

Department of Political Science
School of Public and International Affairs
Baldwin Hall
University of Georgia
POLS 4555: RAILROADS AND AMERICAN POLITICS

Course Description

The railroads transformed the economy and politics of the United States in the 19th Century. The railroads were the first big businesses and their sheer size led inevitably to conflict with governments at all levels and later to conflict with the large industries that arose due to the availability of railroad transportation. These conflicts still affect modern politics.

Course Objectives

To show how the economic and political systems interact in the U.S. over time through the history of the railroad business.

Instructor: **Keith T. Poole**

The following texts will be used in this course:

- Craig Miner, *A Most Magnificent Machine*
- John F. Stover, *American Railroads*
- Harold C. Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business*
- John Steele Gordon, *An Empire of Wealth*

Requirements

Grades will be determined by three examinations -- two mid-semester exams and a final exam. The exams will be Multiple Choice. The midterms will be worth $\frac{1}{4}$ each and the final $\frac{1}{2}$ of the course grade.

The first **Mid-Semester exam** will be on Friday, 17 February 2017, 50 minutes, in class.

The second **Mid-Semester exam** will be on Friday, 31 March 2017, 50 minutes, in class.

The **final** is scheduled for Friday, 28 April 2017 from 3:30 to 5:30PM

The Multiple Choice exams will be about 25 questions each for the Midterms and 40-50 questions for the final. They will be straightforward with no "tricks".

Course Outline

1. Introduction: Why are Railroads Important?

Assignment:

- Chapters 1, 2 and 3, *An Empire of Wealth*

2. American Politics, Economics, and Business prior to the Railroads: 1800 - 1830

Assignment:

- Chapters 4 - 8, *An Empire of Wealth*
- Chapters 1 and 2, *American Railroads*
- Chapters 1 - 3, *A Most Magnificent Machine*

3. Railroads as Big Business

Assignment:

- Chapters 9 - 12, *An Empire of Wealth*
- Chapter 3, *American Railroads*
- Chapters 4 - 10, *A Most Magnificent Machine*

4. Andrew Carnegie, the Standard Railway of the World, and the Industrialization of the U.S.

Assignment:

- Chapter 13, *An Empire of Wealth*
- Chapters 1 - 11, *Andrew Carnegie*
- Chapters 11 - 14 and Conclusion, *A Most Magnificent Machine*

5. The Nature of Railroad Competition

Assignment:

- Chapter 5, *American Railroads*

6. Railroads and the Development of Agriculture

Assignment:

- o Chapter 4, *American Railroads*
- o Chapter 14, *An Empire of Wealth*

7. Railroads and Government Regulation: 1887-1920

Assignment:

- o Chapters 6 to 8, *American Railroads*
- o Chapters 15 to 17, *An Empire of Wealth*

8. Railroads Triumphant: 1980 - 2010

Assignment:

- o Chapters 9 and 10, *American Railroads*
- o Chapters 18 to 20, *An Empire of Wealth*

9. Railroads and the Future of the American Transportation System

Assignment:

- o Stop This Train! Are Trains Slower Now than they were in the 1920s? Tom Vanderbilt, *Slate*, May 15, 2009