Course Description:

Money is more than just a medium of exchange. While it is tempting to think of money as a neutral instrument that enables us to buy and sell goods, monetary policy is deeply political. Furthermore, money as we know it is the product of legal structures that governments put in place. Indeed, recent historians of money have recognized the creation of money as a “constitutional undertaking.”

The meaning of money transformed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in Britain and its empire, which included the North American colonies that would eventually form the United States. In this course, we survey the transformations and revolutions that led to the creation of a new republic in North America, and also to the formation of modern money. Debates about monetary policy frequently turned into constitutional debates. We will discuss the English government’s changing relationship to coinage in the seventeenth century and the creation of the first national bank—a pivotal moment in the development of capitalism. We will also discuss the crises and challenges along the way. Massachusetts and other colonial governments clashed with royal administrators over who had the power to make money, and applied John Locke’s theories of money and value to their arguments over how much money they should make. Governments enforced the security of their metal and paper money with a legal structure that treated counterfeiting as high treason and executed offenders. Public investment in joint-stock companies dramatically increased circulating credit, and then suddenly destroyed public and private wealth when the first stock market bubble burst. An effort to create copper money for Ireland brought a constitutional crisis to a head. Benjamin Franklin’s innovative paper currency in Pennsylvania worried many Pennsylvanians and exacerbated conflicts between creditors and debtors. British currency acts caused setbacks in the American colonies and steeled American colonists for revolution. During the American Revolution, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and other framers of the new republic debated the role of state and federal governments in making and regulating money, and currency debates were central to the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Course Requirements:

Participation: This course is based on class discussion. It is critical that you complete the assigned reading and come to class with questions and observations about the texts at hand. Grades for participation will include both quality and presence. Unexcused absences will lead to reductions in your grade. (15% of final grade)
Weekly Responsers: Write a paragraph (~200 words) on the authorship and key themes of one of the documents assigned for each week. In your response, pose one or two in-depth discussion questions informed by the text. Choose to respond to a text from either Tuesday’s reader or Thursday’s reading. Post your responses to the course website by 5pm the day before the class when we will be discussing your chosen text. (20% of final grade)

Website Project: We will create a class website on money and law that explains the concepts and histories in this course to the general public. Each student will choose one aspect of the subject to explore in depth, and write a short essay for the website, making use of visual as well as verbal tools. Further instructions will be distributed in class. (30% of final grade)

Take-home exam: Due on Friday, May 4 at 5pm. (35% of final grade). The exam will consist of short answers and longer essay questions, and will cover material from the entire course.

Readings:
The following books are required and will be available for purchase at the UR SpiderShop:


All the remaining readings will be available on the course Blackboard site, and paper copies will be distributed in class.

Laptop-Free Classroom
In order to maintain an atmosphere of intellectual exchange and discussion without distractions, please refrain from using laptops and other wireless-enabled devices in class. Please bring paper copies all assigned readings to class. Shorter readings will be available for you to print from the Blackboard site, and paper copies of upcoming readings will be available in class.

Awarding of Credit
To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html
Disability Accommodations
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.
disability.richmond.edu/

Honor System
The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”
studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

Religious Observance
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

Course Schedule:

Week 1: What is Money?

January 16: Introduction

January 18: Who Makes Money, and What Counts? The Case of Cryptocurrency

Week 2: Money as Law, Money and the State

January 23: The Origins of Money
• Desan, *Making Money*, Introduction and Chapter 1: “Creation Stories” (pp. 1-69)
• David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2011), Chapter 2: “The Myth of Barter” (pp. 21-42)

January 25: Money and the State in Seventeenth Century England
• Desan, *Making Money*, Chapter 6: “Priming the Pump” (pp. 231-265)

**Week 3: Reinventing Money: The Bank of England and the Great Recoinage**

January 30: The Glorious Revolution and the Bank of England
• Desan, *Making Money*, Chapter 8: “Reinventing Money” (pp. 295-329)
• John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, V: Of Property
• John Locke, *Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest, and the Raising the Value of Money* (1691)

February 1: Debating Money: The Great Recoinage
• Desan, *Making Money*, Chapter 9: “Re-theorizing Money” (pp. 330-359)
• John Locke, *Further Considerations concerning raising the value of money…* (1696)
• William Lowndes, *A report containing an essay for the amendment of the silver coins* (1695)
• Charles Davenant, *A Memorial Concerning the Coyn of England* (1695) and *A memoriall concerning Credit* (1696) (selections)

**Week 4: Currency and Sovereignty in Colonial Massachusetts**

February 6: Constitutional Conflict and the Massachusetts Mint
• Jeffrey Sklansky, *Sovereign of the Market: The Money Question in Early America*, Chapter 1, “John Wise and the Natural Law of Commerce” (pp. 21-55)

February 8: The Beginning of Paper Money in Massachusetts
• Cotton Mather, “Some Considerations on the Bills of Credit Now Passing in New-England” (1691) in *Colonial Currency Reprints*, edited by Andrew McFarland Davis (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1910) (pp. 189-196)

**Week 5: Counterfeiting and Capital Punishment**

February 13: Capital Punishment as an Answer to the Problem of Trust

February 15: Counterfeiting and the Casualties of the Monetary System
• Documents from the case of Mary Mangey, widow of Arthur Mangey, who was executed for coining (collected from my own research)

**Week 6: Laws and Joint-Stock Companies: The South Sea Bubble**

February 20: Joint-Stock Companies and the First Speculative Bubble
• Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, Chapter 6
• Daniel Defoe, *True Account of the design, and advantages of the South-Sea trade* (1711)

February 22: Financial Collapse
• John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's letters*: No. 2, 12 Nov. 1720: *The fatal Effects of the South-Sea Scheme, and the Necessity of Punishing the Directors*
• William Hogarth, untitled allegory of the South Sea Bubble (image)

**Week 7: Constitutional Crisis and Money in Ireland**

February 27: Ireland: Kingdom or Colony?
• John Cary, *An Answer to Mr Molyneaux His Case of Ireland…And His Dangerous Notion of Ireland’s Being under No Subordination to the Parliamentary Authority of England Refuted* (1698)

March 1: The Crisis over Wood’s Halfpence
• Jonathan Swift, *Letter to the whole people of Ireland* [*Drapier’s Letters*, Letter IV] (1724)
• George Berkeley, *The Querist* (1735-7), selections.

**Week 8: Credit and Paper Money in Pennsylvania**

March 6:
• Francis Rawle, *Some Remedies Proposed for Restoring the Sunk Credit of the Province of Pennsylvania* (1721)
• Paper Money Act of 1723 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

March 8: The Pennsylvania Paper Currency Debates
• Francis Rawle, *Ways and Means for the Inhabitants of Delaware to Become Rich* (1725) (selection)
• James Logan, *A Dialogue shewing, what’s therein to be found* (1725) (selection)
• Rawle, *A Just Rebuke…* (1726) (selection)
• Benjamin Franklin, “A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper-Currency” (1729)

**SPRING BREAK**

Week 9: Currency Debates in Colonial America

March 20: Fractional Conflict and Monetary Theory in Massachusetts
• Ernst, *Money and Politics in America*, Chapter 1, selection (pp. 30-37)
• William Douglass, “Discourse on the Currencies of the American Plantations” (1740) in *Colonial Currency Reprints*

March 22: Currency Debates in the Southern Colonies
• Ernst, *Money and Politics in America*, Chapter 2, selection (pp. 37-42)

Week 10: The American Revolution and Conflict Over Currency

March 27: The Currency Act of 1764 and Imperial Crisis

March 29: American Independence and Currency
• Greene, *Constitutional Origins*, Chapters 2, “Empire Confronted, 1764-1766,” and 4, “Empire Shattered, 1774-1776” (pp. 67-103 and 149-186)
• John Adams, “Letter to the Comte De Vergennes” (1780) in *Papers of John Adams* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, June 22, 1780)
• Alexander Hamilton, *Report on the Public Credit* (January 14, 1790)
• William Manning, “Some Proposals” (1790)

**Week 11: Constitution and Money in the New Republic**

April 3: Currency, Class, and the Constitution
• U.S. Constitution, Art. I, Secs 8 & 10

April 5: Hamilton and the National Bank
• Alexander Hamilton, *Report on the Subject of a National Bank* (1790), 1-23
• Fisher Ames, Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives, Feb. 3, 1791
• “Thomas Jefferson’s Opinion on the Constitutionality of a National Bank 15 February 1791” in *Liberty and Order*
• “James Madison to Thomas Jefferson on Speculative Excess, Summer 1791” in *Liberty and Order*

**Week 12: A Public History of Money**

April 10: Website Project Presentations

April 12: Website Project Presentations, Continued

**Week 13: The Battle over the Banks in Jacksonian America**

April 17: Economic Transformation and the Effort to Regulate Money in the Early Republic
• Sklansky, *Sovereign of the Market*, Chapter 3, “William Leggett and the Melodrama of the Market” (pp. 93-130)
• Mihm, *Nation of Counterfeiters*, Prologue: “Confidence in the Currency” and Chapter 1, “Bordering on Alchemy” (pp. 1-62)

April 19: The Bank Wars
• Sklansky, *Sovereign of the Market*, Chapter 4, “Nicholas Biddle and the Beauty of Banking” (pp. 131-165)
• Mihm, *Nation of Counterfeiters*, Chapters 3, “The Bank Wars” (pp. 103-156)
• President Andrew Jackson’s Veto Message Regarding the Bank of the United States, July 10, 1832

Week 14: Free Banking and Conflict in the Antebellum United States

April 24: The Free Banking Era and the Coming of the Civil War
• Mihm, Nation of Counterfeiters, selections.

April 26: Review: Looking Back and Looking Forward
Take-home exam will be distributed at the end of class

** Trip to the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, date TBA**

Take-home exam due Friday, May 4, by 5pm.

Additional Resources:

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

Academic Skills Center (http://asc.richmond.edu, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement.

Career Services (http://careerservices.richmond.edu/ or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

Counseling and Psychological Services (http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/ or 289-8119): Assists currently
enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Speech Center ([http://speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409](http://speech.richmond.edu)): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center ([http://writing.richmond.edu or 289-8263](http://writing.richmond.edu)): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians ([http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876](http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/)): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.