No scholar seriously doubts that there was a strong relationship between the development of capitalism and the emergence of New World slave plantations. Where they disagree is over the nature of that relationship. Was slavery itself a form of capitalism, or was the master-slave relationship fundamentally different from capitalist social relations? Did slavery give rise to capitalism, or did capitalism give rise to slavery? This course will address these questions, beginning with a survey of the way scholars have addressed them. Then, with a particular focus on the United States, we will address the theoretical and empirical question of whether the slave economy of the Old South was or was not capitalist. Finally, we will shift to the very different question of the relationship between southern slavery, especially the cotton economy, and the industrialization of the North.

Readings:

Week 1: *The Transition Debates*


Week 2: *The Williams Thesis*

- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 1944)
Week 3:  *Slavery and the British Industrial Revolution*

Week 4: *Consumption and Slavery*


Week 5: *Global Capitalism: I*


Week 6: *Global Capitalism: II*


Week 7: *Global Capitalism: III*

- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*
Week 8: The Profitability, Viability, and Efficiency of Southern Slavery


Week 9: Slavery and Inter-regional Trade

Week 10: *The Productivity Debate*


Week 11: *Northern and Southern Growth Compared*

Week 12:  *The Countryside and Northern Economic Development*


Week 13:  *Industrialization in the North*


Week 14:  *The New History of Capitalism and its Critics*

Supplementary Readings:

- Ralph Davis, *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade* (Leicester, 1979)
- David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1979)