



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

Department of Economics

ECON-319.01  
U.S. Economic History

Fall 2008  
Larry Sawers

*August 23*

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Office hours: Tuesdays 12:00–4:00. You might want to check with me by email to make sure I will be in my office at that time. A good time to talk to me is at the break or after class, either in the classroom or we can return to my office.

***Syllabus***

***Objectives:*** The course will investigate three fundamental events in the country's history that have had profound implications for today's economy: First, the creation of the Colonial economy and the end of the Colonial era during the War of Independence; second, the creation of the plantation economy in the South, the collapse of the system of slavery during the Civil War, and the recreation of the Southern economy in the antebellum period; and third, the Great Depression and the shadow it has cast over the post World War II economy.

**Texts:**

Gary Walton and Hugh Rockoff, *History of the American Economy*, Tenth Edition 2005, Thompson-Southwestern. ISBN: 0-324-25969-7

Peter Temin, *Lessons from the Great Depression*, MIT Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-262-70044-1

Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War*, Louisiana State University Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-807-12098-7

**Assignments:**

1. ***The Colonial Economy and the War of Independence*** (August 27, September 3 and 10)

Walton and Rockoff, Chapters 2–8, pages 24–161.

Marc Egnal and Joseph A. Ernst, (1972) “An economic interpretation of the American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series **29** (1), 3–32.

David J. Loschky, (1973) “Studies of the Navigation Acts: New Economic Non-History?” *Economic History Review* New Series **26** (4), 689–691.

Larry Sawers, (1992) “The Navigation Acts revisited,” *Economic History Review* **45** (2), 262–284. [JSTOR]

*Further Reading:*

Marc Egnal, (1980) “The Origins of the Revolution in Virginia: A Reinterpretation,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series **37** (3), 401–428.

Marc Egnal, (1975) “The Economic Development of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1720 to 1775,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series **32** (2), 191–222.

**First Exam September 17****2. *The Antebellum Southern Economy and the Civil War*** (September 24, October 1 and 8)

Walton and Rockoff, Chapter 13, pages 241–260.

Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, (1977) “Explaining the relative efficiency of slave agriculture in the antebellum South,” *American Economic Review* **67** (3), 275–296.

Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, Chapters 1–4. (HC107.A13 W68)

James L. Huston (1999) “Property Rights in Slavery and the Coming of the Civil War,” *Journal of Southern History* **65** (2), 249–286.

*Further Reading:*

Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, (1974) “The anatomy of exploitation,” *Time on the cross*, Chapter 4, New York: Norton.

I wrote this nifty article. If you are curious about what I do in my spare time, you can read it, but no questions on the exams will be based on the article: (2003) “U.S. Army Procurement of Draft and Pack Animals in the Civil War Era,” *Eastern Economic Journal*, **29** (1), 59–67.

**3. *The Postbellum Southern Economy*** (October 15, 22, and 29)

Walton and Rockoff, Chapter 14, pages 264–284.

Comments by Gavin Wright, Harold Woodman, and Peter Coclanis on Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, (2001) “*One Kind of Freedom* Revisited,” Special Issue of *Explorations in Economic History* **38**, 40–63.

Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South*, chapters 1–4 and pages 156–177.

Larry Sawers, (2005) “The Mule, the South, and Economic Progress,” *Social Science History*, **28** (4), 667–690. Skim.

**Third Exam October 29****4. *Crash and Depression*** (November 5, 12, 19, December 3)

Walton and Rockoff, Chapters 21–25, pages 416–516.

Peter Temin, *Lessons from the Great Depression*, especially Chapters 1 and 2.

Christina Romer, (1993) “The nation in depression,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7 (2), 19–39.

Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War*, Chapters 7–8 to page 264.

Gavin Wright, (1999) “The Civil Rights Revolution as Economic History,” *Journal of Economic History* 59 (2), 267–289.

### **Final Examination December 15**

#### **Other Information**

I will be using Blackboard to send you email messages and to post assigned readings, study guides, practice questions, and dormwork assignments. I will not keep a separate email roster with your actual email addresses, but I will email you through Blackboard, which sends your messages to your official AU email address. You will not get my messages unless you either check your AU email account regularly or have your mail forwarded. Go to [my.american.edu/technology](http://my.american.edu/technology) and have your email forwarded from your official AU email address to whatever gmail, hotmail, or yahoo address you currently use.

Assigned articles can be found on line through JSTOR on the university library’s web site. For your convenience, I will also put links to these articles in Blackboard. I suggest you download these articles to your hard drive or a memory stick. The newest version of Adobe Reader (8), available from [my.american.edu/technology](http://my.american.edu/technology), allows you to search pdf documents for words or phrases using the Edit/Search facility. This may be useful in preparing for exams.

Receiving or giving help to other students during an examination is a breach of academic integrity. You may not copy answers from other students’ exams or from any written materials, tamper with the exam after it has been returned to you, or assist other students to cheat, including letting them copy your answers. All of these actions will be reported to the dean of the college. Penalties can include a failing grade in the course with the reason noted on your transcript and dismissal from the university. You are encouraged to study together in preparing for the exams. If English is not your first language, you may use a translation dictionary during the exams after I have examined it.