

**The Old History of Capitalism**  
HIST/CRES 17704  
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:20 PM  
The University of Chicago—Winter 2019

Professor Destin Jenkins  
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Office Hours: Tuesday 4-6 PM  
Harper East Tower, Room 687

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What is the relationship between race and capitalism? This course introduces students to the concept of “racial capitalism,” which rejects treatments of race as external to a purely economic project and counters the idea that racism is an externality, cultural overflow, or aberration from the so-called real workings of capitalism. Spanning the colonization of North America to the era of mass incarceration, topics include the slave trade, indigenous dispossession, antebellum slavery, the Mexican-American War, “new imperialism,” the racial welfare state, and the war on drugs. This class neither presumes a background in economics, nor previous coursework in history. Open to 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> year students.

There will be one lecture per week and a weekly discussion section that is required of all students. Please note that weekly *lecture* will be held in Stuart Hall, room 102. Weekly *sections* will be held during the same class time with some students meeting in Cobb Lecture Hall, room 403, and others meeting in the Social Science Research Building, room 404.

### **Grades and Expectations**

#### *30%: Section Participation.*

Students will be expected to attend all class sessions. Being on time means arriving a few minutes before class begins. You are expected to complete all reading before class and meet all deadlines. Outside of unforeseen circumstances, no extensions will be granted. All unexcused absences and tardiness will greatly deflate your grade. The breakdown of the participation grade is:

- 15% participation in and contribution to class discussions.
- 15% weekly paragraphs: For sections, students are expected to have read the week’s readings and uploaded a one paragraph response to one of the week’s guiding questions. These comments should be posted on Canvas (under “Discussion”) by 5:00PM on the day before weekly discussion.

#### *30%: Midterm.*

The in-class midterm examination (February 5) will consist of ID’s and essays questions.

#### *40%: Final Paper.*

Each student will write a 6-8 page paper analyzing primary documents and class readings.

The final assignment is due on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> by 5PM via. email. I will not grant extensions. Late submissions will be penalized by a letter grade per day (i.e. an A- paper will become a B+).

## Readings

You do not need to purchase any of the readings. Assigned readings can be found online (eBooks) and/or through our Canvas portal [C] under “Files.” The secondary readings are listed alphabetically. Primary sources for the week are listed numerically. Readings will average between 80-150 pages per week.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

I. January 8. Introduction (Lecture 1).

I. January 10. Captivity, Transport, Commodities (Lecture 2).

### *Readings*

- a) Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (2007), chapter 2 (pp. 33-64) and chapter 3 (pp. 64-100). [eBooks]
  - b) Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), chapter 3 (pp. 51-84). [C]
  - c) Stephen D. Behrendt, “Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits: Merchant Decision Making in the British Slave Trade,” *The Williams and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 1 (January 2001): 171-204. [C]
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1. Royal African Company, “The Several Declarations of the Company of Royal Adventures of England Trading Into Africa” (1667). [C]
  2. “The improvement of the African trade” (1708). [C]
  3. “An account of the ships employed in the African trade,” (1713). [C]

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II. January 15. Colonial Conquest (Lecture 3).

II. January 17. Discussion.

### *Readings*

- a) Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (2004), chapter 3 (pp. 69-106). [C]
- b) K-Sue Park, “Money, Mortgages, and the Conquest of America,” *Law & Social Inquiry* (2016): 1-30. [C]

- c) William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983, 2003), chapter 2 (19-33), chapter 3 (34-53), chapter 4 (54-81). [C]
- 1. Depositions of Henry and Joseph, Two Maqua Indians (1698). [C]
- 2. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XI: Aborigines, and Query XIV: Laws* (1781). [C]
- 3. St. John De Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter IX (1782). [C]

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III. January 22. “Slaveholders Republic” (Lecture 4).

III. January 24. Discussion.

*Readings*

- a) Amy Dru Stanley, chapter 5 (pp. 119-144) in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith. [eBooks]
- b) Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (2013), chapter 8 (pp. 209-243). [eBooks]
- c) Alexandra Finley, “‘Cash to Corinna’: Domestic Labor and Sexual Economy in the ‘Fancy Trade,’” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 104, no. 2 (Sept. 2017): 410-430. [C]
- 1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, chapter XVIII: Future Condition of Three Races. [eBooks]
- 2. Tench Coxe, “An Address to an Assembly of the Friends of American Manufacturers,” (1787). [C]
- 3. Solomon Northup, “Cotton Growing” (pp. 162-175), *Twelve Years a Slave* (1854). [eBooks]

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IV. January 29. Continental Expansion (Lecture 5).

IV. January 31. Discussion.

*Readings*

- a) Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, chapter 13 (pp. 366-394). [eBooks]
- b) David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1936* (1987), chapter 2 (pp. 24-49). [eBooks]
- c) Elliot West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009), chapter 5 (pp. 75-97). [eBooks]
- 1. Andrew Jackson, “Indian Removal” (1835). [C]

2. James K. Polk, "Message on War with Mexico" (1846). [C]
3. John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the War with Mexico" (1848). [C]

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V. February 5. In-class midterm.\*\*

V. February 7. War and Reconstruction (Lecture 6).\*\*

\*\*Note: Both sessions this week will be held in Stuart Hall, room 102.

### Readings

- a) Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (2000), chapter 2 (pp. 61-106). [C]
- b) Moon Ho-Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 677-701. [C]
1. "The Battle of Sand Creek," *Rocky Mountain News* (1864). [C]
2. "The Fort Lyon Affair," *Rocky Mountain News* (1864). [C]
3. Edward King, *The Great South: A Record...* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1875), chapter XIX: The "Indian Territory" (197-203), chapter XX: "Railroad Pioneering—Indian Types and Character" (204-214), chapter XXVIII: "The "Supply" System in the Cotton Country" (270-277). [eBooks]

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VI. February 12. Frontiers, Restrictions (Lecture 7).

VI. February 14. Discussion.

### Readings

- a) Peter James Hudson, "The National City Bank of New York and Haiti, 1909-1922," *Radical History Review*, issue 115 (winter 2013): 91-114. [C]
- b) Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016), chapter 1 (pp. 17-57), and chapter 2 (pp. 58-118). [eBooks]
- c) Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (1997), chapter 2 (pp. 40-63). [eBooks]
1. "The Negro as a Life Risk," *The Independent* (1898). [C]
2. "Other Negro Interests," *Outlook* (1907). [C]
3. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic* (1915). [C]
4. "The Biggest Negro Business," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (1927). [C]

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VII. February 19. Depression and War (Lecture 8).

VII. February 21. Discussion.

*Readings*

- a) Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (1990), chapter 1 (pp. 13-33), chapter 2 (pp. 34-56), and chapter 3 (pp. 57-77). [eBooks]
- b) Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004), chapter 3 (96-126), and chapter 4 (127-166). [eBooks]
1. Abram L. Harris, *The Negro as Capitalist: A Study of Banking and Business* (1936), chapter 9 (pp. 177-184). [C]
2. “A Mexican-American Laborer and the Labor Organizer in Chicago”(1939). [C]

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VIII. February 26. The Metropolis (Lecture 9).

VIII. February 28. Discussion.

*Readings*

- a) Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (2003), chapter 3 (pp. 112-147). [eBooks]
- b) N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (2014), chapter 6 (pp. 163-198). [eBooks]
- c) Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996), chapter 4 (91-124). [eBooks]
1. Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), Residential Security “Redlining” Map and Area Descriptions. Hartford, Connecticut, 1937. [C]
2. Lambert Pharmacal Company, “I got them whisk-broom blues” (1941). [C]
3. War Production Board, “Rat Poison Wanted” (1943). [C]
4. Jeris, “Hairways” (1945). [C]

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IX. March 5. Long Hot Summers (Lecture 10).

IX. March 7. Discussion.

*Readings*

- a) Russell Rickford, “‘We Can’t Grow Food on All This Concrete’: The Land Question, Agrarianism, and Black Nationalist Thought in the late 1960s and 1970s,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 103, no. 4 (March 2017): 956-980. [C]
  - b) Crystal M. Moten, “‘Fighting Their Own Economic Battles’: Charles Lockett, Ethnic Enterprizes, and the Challenges of Black Capitalism in 1970s Milwaukee,” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* vol. 18, no. 1 (Jan.-March, 2016): 106-125. [C]
1. *Climbin’ Jacob’s Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O’Dell*, ed. Nikhil Pal Singh, (pp. 124-144), and (pp. 145-159). [eBooks]

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X. March 12. The Pay-off (Lecture 11).

*Readings*

- a) Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007), chapter 3 (pp. 87-127). [eBooks]
  - b) Alex Lichtenstein, “Flocatex and the Fiscal Limits of Mass Incarceration: Toward a New Political Economy of the Postwar Carceral State,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 102, no. 1, (June 2015): 113-125. [C]
1. “Seized Assets Underwrite the War on Drugs,” *Los Angeles Times* (1991). [C]
  2. Jason Grotto, Heather Gillers, Patricia Callahan, and Alex Richards, “Broken Bonds,” *Chicago Tribune* (2013). <http://apps.chicagotribune.com/bond-debt/index.html>, Part 1: “Chicago's Debt Splurge.”

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The final assignment is due on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> by 5PM via. email.

**Resources and Policies**

*Accessibility: If you need any special accommodations or academic adjustments, please provide your professor with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that you may discuss with them how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.*

<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

The Writing Program: <https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/>

UChicago Academic Integrity: <https://college.uchicago.edu/advising/academic-integrity-student-conduct>

Plagiarism: *You are encouraged to consult with one another on the choice of paper topics, and you may also share library resources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as someone else, but you should ensure that the written paper you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and reflects your own approach to the topic.*

Technology: You are allowed to use computers, tablets, and the like. This policy is subject to change if I find students abusing the privilege.