

Course Outline: Slavery, Industrialization and the European Expansion. New Theoretical Perspectives from the New History of Capitalism

In the wake of global economic crises, growing economic inequality and the challenges posed by socio-ecological transformations, the history of capitalism has once again attracted considerable interest, both amongst historians and amongst the wider public. The ‘new history of capitalism’, which originated and is practiced predominantly in the United States, aims to open up new (research) perspectives on the history of capitalism, which until now has largely been shaped by classical, often Eurocentric questions and frameworks. Consequently, the ‘new history of capitalism’ has turned its attention to new questions. To what extent, for instance, did slavery and the European expansion influence industrialization, and what was the role of the expanding financial markets in this context? How have different forms of free and unfree labour, alongside wage labour, contributed to the history of capitalism? To answer these questions, the ‘new history of capitalism’ seeks to overcome the narrow (sub-)disciplinary boundaries between cultural, legal, political and economic history. In this seminar, alongside some ‘classics’ on the history capitalism, we will examine the key texts, themes and debates of the ‘new history of capitalism’. Finally, we aim to discuss the extent to which the theoretical and methodological insights of this approach, which has so far been based mainly on examples from the United States, are also relevant and analytically interesting for other regions such as Europe or Latin America. This theory and methodology seminar is explicitly aimed at students in the M.A. Global History program and requires a good English reading skills.

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Friday, 06.12.24: The ,Classics‘ – 14-17h

Session 1 | Introduction to the (Global) History of Capitalism

Session 2 | Adam Smith and the ‘Wealth of Nations’

Literature: Smith, Adam: An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, London/New York 1964. Book 1, Chapter 1-3 und Book 4, Chapter 7, Part 3.

Further literature: Lenger, Friedrich: Adam Smiths Wohlstand der Nationen. Historische Kontexte und aktuelle Perspektiven, in: Mittelweg 36 6 (2017), p. 7-18.

Session 3 | Karl Marx and the Process of (Primitive) Accumulation

Literature: Marx, Karl: Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Berlin 1989. Chapter 24 and 25.

Further literature: Welskopp, Thomas: Kapitalismus als Landnahme. Zu einem Theoriestrang von Karl Marx bis Rosa Luxemburg, in: Mittelweg 36 6 (2017), p. 19-28.

Session 4 | Immanuel Wallerstein and the World-Systems Theory

Literature: Hopkins, Terence K./Wallerstein, Immanuel: Patterns of Development of the Modern World-System, in: Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 1/2 (1977), p. 111-145.

Further literature: Lenger, Friedrich: Wallerstein on Early Modern Capitalism and Global Inequality. A Reevaluation, in: Socio 15 (2021), p. 49-70.

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Saturday, 07.12.24: From the ‚Classics‘ to the *new history of capitalism* – 09-17h

Session 5 | Eric Williams and the ‚Williams Thesis‘

Literature: Williams, Eric: Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill 2021. Chapter 1: The Origin of N**** Slavery, Chapter 5: British Industry and the Triangular Trade, Kapitel 7: The Development of British Capitalism, 1783-1833 and Chapter 13: Conclusion.

Session 6 | American Capitalism – New Histories

Literature: Beckert, Sven/Desan, Christine: Introduction, in: American Capitalism. New Histories, ed. by Sven Beckert/Christine Desan, New York 2019, p. 1-32.

Session 7 | Slavery and U.S. Economic History

Literature: Beckert, Sven/Rockman, Seth: Introduction. Slavery’s Capitalism, in: Slavery’s Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development, ed. by Sven Beckert/Seth Rockman, Philadelphia 2016, p. 1-27.

Session 8 | *The Half Has Never Been Told* – A Controversial Contribution Part I

Literature: Baptist, Edward E.: The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism, New York 2014. Chapter Introduction: The Heart, 1937 und Chapter: Backs, 1839-1850.

Further literature: Editor’s Note: Our Withdrawn Review “Blood Cotton”, The Economist, 05.09.2014, online: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170902141042/https://www.economist.com/news/books/21615864-how-slaves-built-american-capitalism-blood-cotton> [26.09.2024].

Baptist, Edward: What the Economist Doesn’t Get About Slavery – And My Book, Politico, 07.09.2014, online: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/09/economist-review-slavery-110687/> [26.09.2024].

Session 9 | *The Half Has Never Been Told* – A Controversial Contribution Part II

Literature: Burnard, Trevor: ‚The Righteous Will Shine Like the Sun.’ Writing an Evocative History of Antebellum American Slavery, in: *Slavery & Abolition* 36/1 (2015), S. 180-185.

Baptist, Edward E.: The Response, in: *Slavery & Abolition* 36/1 (2015), S. 186-197.

Session 10 | Slavery and the *new history of capitalism* – A Critique

Literature: Burnard, Trevor/Riello, Giorigo: Slavery and the New History of Capitalism, in: *Journal of Global History* 15/2 (2020), p. 225-244.

Further literature: Olmstead, Alan L./Rhode, Paul W.: Cotton, Slavery, and the New History of Capitalism, in: *Explorations in Economic History* 67 (2018), p. 1-17.

Session 11 | The (Slave) Plantation as a Modern Economic Unit

Literature: Rosenthal, Caitlin: Slavery’s Scientific Management. Masters and Managers, in: *Slavery’s Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development*, ed. by Sven Beckert/Seth Rockman, Philadelphia 2016, p. 62-86.

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Friday 17.01.25: Central Europe, Slavery and Capitalism – 14-17h

Session 12 | Slavery Hinterland – Central Europe and Slavery

Literature: Brahm, Felix/Rosenhaft, Eve: Introduction. Towards a Comprehensive European History of Slavery and Abolition, in: *Slavery Hinterland. Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850*, ed. by Felix Brahm/Eve Rosenhaft, Woodbridge 2016, p. 1-23.

Session 13 | Talk by and Discussion with PD Dr. Magnus Ressel

Literature: Ressel, Magnus: Spoils of Neutrality. The Austrian Netherlands in the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Early 1780s, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 96/4 (2024), p. 765-801.

Session 14 | Interim Conclusion: Slavery and ‘Modern’ Capitalism

Saturday, 18.01.25: 'Modern' Capitalism in the *new history of capitalism* 09-17h

Session 15 | Max Weber and 'Modern' Capitalism

Literature: Weber Max: Vorbemerkung, in: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie, Vol. 1, Tübingen 1920, p. 1-16.

Session 16 | Mechanization, Scientific Management and Slavery in Global Capitalism Part I

Literature: Rosenthal, Caitlin: Slavery's Scientific Management. Masters and Managers, in: Slavery's Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development, ed. by Seth Rockman/Sven Beckert, Philadelphia 2016, p. 62-86.

Session 17 | Mechanization, Scientific Management and Slavery in Global Capitalism Part II

Literature: Rood, Daniel B.: An International Harvest. The Second Slavery, the Virginia-Brazil Connection, and the Development of the McCormick Reaper, in: Slavery's Capitalism. A New History of American Economic Development, ed. by Seth Rockman/Sven Beckert, Philadelphia 2016, p. 87-104.

Session 18: Capitalism and its Political Utopias in the United States

Literature: White, Richard: Utopian Capitalism, in: American Capitalism – New Histories, ed. by Christine Desan/Sven Beckert, New York 2018, p. 119-139.

Session 19: Finance Capitalism and the Concept of a Shareholder Democracy

Literature: González, Felipe/Marshall, Guillermo/Naidu, Suresh: Start-up Nation? Slave Wealth and Entrepreneurship in Civil War Maryland, in: The Journal of Economic History 77/2 (2017), p. 373-405.

Session 20 | Critiques of the New History of Capitalism from the Perspective of Economic History

Literature: Olmstead, Alan L./Rhode, Paul W.: Cotton, Slavery, and the New History of Capitalism, in: Explorations in Economic History 67 (2018), p. 1-17.

Session 21 | Applying the New History of Capitalism to European and Atlantic Economic History

Literature: Steffen, Anka/Weber, Klaus: Spinning and Weaving for the Slave Trade. Proto-Industry in Eighteenth-Century Silesia, in: Slavery Hinterland. Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850, ed. by Felix Brahm/Eve Rosenhaft, Woodbridge 2016, p. 87-107.