

TRENT UNIVERSITY

Department of History

History 3081H: Canadian Business History in a Global Context

Winter 2012 Session

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Canadian business has always been part of a larger international economy, as a resource hinterland for France and later Britain in the 16th-19th centuries; as an emerging industrial nation in the more recent past, whose capital and technological needs tied it to the United States as well as Britain; and as an exporter and source of investment overseas in the 20th century. Canada's business evolution has followed paths similar to those of other capitalist countries, although there also have been distinctive elements in its history (e.g., the role of family-based business, and crown corporations). This course looks at the development of business in Canada in terms of the nation's growth but also in the context of these larger patterns of global change.

Week 1: Introduction: Canada and Business History

Patterns of business evolution" mercantile, industrial and finance capitalism; globalization and multinational enterprise. Distinctive features of Canadian business: family capitalism, the role of the state, resources and the staple theory.

Readings:

Graham D. Taylor, *The Rise of Canadian Business* (2008), Introduction

Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (2010), chapter 1

Week 2: Imperialism, Globalization and the Origins of Canadian Business

Fish, furs and timber: staples and the early Canadian economy. Empires of trade: the great chartered companies and the global economy. The beginnings of indigenous enterprise.

Readings:

Appleby, *Relentless Revolution*, chapters 2-3

Ann Carlos and Stephen Nicholas, "Giants of an Earlier Capitalism: The Chartered Trading Companies as Modern Multinationals," *Business History Review* vol. 62 no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 398-419.

Week 3: The Emergence of a Canadian Market

Merchant networks in pre-Con federation Canada. Transportation, finance, political unification and business opportunities. The role of family dynasties in Canada.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapter 1.

Appleby, Chapter 4-5.

Week 4: Finance Capitalism

Rise of financial markets: London, New York, Montreal. Transatlantic finance and industrialization in North America. Investment banks, large scale business and innovation.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapter 2.

Gregory Marchildon, "Hands Across the Water: Canadian Industrial Financiers in the City of London, 1905-1920," *Business History* vol. 34, no. 3 (July 1992): 69-96.

Week 5: Opening the Storehouse

Transcontinental expansion; the global search for minerals; Canada's "new staples": mines, forests and fossil fuels.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapters 3-4.

Appleby, Chapter 6-7.

Week 6: The Arrival of Big Business

Industrialization, technology and capital needs; economies of scale and scope; the limits of 'big business' in Canada.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapter 5

Alfred D. Chandler Jr., "Organizational Capabilities and the Economic History of the Industrial Enterprise," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 79-100.

Week 7: Business in a Changing Environment

Small business versus big business; the reorganization of work and the emergence of mass production unions; the emergence of “consumer capitalism.”

Readings:

Taylor, chapter 6

Donica Belisle, “Negotiating Paternalism: Women and Canada’s Largest Department Stores, 1890-1960,” *Journal of Women’s History* vol. 19 no. 1 (Spring 2007): 58-81.

Case Study Paper due

Week 8: Agents of Globalization

Patterns of multinational expansion in the “first era of globalization”; the shift from British to American investment in Canada; managing multinationals.

Readings:

Appleby, Chapters 8-9.

Graham Taylor, “From Branch Operation to Integrated Subsidiary: The Reorganization of Imperial Oil Under Walter Teagle, 1911-17,” *Business History* vol. 34 no. 3 (July 1992): 49-68.

Week 9: The Long Arms of the Law

Government and business in Canada; the impact of the Great Depression; the impact of war; the limits of the ‘regulatory state’; the uses of crown corporations.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapters 7-8

Joseph Santos, “Going Against the Grain: Why Did Wheat Marketing in the U.S. and Canada Evolve So Differently?” *Business and Economic History Online* vol. 4 (2006).

Week 10: An Interventionist Era

The politicized economy; first responses to the “second era of globalization”: bailouts and bureaucratic empire building.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapters 9-10.

Appleby, Chapter 10.

Dimitry Anastakis, "Hubris, Nepotism and Failure: The Bricklin Car Company and the Question of Inevitability," *Business & Economic History Online* vol. 8 (2010).

Week 11: Global Transformations of Business

The emergence of Canadian multinationals; a new age of international competition; the impact of computer/communications technologies on business.

Readings:

Taylor, Chapters 11-12

Appleby, Chapters 11-12

William Lazonick, "Evolution of the 'New Economy' Business Model," *Business and Economic History Online* vol. 3 (2005).

Week 12: The Future of Canadian Business/The Future of Global Business

Readings:

Taylor, Chapter 13.

Appleby, Chapter 13.

Donald Brean et al., "Canada and the United States: Different Roots, Different Routes to Financial Sector Regulation," *Business History*, vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2011): 249-269.

Course Format: Two hour lecture/discussion per week plus biweekly seminar. This course uses My Learning System for assignments, discussion, internal (course) mail, etc.

Readings:

Graham D. Taylor, *The Rise of Canadian Business: 1885 to the Present* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada 2009).

Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: Norton 2010).

All articles are available on line through Bata Library E-Resources Citation Linker or Business and Economic History Online.

Evaluation:

Grades are based on two writing assignments:

- (1) A 'case study' of a company, individual or set of events in the history of business in Canada. Proposals should be submitted in Week #4 and the case study must be submitted in Week #7. The paper should be c. 3000-3500 words (12-15 pages double spaced). This assignment = 40% of the final grade. Papers submitted later than 24 hours after class time on the due date will be penalized (@ 1 point/day) unless a valid excuse is provided.
- (2) A final (take home) essay exam at the end of the term. The examination involves essay questions related to the general themes covered in lectures, readings and class discussions. This assignment=50% of the final grade. Because of the requirements for grade submissions, no late exams will be accepted without a valid excuse.
- (3) The balance (10%) will reflect class attendance and participation. Participation evaluation covers both attendance, evidence of preparation for class discussion and contributions to discussion.

Course objectives: Students will acquire comprehension not only of the history of Canadian business, but also its similarities and differences with the evolution of business in other major industrial countries over the past two centuries, and how historical developments affected the structure of business in the 21st century.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offense and carries penalties varying from a 0 grade on an assignment to expulsion from the university. Definitions, penalties and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent's Academic Integrity Policy. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more at www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction:

Trent's policy toward accessibility: "It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (BH Suite 132, 748-1281, disabilityservices@trentu.ca) as soon as possible. Complete text can be found under Access to Instruction in the Academic Calendar **Academic Integrity Policy**.