

MoneyLand: Business in American Culture

(syllabus revised 1/10/2019)

HIST136 * Carillon section 0105 * Fall 2019
class meetings: TBA * section meetings: weekly

	email	office	office hours
Prof. David Sicilia	dsicilia@umd.edu	TLF 2119	TBA; and by appt.
Teaching Assistant TBA		KEY 3118	TBA

Two core tensions animate this course. One is the tension between Americans' widespread belief in meritocracy within our business system and the reality that social capital – an individual's inherited and acquired traits – plays an enormous role in one's business success or failure. By examining how social capital has both opened and closed doors to opportunity for entrepreneurs, managers, works, and consumers, this course explores the creation and recreation of dominant ideas about identify and business behavior, including those salient today.

The second core tension is between the realities of American competitive capitalism and popular notions about business put forward by cultural tastemakers such as ministers, novelists, playwrights, cartoonists, public intellectuals, and movie producers. How and why have Americans excelled at commerce, industry, and services while our cultural leaders, almost without exception, have cursed and accused firms and business leaders of being avaricious, anti-social, dehumanizing, and undemocratic. For their part, business leaders often have weighed into the debate in spirited defense. This struggle to define American business culture reveals much about changes and continuities in our broader national identity.

Themes and goals. Major themes in the course include: myths and realities of American entrepreneurship; the gendering of enterprise; corporations as perceived threats to democracy; changing notions of business failure; salesmanship and alienation; conflict and convergence between business and religion; and Hollywood populism.

Carillon section. This special section of the course is for students enrolled in the "Enterprising Cultures" Carillon Community, and is taught by Enterprising Cultures team leader Prof. David Sicilia. Carillon Communities creates an inspiring and supportive living and learning environment for first-year students. Carillon promotes an environment where students develop a sense of belonging and trust to support their academic success and innovative thought. In Carillon, students consider their own interests and knowledge, and become active agents in their own education.

This course is designed to help students:

- develop the ability to assess and think critically about historical issues and about how people interpret those issues;
- develop skills in analyzing historical artifacts, especially primary documents, and reaching informed conclusions about those artifacts;
- understand how culture, social structure, diversity, or other key elements of historical context have an impact on individual perception, action, and values.
- hone analysis, discussion, and writing skills.

Class etiquette. During class meetings kindly refrain from chatting, texting, reading newspapers, eating, or otherwise distracting yourself or other students from the lecture or discussion. *Laptop computers and cell phones must be turned off and put away.* If you must arrive late or leave early, do so quietly from a rear exit and sit in the back of the room.

Class participation. The best way to earn high marks for discussion is to complete each week's required reading **before** class meetings, and bring to class the documents and/or books with key passages highlighted along with your own questions and issues for discussion.

Course grades will be calculated according to the table below. The grading scale is 100-98 = A+; 97-93 = A; 92-90 = A-; 89-88 = B+; 87-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-78 = C+; 77-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-68 = D+; 67-63 = D; 62-60 = D-; 59-0 = F.

assignment	date/place due	% of course grade
class participation	weekly/section	14 % (1% each)
short essays	weekly/Canvas	28 % (2% each)
first in-class exam	TBA	15 %
project proposal	TBA/Canvas	5 %
project full draft	TBA/Canvas	11 %
second in-class exam	TBA	15 %
final project	TBA	12 %

Required readings. There are two required books for the course, which are available at the University Book Center (UBC): Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise* (2017); and Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King* (1937). [Note: UBC will price match.] Copies are on reserve at MCK Library. All other course readings will be available through Canvas, unless otherwise indicated on the syllabus as a web url.

University Policies. This course abides by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics such as: academic integrity; student and instructor conduct; accessibility and accommodations; attendance and excused absences; grades and appeals; copyright and intellectual property. Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies'

full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with the professor if you have questions. Because this information pertains to all your undergraduate courses, including this one, it is worth your while to familiarize yourself with it.

Make-up Exams and Late Papers. If for any family or medical reason you find it absolutely necessary to miss an in-class examination, you must contact your Teaching Assistant before the examination to obtain his consent to your absence if you wish to take a make-up exam. Unless you make other arrangements with the instructor, project assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for each day late. Weekly short essays cannot be submitted late.

Reviewing Grades. One of the ways to learn a great deal in this course is by reviewing carefully exams and papers returned with comments by your section instructor. Please take the time to do this, and follow up with him if you have any questions about his commentary. Reviewing comments on the first paper and exam is a great way to prepare for the second paper and exam, respectively. If you believe one of your assignments was graded unfairly, please follow these steps: 1) Do not try to speak with your section instructor about your grade at the end of the class period in which his handed back the assignment; take at least 24 hours (but no more than a few days) to read and think about the comments and grade; 2) Reread the assignment and your written work; 3) Write down the reason or reasons why you think the grade is inappropriate; 4) Give these comments to your section instructor and arrange a time to meet with him.

Course evaluations. As a member of our academic community, you as a student have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit your course evaluations each term through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. Please make a note of the link for accessing the submission system for fall 2018: www.courseevalum.umd.edu.

Emergency Notifications. In the event of weather-related or other emergencies, the University central administration will determine and announce whether classes will be held. If any classes are cancelled, the professor will notify you via email through Canvas how to proceed with course work, including remote or make-up assignments, if any.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week 1 (Aug. 27 & 29): Moneyland

- all sections meet
- David B. Sicilia, "Was Tucker Really Torpedoed?" *Harvard Business Review* (Nov.-Dec. 1988), pp. 176-177.
- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, Introduction.

Week 2 (Sept. 5): Sprouts of American Capitalism

- no sections meet
- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 1.
- Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., and Richard S. Tedlow, "Benjamin Franklin and the Definition of American Values," in Chandler and Tedlow, *The Coming of Managerial Capitalism* (1985), pp. 2-24.

Week 3 (Sept. 10 & 12): Corporations and the State

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, chs. 3-4.

Week 4 (Sept. 17 & 19): Work, Free and Unfree

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 2.
- Samuel Clough, "Memoirs of an Itinerant Worker," in Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., and Richard S. Tedlow, *The Coming of Managerial Capitalism* (1985), pp. 424-434.

Week 5 (Sept. 24 & 26): Big Business and Antitrust

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 5-6.
- Louis D. Brandeis, *Other People's Money and How the Bankers Use It* (1914), chapters 1, 5, and 10. (Originally published as articles in *Harper's Weekly*, 1913-1914). <https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-louis-d.-brandeis-collection/other-peoples-money-by-louis-d.-brandeis>

Week 6 (Oct. 1 & 3): Self-Made Myths and Realities

- Horatio Alger, *Paul the Peddler* (1871), pp. 133-174, 271-281.
- William Miller, "Recruitment of the American Business Elite," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (May 1950), pp. 242-253.
- Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King* (course book), first half.

Week 7 (Oct. 8 & 10): Fordism and the American Soul

- first in-class exam: Wednesday Oct. 10, 1:00-1:50 p.m., ESJ 1202.
- sections will meet this week
- Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King* (course book), second half.
- "Modern Times" (United Artists motion picture, 1936).

Week 8 (Oct. 15 & 17): Advertising Age

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, pp. 123-147.
- Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (1985), pp. 206-234 (ch. 7).

Week 9 (Oct. 22 & 24): American Capitalism's Greatest Crisis

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, pp. 147-156.

- Studs Terkel, *Hard Times* (1970), “Big Money” (pp. 60-81) and “Three Strikes” (pp. 129-147).

Week 10 (Oct. 29 & Oct. 31): Organization Men and Women

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 9.
- “Mildred Pierce” (Warner Brothers motion picture, 1945).

Week 11 (Nov. 5 & 7): Selling Counterculture

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 10.
- “Office Etiquette” (short motion picture, Encyclopedia Britannica Films, 1950).
- “New Girl in the Office – Part I and Part II” (Government Committee on Government Contracts, c. 1959) <http://archive.org/details/prelinger> [type film titles in search field]

Week 12 (Nov. 12 & 14): Downsized Dreams

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 11.
- Scott Adams, *The Dilbert Principle*, chs. 21-22 (pp. 244-273).
- New York Times, *The Downsizing of America* (1996), ch. 1 (pp. 3-36).

Week 13 (Nov. 19): Modern Feminism and the Career Women

- no sections meet this week
- “Baby Boom” (United Artists motion picture, 1987).

Week 14 (Nov. 26 & 28): Wall Street v. Main Street

- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, ch. 12.
- Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), pp. 55-71.
- CBS Evening News, “Enron Traders Caught on Tape,” Dec. 5, 2007: story at http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-620626.html.
- audio at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOLNWF5QMxY>

Week 15 (Dec. 3 & 5): Black and Brown Dollars

- Robert Weems, *Desegregating the Dollar* (1998), ch. 6 (pp. 100-116).

Week 16 (Dec. 10): Final Exam review session

- no section meetings this week
- Benjamin Waterhouse, *Land of Enterprise*, Conclusion.