SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
Department of History

History 24
Spring 2010
Monday, 1:15-4:00
Trotter 215
Office hours
W 9-10 am, 1.30-4 pm; F 2-4 pm

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TRANSITIONS TO CAPITALISM

Capitalism, currently the globally dominant form of economic organization, was born in early modern Europe and its empires. This course analyzes the protracted, uneven, and contested emergence of the new economic and social order. Much of the required reading focuses on Britain, the first nation to industrialize, but readings and reports will incorporate the experiences of other countries and areas.

Each student should purchase the following paperbacks (a copy of each is also on Reserve; Honors Reserve for History 117 in the case of Transitions to Capitalism):

Charles More, Understanding the Industrial Revolution (2000) (also ebrary)

Other readings will be in electronic reserves, accessed through Blackboard.

The course will be conducted as a colloquium, so all students must participate actively and in an informed manner in class discussions. A substantial part of each student’s grade will be determined by the quality of class participation. The other requirements for the course are:

1. Two position papers of about 5-7 pages (1500-2000 words). These essays, based on additional reading, will respond to questions regarding class topics and are intended to help deepen class discussions. One paper will be based on a topic discussed in weeks 4-7, the other on a topic considered during weeks 10-13. Each paper is due at the beginning of the class in which the topic will be discussed. Essay topics will be chosen in consultation with me.

2. Leading part of two discussions in weeks 4 through 13. This assignment does not involve additional reading but careful attention, based on class readings, to the issue to be discussed. You will post questions for the class to consider no later than 1.15 pm on the Sunday prior to each class meeting that you will help conduct.

3. A final paper, on a subject chosen in consultation with the instructor, of about 15 pages (4500 words), due at 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 15 (the final day of final examinations). Oral reports based on these papers will be presented in class on April 26. Paper topics, on subjects not considered in class, must have my approval by Friday, 4 April.
I do not determine final grades according to a strict mathematical formula but according to the trend of grades on papers and class participation so that improvement is properly rewarded.

This course, like any other, is premised on mutual respect and honesty. Thus I expect that the work you submit is your own. Plagiarism will be severely penalized: any work containing plagiarized material will be granted the grade of no credit and may subject you to prosecution before the CJC. In order to clarify the issue of academic honesty, I will distribute copies of the History Department's guidelines. When in doubt, check with me.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

1. **(Jan. 18)** Introduction

2. **(Jan. 25)** What Is Capitalism? What is Economic Growth?
   Reading:
   Suggested:
   Robert C. Allen, “Progress and poverty in early modern Europe” (2003) (Blackboard)

3. **(Feb. 1)** Agriculture: Help or Hindrance to Economic Development?
   Reading:
   4. Edgar Melton, “*Gutsherrschaft* in East Elbian Germany and Livonia, 1500-1800” (1988) (Blackboard)

4. **(Feb. 8)** Institutions: Effects on Economic Development
   Reading in this order:
5. Additional assigned article from “Guilds” list posted on Blackboard

5. (Feb. 15) Structures of Industrial Production
Reading:
   or
   Carlo Marco Belfanti, “Rural manufactures and rural proto-industries in the ‘Italy of the Cities’ from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century” (1993) (Blackboard)

Reading (all on Blackboard):

7. (Mar. 1) Slavery, the Atlantic, and European Economic Development
Reading:
1. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy*

**SPRING VACATION**

8. (Mar. 15) Bubbles and Manias
Reading:
1. Peter Garber, “Famous First Bubbles” (1990) (Blackboard)
3. Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania* (2007) (General Reserve), Introduction, chap. 1, Epilogue, and one other chapter as assigned
9. (Mar. 22) Why did the Netherlands Not Industrialize First?  
Reading:  
2. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, chaps. 1, 13, 14 (pp. 1-5, 665-722) (1997) (Blackboard; 3 parts)  

Reading:  

Friday, April 2: deadline for getting my approval for final paper topics (see # 3 above)

Reading:  
1. More, *Understanding the Industrial Revolution*, chaps. 2-6

12. (Apr. 12) British and Continental Industrializations: Comparisons  
Reading:  

13. (Apr. 19) What difference did the Industrial Revolution make?  
Reading:  

14. (Apr. 26) Reports
May 15      FINAL ESSAY DUE, 5 p.m.