

# ECON-273: Topics in Development

## The Political Economy of Early America

**Instructor:** Fernando Arteaga

**TA:** Rodrigo Morales Mendoza

**Dates** TR 10:15-11:45 <sup>1</sup>

**Location:** STIT B21

### 1. Course overview

This course will study the political economy of Early America, from the British Settlement to c. 1820. In particular, we will explore the mechanisms behind the economic growth of the British colonies, the economic forces behind the Revolution, the consequences of the Revolution, the political economy of the constitutional convention and ratification, the role of SCOTUS in creating a national market, and the opposing Hamilton-Jefferson views of an American economy. We will close by looking at how the Early Republic transitions into the Age of Jackson.

Early America is a fascinating and rich historical period, and we will need to skip many issues of interest. Nevertheless, we hope to provide you with a good overview of how a group of small peripheral colonies created an institutional arrangement that allowed them to become the largest economy in the world in less than two centuries.

### 2. Instructors

A few words about us. Fernando (FA) is originally from Mexico. He received a B.Sc. in Economics from UNAM in Mexico City, Mexico. He got his Ph.D. in Economics from the George Mason University. His research focuses on economic history, the economics of institutions, and development economics. Rodrigo Morales Mendoza (RMM) is a rising fourth year PhD student in Economics at UPenn. He is originally from Mexico City. His research interests include the mathematical tools and machine learning environments applied to macroeconomic questions.

The best way to reach is via email [arteaga@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:arteaga@sas.upenn.edu). I usually answer questions via email within half a day. Besides, our TA ([rodmo@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:rodmo@sas.upenn.edu)) can also answer your questions.

Office hours:

FA: Tuesday 12:00-13:30, PCPSE Room 533

RMM: TBA.

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<sup>1</sup>We will start online for the first two weeks. Please be attentive of the University's most recent guidelines, as this may change at any point in time during the semester.

### 3. Textbook

We will use *The American Republic: Primary Sources*, edited by Bruce Frohnen. The book is free at <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/frohen-the-american-republic-primary-sources> in pdf and html format. You can also purchase a kindle or a physical copy at Amazon if you prefer any of those formats.

### 4. Class structure

In anticipation of unexpected contingencies, the course is organized to minimize potential disruptions in the transition between virtual and in-person formats. As of today (January 1st), the course will begin online and move to an in-person format on January 25. However, changes may occur at any time.

The class will be organized around four components:

- i) Two *asynchronous* recorded administrative lectures where we will describe the rules we will follow and introduce the course.
- ii) 16 in-person lecture sessions starting in January 25, and two *asynchronous* recorded lectures of approximately 100 minutes for the prior week. If in-persons classes get suspended, we will replace them with asynchronous recorded lectures and synchronous virtual Q&A Sessions.
- iii) Five debate sessions, where we will discuss specific readings and your reading reports. If in-persons classes get suspended, we will replace them with synchronous virtual Q&A Sessions.
- iv) Two review sessions, where we will summarize what we have covered in the lectures in preparation for the midterm and final exams. If in-persons classes get suspended, we will replace the review sessions with synchronous virtual Q&A Sessions, and the exams may be of a take-home format.

In addition, we will hold office hours. Details will be announced via Canvas.

#### 4.1. Lectures

The tentative dates and contents of each lecture are:

- **Lecture 0, posted on January 13:** Administrative [Recorded]
- **Lecture 1, posted on January 13:** Introduction [Recorded]
- **Lecture 2, posted on January 18:** Pre-Columbian North America [Recorded]
- **Lecture 3 & 4, on January 25 & 27:** The Atlantic World
- **Lecture 5 & 6, on February 1 & 8:** The Regional Economies

- **Lecture 7 & 8, on February 10 & 15:** Slavery and the American Colonization
- **Lecture 9 & 10, on February 22 & 24:** The Road to Independence: Imperial Reforms and Constitutional Conflicts
- **Lecture 11 & 12, on March 1 & 22:** The Economics of the Revolution
- **Lecture 13 & 14, on March 29 & 31:** The Political Economy of the Constitution
- **Lecture 15 & 16 , on April 5 & 12:** Hamilton's Economic Program
- **Lecture 17 & 18, on April 14 & 19:** John Marshall and the U.S. economy

#### 4.2. Debate Sessions

There will be five debate sessions, where the class will discuss the reading for that day. The meeting times and contents of each recitation are:

- **Debate 1, February 3:** A Colony Open to All?
- **Debate 2, February 17:** American Freedom, American Slavery.
- **Debate 3, March 3:** London vs. Philadelphia.
- **Debate 4, March 24:** Thomas Jefferson vs. Alexander Hamilton.
- **Debate 5, April 7:** John Marshall vs. James Madison.

#### 4.3. Exam & Review sessions

There will be two open-book exams, and two review sessions before each. The dates are the following:

- **First Midterm Review session, March 15.**
- **First Midterm, March 17.**
- **Second Review session, April 21.**
- **Second Exam, April 26**

If you have a problem with the dates of the midterms, please let me know before January 30. After January 30, we will NOT accommodate your requests. Note that travel, job interviews, or non-emergency family matters are NOT acceptable reasons to re-arrange the exam.

## 5. Course requirements and grades

The evaluation of this class will be based on three items: reading reports on the readings, class participation, and two exams.

### 5.1. Reading reports on the debates

There are five written reading reports due by 10.15 am EST on the day listed below based on your reading of original documents listed in Section 8. **You will deliver two copies of the written report: a physical copy, and a digital one.** The physical copy will be due by the beginning the class. The digital copy should be delivered through Canvas and in a PDF format. Please, **DO NOT** send the report in a format different than pdf or by email. Also, note that we will be *strict* in enforcing that late reports will get a zero grade unless covered by a University-wide policy exemption.

The dates and content of the reading reports are:

- **Reading report 1, February 3:** Debate 1: A Colony Open to All?
- **Reading report 2, February 17:** Debate 2: American Freedom, American Slavery.
- **Reading report 3, March 3:** Debate 3: London vs. Philadelphia.
- **Reading report 4, March 24:** Debate 4: Thomas Jefferson vs. Alexander Hamilton.
- **Reading report 5, April 7:** Debate 5: John Marshall vs. James Madison.

We will grade each report out of ten points, for a total of 50 points. We will post in Canvas an example of a written report to have a guideline on how to prepare it and a rubric.

Warning: Note that, since we will be reading original documents, some of the language in them is considered, with good reason, highly offensive today. However, it is essential to understand our past to read the original version of what was said at the time.

### 5.2. Class participation

We expect you to participate in the debate sessions discussing the original documents (offering comments, asking questions about them etc.). You can also participate in the lecture sessions. Class participation will be graded over 20 points.

### 5.3. Exam

There will be two open-book midterms. They will be graded over a 15 points base each. Each midterm will consist of essay and short questions. As we get closer to the exam, we will present some examples of each type of questions.

## 6. Grading standards

Students taking the course for a letter grade will receive grades from A through D or an F. Students that take the class on a Pass/Fail basis need at least a D+ to pass the class. Poor performance is not a valid reason for an incomplete (I). An incomplete is given only under exceptional circumstances and requires the satisfactory completion of a substantial part of the course. Any incomplete must be arranged **before** April 10.

The grade will be equal:

Points = total grade in written reports + class participation + midterm + final exam

The mapping of points into letter grades is given by:

| Points Achieved | Letter Grade | Points Achieved | Letter Grade |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 96 - 100        | A +          | 72 - 75.75      | C +          |
| 92 - 95.75      | A            | 68 - 71.75      | C            |
| 88 - 91.75      | A -          | 64 - 67.75      | C -          |
| 84 - 87.75      | B +          | 60 - 63.75      | D +          |
| 80 - 83.75      | B            | 56 - 59.75      | D            |
| 76 - 79.75      | B -          | less than 56    | NP           |

## 7. Common policies

Finally, note that all common set of policies for courses taught in the department of economics apply unless superseded by the rules above. You can find such policies at <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/undergraduate/course-information/course-policies>.

## 8. Debates on Political Economy: Original documents

- Debate 1: A Colony Open to All?
  1. *John Winthrop*, A Model of Christian Charity.  
[https://www.winthropsociety.com/doc\\_charity.php](https://www.winthropsociety.com/doc_charity.php)
  2. Charter of Liberties and Frame of Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America, May 5, 1682.  
*The American Republic*, pp. 23-30.
- Debate 2: American Freedom, American Slavery.
  1. Letter from a Planter, The Gentleman's Magazine Vol 59 Jan-June, April 1789.  
<http://https://www.bl.uk/learning/images/makeanimpact/transcript9003.html>
  2. A Minute Against Slavery, Addressed to Germantown Monthly Meeting, 1688.  
[http://www.meetinghouse.info/uploads/1/9/4/1/19410913/a\\_minute\\_against\\_slavery.pdf](http://www.meetinghouse.info/uploads/1/9/4/1/19410913/a_minute_against_slavery.pdf)
- Debate 3: London vs. Philadelphia.
  1. *Thomas Whately*, The Regulations Lately Made.  
<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-regulations-lately-made/>
  2. Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress.  
*The American Republic*, pp. 154-156.
- Debate 4: Thomas Jefferson vs. Alexander Hamilton.
  1. *Thomas Jefferson*, Opinion against the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United States.
  2. *Alexander Hamilton*, Opinion as the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United States.  
*The American Republic*, pp. 574-590.
- Debate 5: John Marshall vs. James Madison.
  1. *John Marshall*, McCulloch v. Maryland, 17 U.S. 316 (1819).  
<https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/85272/mculloch-v-state-of-maryland/>
  2. *James Madison*, Veto Message, March 3, 1817.  
*The American Republic*, pp. 501-502.