

Business 150

A Community History of Business

In one form or another, we have been doing “business” for thousands of years. Some aspects of business are unchanged – businesses provide goods and services to their communities. But the potter sitting in a market in Babylon would be unlikely to recognize the ceramics being mass produced and shipped around the globe, each including a bar code or RF tag to monitor their movement through a global logistics network. Similarly the small business man of Rome would be unfamiliar with the community expectations we now have for our business leaders. In this course students will review the historic role of business in many communities and will research the civic engagement of business in a particular community of their choosing.

Signature Question:

How do people understand and engage in community life?

Defining Civic Knowledge and Civic Engagement

Civic knowledge consists of an awareness and understanding of the various political and social processes that impact the nature and quality of life in local, state, national, or global communities. It also encompasses the cultivation of skills which may be useful in public life, like effective communication and ethical reasoning. Civic engagement means having an appreciation for and applying the values gained from civic knowledge in real world settings, directed at improving the quality of life in the communities of which one is a part. Civic knowledge and civic engagement emphasize learning, reflection, and action in order to create better communities.

Signature Question: How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?

Knowledge of sustainability and its applications is the ability to understand local and global earth systems; the qualities of ecological integrity and the means to restore and preserve it; and the interconnection of ecological integrity, social justice, and economic well-being. Sustainability is about working towards a future in which all human beings can enjoy decent quality of life– good health, economic security, membership in strong and inclusive communities, the list goes on– while ensuring that we do not endanger the natural resources and environments upon which we depend.

Signature Question: How do people understand and bridge cultural differences?

Intercultural knowledge and competence is the understanding of one's own culture as well as cultures beyond one's own; the recognition of the cultural values and history, language, traditions, arts, and social institutions of a group of people; the ability to negotiate and bridge cultural differences in ways that allow for broader perspectives to

emerge; and the skill to investigate a wide range of world views, beliefs, practices, and value

Defining a Liberal Arts Education

Liberal Education is a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement. These broad goals have endured even as the courses and requirements that comprise a *Liberal Education* have changed over the years. Characterized by challenging encounters with important and relevant issues today and throughout history, a *Liberal Education* prepares graduates both for socially valued work and for civic leadership in their society. It usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in at least one field or area of concentration.

Original source: Advocacy “What is a liberal education?” www.aacu.org/leap.

How does that definition connect to our course? The place of business in a community has been an important – and changing – issue throughout history. This course will provide you with background on this issue, background you will need as you become a community leader. It will help you determine for yourself what values, ethics, and sense of community you wish to bring to your work.

Textbook: *The Origins of Business, Money, and Markets*. Keith Roberts. Columbia University Press, 2011.

Course Learning Outcomes – at the completion of this course, students will be able to

- Describe approaches to business during at least three distinct historical periods
- Explain the civic role of business in at least three cultures
- Describe how the role of managers and workers have changed over time
- Analyze current debates over expectations for corporate social responsibility by businesses
- Take a principled ethical stand on one issue affecting businesses and the community
- Describe the historical role of business in a particular community

Program Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to describe the value of a *Liberal Education*.
- Students will become familiar with the expectations of a college-level education, the UW Oshkosh Essential Learning Outcomes, and the University Studies Program.
- Students will begin their acculturation to life at this university, developing familiarity with the academic resources and community engagement opportunities at UW Oshkosh.
- Students will engage in learning communities to enhance their connections to the class, the university, and one another.

- Students will participate in campus and community life through co-curricular activities.
- Students will begin to take personal responsibility for their intellectual development by archiving learning artifacts in the ePortfolio

Assessment of Learning

You will experience a variety of assessment activities to determine your achievement of the course learning objectives:

- 4 short exams of about 30 minutes each
- 2 visits to business clubs on campus. You should pick a meeting that has an outside speaker and write a one page summary of the work that person does.
- 2 written summaries of news articles or YouTube videos discussing the role of businesses in particular communities
- A report on the history of a town of your choice emphasizing the businesses that used to be in the town and the ones there now. What has the relationship between the town and local businesses been through the years? What has changed, and how did that impact the community? What did the community do in response to those changes? (This assignment will be uploaded to your ePortfolio for preservation).

Early Alert

College grading expectations and processes are very different from high school processes. To help you learn early if you are meeting college-level expectations, UW Oshkosh has Early Alert. It means you will be given a grade in your course within the first three weeks of the semester to let you know if you are making satisfactory progress. In this class we will have an exam after 2 weeks so you will see if you are doing what you need to do to be successful in college.

ePortfolio

Selected assignments will be retained in your ePortfolio – a web resource that lets you keep copies of major assignments over your four years of college. In this class you will upload your community history paper.

Event Attendance

As part of this class you will be expected to attend two business club meetings. The purpose is to hear guest speakers describe their careers so you have a better sense of people really do in business.

Meetings with Students

During the semester I will expect you to visit my office at least twice to talk about the course and about your observations about businesses in your community.

Academic Resources

UW Oshkosh has a number of resources available to help you succeed. The website below contains information about all of them:

<http://www.uwosh.edu/home/resources>

Since we will be doing a great deal of writing in this class, be sure to note the information about the Writing Center: <http://www.uwosh.edu/wcenter> I have published 8 books and 35 professional articles, and I still use editorial assistance to improve my writing. Getting help doesn't mean you are a bad writer – it means you care enough to want to improve.

Grading:

- 50% of your grade will be based on the short exams
- 10% of your grade will be based on the club meeting reports
- 15% of your grade will be based on the written summaries
- 25% of your grade will be based on the community history paper

Club Meeting Reports – detailed description

There are ten business clubs here at UW Oshkosh – a marketing club, an information systems club, a human resources club, etc. They generally meet at 5pm for about an hour. Usually they have a guest speaker – a recent graduate who talks about how they got their job and what they do all day. This is a good opportunity to learn what people really do in business (as opposed to what they seem to do on television). In no more than 2 single-spaced pages describe the club you went to and the name and position of the speaker. Then summarize the presentation you heard. After summarizing the presentation, comment on what you heard. What surprised you? What seemed attractive or unattractive about the job? What good does this job do in the community?

Summary papers – detailed description

In no more than 2 single-spaced pages describe a current event involving a community and a business. YouTube is a good source as is BusinessWeek.com. Examples might be Chinese villages being changed by businesses, or US communities fighting to land a new company or recover from the closure of a local business. Cite your source completely, then present the facts from two perspectives – why is the company doing what it is doing, and why is the community doing what it is doing? Place special emphasis on the role the business did (or will) play in the community, and the impacts of the business on the community for good and for ill.

Community History paper – detailed description

Early in the semester pick a community that interests you. It may be your hometown, a place where you vacation, or a place you think you might want to live and work after graduation. Visit the local library and talk with a librarian there about local history. Look through old newspapers or other items in the archives of the library (include copies of articles or pictures where appropriate). Here is what you want to know:

- Why was the community founded in the first place? Usually there is some business reason – access to lumber or water, or a market for farmers, etc.
- How has the population of the town changed over time? Go back at least a century. What are the numbers? What about ethnicity – are the same groups prominent now as at the time of the town’s founding? What about education – have educational levels changed over time?
- What industries have dominated over time – agriculture? Manufacturing? Retail? Financial services? Healthcare? Are the same industries dominant now that were earlier?
- What companies have come and gone over time – and why did they come and why did they leave?
- What connection has the community had to primary businesses? What did the community get from the businesses? What did the community do for the businesses?
- Close with your predictions for the future. How well do you think the community will do in the next ten to twenty years? What businesses will be there? What kind of jobs will be available? What kind of people will be drawn to the community? What responsibility do you think businesses in the town have to the community? What responsibilities do you think the community has to local business?

Your paper should be 5-8 pages single-spaced. You will also create a PowerPoint presentation based on your research, and you will present it to the class during the final week of the semester.

Class Schedule

Dates	Subject	Learning Outcomes	Readings	Assessment
Week 1	Foundations of Business in the Middle East	Students will understand the initial relations between cultures and business	pp 5-27	
Week 2	Foundations of Business in the Middle east	Students will understand the initial relations between cultures and business	pp 28-46	Exam 1 – foundations of business
Week 3	Current reflections on business and culture	Students will compare and contrast current and ancient business and		Group presentations on contracts, finance, markets, or

		culture		infrastructure
Week 4	Foundations of Greek business	Students will understand the relation between Greek culture and business	pp 47-83	
Week 5	Impact of Greek historical developments on business	Students will understand the relation between Greek culture and business	pp 84-115	
Week 6	Strengths and weakness of Greek culture and its impact on business	Students will understand the relation between Greek culture and business	pp 116-132	Exam 2 – Greek history, culture, and business
Week 7	Current reflections on business and culture	Students will compare and contrast current and Greek business and culture		Group presentations on contracts, finance, markets, or infrastructure
Week 8	Roman History	Students will understand the relation between Roman culture and business	pp 133-156	
Week 9	The decline of Roman culture	Students will understand the relation between Roman culture and business	pp 176- 216	
Week 10	The impact on business of Rome’s decline	Students will understand the relation between Roman culture and business	pp 217-262	Exam 3 – Roman history, culture, and business
Week 11	British development of Business	Students will understand the evolution to modern business principles	Web site	
Week 12	Early American development of business	Students will understand models of labor and management	Web site	
Week 13	Contemporary structures of	Students will understand current	Web site	Exam 4 – Modern structures of

	business	organizational elements of business		business and their connection to communities
Week 14	Community connections to business	Students will describe the historical role of business in a particular community		Students will present their findings on a particular community