This is a class in American Economic History. This semester we will focus on the period from the Civil War through World War II: 1860 to 1950. The texts for the course are:


In addition to the text there will be readings from other books and professional journal articles. The readings are available on the course website on ELMS.

My experience over the last few years suggests that students who do the reading, and particularly students who do the reading before the class the reading is assigned for, do much better in the class than students who simply attend the lectures. I expect that you to do roughly one hour of reading for every hour of class time, about 2½ hours per week. A chapter in Hughes and Cain takes at most an hour to read, as does a chapter in Atack and Passell. I have assigned 13 chapters in Hughes and Cain and 11 chapters in Atack and Passell, which is about 24 hours of reading. I have also assigned 7 - 10 articles from professional journals, which will take another hour a piece, for a total of about 35 hours of reading outside of class.

Grades in the class will be based on a set of exams: four quizzes, a midterm, and a final.

Over the course of the semester I will give six quizzes. The quiz questions will be both prospective and retrospective, that is, they will cover material that you are supposed to have read but we have not covered in class, and material that we have covered in class. Quizzes will be every other Wednesday: 2/8, 2/22, 3/7, 4/4, 4/18, and 5/2. I will count the best four quizzes toward your final grade. There will be no make-ups on the quizzes. Quiz questions will be very short answer essays and multiple choice. The midterm and final will be a combination of essay questions and multiple choice questions (about three-quarters of the weight will be on the essays).

The midterm will be on March 14 and the final exam will be on the day and time scheduled by the University: Wednesday, May 16, 1:30-3:30.

Weights on the exams are:

- **Quizzes:** 20%
- **Midterm:** 35%
- **Final:** 45%
Readings for the week of:

1/30  The Civil War and its aftermath
      Hughes, ch. 13
      Atack, ch. 13

2/6   The Economics of Size

2/13  Manufacturing
      Hughes, 17 & 18
      Atack, ch. 17
      Atack, Size, Explorations, 1986

2/20  Transportation
      Hughes ch. 14
      Atack, ch. 16
      Fogel, RR or Social Savings

2/27  Banking
      Hughes, ch. 19 and 20
      Atack, ch. 18
      Gold Standard
      Rockoff, “Wizard of Oz”

3/5   More Finance and Capital
      Hughes, ch. 19 & 20
      Atack, ch. 18
      Merger Movement
      Lamoreaux, Merger Movement
      Grandy, Chartermongering
      Hughes, ch. 25

3/12  Midterm exam, Wednesday March 15

3/19  Spring Break

3/26  Demography
      Hughes, ch. 16

4/2   Agriculture
      Hughes, ch. 15
      Atack, ch. 14 and 15
4/9  Government Regulation
     The ICC, Sherman Act, and
     The Federal Reserve Act
     Atack, ch. 20

4/16  Great Contraction
     Hughes, ch. 24
     Atack, ch 21
     Eichengreen, “Great Slump Revisited”

4/23  New Deal
     Hughes, ch. 25
     Atack, ch. 22, 23
     Wallis, “Why 1933”

4/30  World War II
     Hughes, ch. 26 and 27

5/7   Review

5/16  Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 Final exam in class room