COURSE DESCRIPTION: For many years historians described the Civil War as a conflict between a free-labor capitalist society in the North and the slave labor society of the South. More recently that framework has come into question by historians who see southern slavery itself as a brutally exploitative capitalist system, different in degree perhaps but not in kind from the economic system of the antebellum North. This course will take up this issue through a close examination of the political economies of the North and South. Some of the questions we will ask include: What is capitalism? What is slavery? If slavery and free labor were both “capitalist,” why did the North develop cities and industries at a much faster pace than the South? If slavery and free labor were fundamentally different, why did the slaveholders behave like profit-maximizing rationalists? To what degree was northern urban and industrial development dependent on the profits of southern slavery rather than the dynamic relationship between the city and the countryside in the northern states?

REQUIREMENTS: A fifteen-page essay on Capitalism and Slavery due on the last day of classes for the semester. Active participation in weekly discussions will raise your course grade; weak participation will lower it.

Week 1  Definitions

- Maurice Dobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism

Week 2  The Debate: I

- Eugene D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery
- Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross

Week 3  The Debate: II


**Week 3**


• Barry Levy, *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from Its Founding to the Revolution*

**Week 4**


• Christopher Clark, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*

**Week 5**

• John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek*


**Week 6**

• Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860*.

• Glen Porter and Harold Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers*, 1-115.

**Week 8**

• Katherine Hilliard, *Masters, Slaves, and Exchange: Power’s Purchase in the Old South*

**Week 9**

• Harold Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925*, pp. 1-195
- Richard Holcombe Kilborne, Jr., *Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 1825-1885*

**Week 10**


**Week 11**

- Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery*

**Week 12**


**Week 13**

- Roger Ransom, *Conflict and Compromise*
- Jon Majewski, *A House Dividing: Economic Development in Pennsylvania and Virginia Before the Civil War*

**Week 14**

- James L. Huston, *The British Gentry, the Southern Planter, and the Northern Family Farmer*