

ECON-4550: The Political Economy of Early America

Fall 2024

Instructors: Fernando Arteaga

TA: Zhuoqun Hao

Dates MW 8:30-10:00

Location: MCNB 286-7

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 examining 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. However, 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 is originally from Mexico. He received a B.Sc. in Economics from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He got his Ph.D. in Economics from George Mason University. His research interests focus on economic history, the economics of institutions, and development economics. He has written on the colonial and pre-colonial origins of nation-state building in the Americas. Zhuoqun Hao is an economics PhD student at Penn.

The best way to reach us is via electronic mail: arteaga@upenn.edu & zhuoqunh@sas.upenn.edu. I usually answer questions via email within half a day. I have the following office hours:

FA: Monday 10:00-12:00, PCPSE Room 533

ZH: TBA

3. Textbook

We don't have a proper textbook for the class. All readings are readily available on the internet. However, you may find it helpful to acquire *The American Republic: Primary Sources*, edited by Bruce Frohnen. The book is also free at <https://oll.libertyfund.org> in pdf and html format. You can also purchase a Kindle or a physical copy at Amazon if you prefer any of those formats. The book reunites some (not all) of the readings that we will discuss in class.

4. Class structure

The class will be organized around three components:

- i) 19 in-person lecture sessions starting August 30.
- ii) Five debate sessions, where we will discuss specific readings and your reading reports.
- iii) Two review sessions, where we will summarize what we have covered in the lectures in preparation for the midterm and final exams.

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

4.1. Lectures

The tentative dates and contents of each lecture are as follows:

- **Lecture 1, August 28:** Administrative Session
- **Lecture 2, September 4:** Pre-Columbian North America
- **Lecture 3 & 4, September 9 & September 11 :** The Atlantic World
- **Lecture 5 & 6, September 18 & September 23 :** The Regional Economies
- **Lecture 7 & 8, on September 25 & September 30 :** Slavery and American Colonization
- **Lecture 9 & 10 , on October 7 & October 09:** The Road to Independence: Imperial Reforms & Constitutional Conflicts.
- **Lecture 11 & 12, on October 21 % 23 :** The Economics of the Revolution
- **Lecture 13 & 14, on October 30 & November 4:** The Political Economy of the Constitution
- **Lecture 15 & 16 , on November 6 & November 11:** Hamilton's Economic Program
- **Lecture 17 & 18 , on November 18 & November 20:** John Marshall and the U.S. economy
- **Lecture 19, on November 25:** Jeffersonian Alternatives

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, September 16:** A Colony Open to All?
- **Debate 2, October 2:** American Freedom, American Slavery.
- **Debate 3, October 28:** London vs. Philadelphia.
- **Debate 4, November 13:** Thomas Jefferson vs. Alexander Hamilton.
- **Debate 5, December 02:** John Marshall vs. James Madison.

4.3. Exam & Review sessions

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

- **First Midterm Review session, October 14.**
- **First Midterm, October 16.**
- **Second Review session, December 04.**
- **Second Exam, December 09.**

If you have a problem with the midterm dates, please let me know before September 10. After September 10, I will NOT accommodate your requests. Note that travel, job interviews, or non-emergency family matters are NOT acceptable reasons to rearrange 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

Five written reading reports are due by 8:30 am EST on the day listed below based on your reading of the articles listed in Section 8. You will submit a digital copy delivered through Canvas in 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:

- **Debate 1, September 16:** A Colony Open to All?
- **Debate 2, October 2:** American Freedom, American Slavery.
- **Debate 3, October 28:** London vs. Philadelphia.
- **Debate 4, November 13:** Thomas Jefferson vs. Alexander Hamilton.
- **Debate 5, December 02:** John Marshall vs. James Madison.

We will grade each report out of five points for a total of 25 points. We will post an example of a written report in Canvas to have a guideline on how to prepare it.

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 by reading 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 25 points.

We will have an online text participation forum through Ed Discussion. Ed Discussion is a course management tool that you may find helpful in being in touch with me or our TA. One of its great benefits is that it allows for class anonymity. So, for example, in the lectures and debate sessions, you can participate in real-time by typing questions if you prefer. The use of this software is not required. It is just another tool that you may use if you desire. The course's main communication channel will remain Canvas and the in-person classes.

5.3. Midterms

There will be two closed-book midterms. They will be graded over 25 points base each. Each midterm will consist of three to four open-ended questions. As we approach the exam, we will present some examples.

6. Grading standards

Students taking the course for a letter grade will receive grades A through D or F. Students taking 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). Incomplete is given only under exceptional circumstances and requires satisfactory completion of a substantial part of the course. Any incomplete must be arranged **before** December 1.

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
97 - 100	A +	72 - 75.75	C +
93 - 96.75	A	68 - 71.75	C
88 - 92.75	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 sets 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
 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
- 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.