at least four pages long, due *in section* during the week listed in the schedule. Essays must be typed and double-spaced, with all quoted material cited. I strongly recommend that you submit a draft of your essay to your section leader and get feedback before you turn in your final draft.

There will be one midterm and one final examination, both of which will consist of short objective questions and longer essay questions. A curve will be used for grading the exams, however, the structure of this curve has not been determined.

The essays and exams will be graded on a letter scale and be weighted as follows: **15% First Essay, 25% Midterm, 20% Second Essay, and 40% Final.** (The final exam will be comprehensive but slightly weighted towards material after the midterm.) Students must complete all assignments to receive a final grade in this class.

In addition to the guest lecture in this class, Dr. Stanley Engerman will be giving a public lecture at 7.30pm on April 25. There will be an extra-credit assignment for attendees at this lecture; details, deadline, and value to be announced.

In accordance with UCSD policy, please note that the grade “A” is assigned to *outstanding* work only. Showing up on a semi-regular basis and answering questions adequately, by definition, gives you a C. Doing less than that gets you a D. Plan your quarter accordingly.

Sections:

Sections are not required, although they are strongly recommended. Section leaders will guide students through the production of two essay assignments and assist them in preparing for the midterm and final exam. Section meetings will begin in the second week. As of this writing, the section leaders, meeting times, and contact information are:

James Field
W 1-1.50pm H&SS 1315
W 3-3.50pm Sequoyah 147
Office hours W 2-2.50pm
H&SS 2306

Jeff Lin
Th 9.30-10.20am Center Hall 217B
Another section TBA
jelin@ucsd.edu
Office at Sequoyah 122
Dept. of Economics, Mail Code 0534
Office hours TBA

Grade Appeals and Make-Up Examinations:

Students who wish to appeal the grading of examinations and/or essays may do so *in writing* within two weeks of the return of the examination or essay. This should include an explanation of the specific reasons why the appeal is being made. Make-up examinations will not be offered except under extraordinary circumstances or medical emergencies. Such circumstances will need to be documented appropriately by a physician.

First Essay Question (due in section, 4th week):

To what extent was the New Deal an attempt from above to rationalize modern capitalism, and to what extent was it driven from below as an attempt to create social justice in American life? This is an *argumentative* and *interpretive* essay, and you will have to comprehend and use several of the arguments presented by the authors (and lecturer) in this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE **(subject to minor revision)**

- 4 Apr Methods of History and Economics; This Modern World;
reading: *Decline*, Foreword, "Understanding American Economic
Decline"; *Rise and Fall*, Introduction
- 6 Apr (1919) Hydrocarbon Man; reading: Yergin, *The Prize*
- 11 Apr (1922) Big Machines Regnant; reading: *Rise and Fall*, "Industrial
Conflict and the Coming of the New Deal"; "The 'Labor Question'"
- 13 Apr (1929) The Great Depression (causes and interpretations);
reading: *Rise and Fall*, "Why the Great Depression Was Great"
- 18 Apr (1933) The New Deal (Shock to the System);
reading: *Regulating the Poor*
- 20 Apr (1936) The New Deal (Building the Welfare State); reading:
Rise and Fall, "The New Deal and the Idea of the State"; *Decline*,
"Financial Institutions and Contemporary Economic Performance"
- 25 Apr Guest Lecture (Dr. Stanley Engerman)
- 27 Apr (1939) Industrial Agriculture;
reading: McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*
- First essay due in section this week**
- 2 May (1943) Wartime Economics; reading: *Rise and Fall*,
"From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining"
- 4 May **Midterm Exam**
- 9 May (1946) The Strike Wave and After: Labor in the Cold War;
reading: *Decline*, "Industries, Trade, and Wages"
- 11 May (1954) The Metropolitan-Military Complex; reading: Lotchin,
Fortress California; *Decline*, "Creating and Extracting Value"
- 16 May (1964) Science in the Cold War; reading: Dennis, "'Our First Line of
Defense'"; *Decline*, "Chickens Come Home to Roost"
- 18 May (1972) End of the Liberal Consensus; reading: *Rise and Fall*, "Was the
Great Society a Lost Opportunity?"; "The Rise of the 'Silent Majority'"
- 23 May (1983) Blowout: the 1980s; reading: *Decline*, "Right-wing Economics
in the 1980s"; "The New Economic Stagnation"
- 25 May Guest Lecture (Dr. Michael Bernstein); reading: *Decline*, "American
Economics and the American Economy"

- 30 May (1989) *The Spectacle-Commodity Economy*; reading: Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*; *Decline*, "The New Economic Stagnation"
- 1 June (1997) "We Throw a Lot of Product at the Problem"; reading: Schlosser, "Reefer Madness"

Second essay due in section this week

- 6 June (2001) *Hypereconomics: Enron*; reading: *Decline*, "The Changing Contours of Discrimination"; *Rise and Fall*, "The Changing Shape of Power"
- 8 June (2006) *Any Frontier, Any Hemisphere*; reading: *Decline*, "A Comparative Analysis of the Sources"; "Troubled Times"

Final Exam Tuesday 13 June 8am-11am

Things that can't last forever, don't.

Paul Krugman