# Business History

## Prof. Giovanni Gregorini

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to explore the historical evolution of business, which plays a key role in modern economic development. The historical perspective is fundamental to understand the multifaceted nature of businesses, as well as their complexity and geographical differences.

After a short introduction on the evolution of the theories about business and entrepreneurship, the course will then focus on business history, setting the Italian national experience among the events that characterised the evolution of global economics. Particular importance will be attached to social and cultural aspects, such as the entrepreneur role and the latest work trends (two factors that have influenced the evolution of business over time).

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

* understand the different ways in which businesses have become the most important actor of contemporary capitalism;
* identify the steps of modern economic development, as well as their influence on the formal and substantial evolution of business in Italy and in the rest of the world;
* distinguish the different factors (including the systemic ones) that have had an influence on the functioning of businesses over time;
* realise that globalisation is not an irreversible process.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

* make strategic decisions for
* business, considering its historical and institutional context;
* analyse the ordinary and extraordinary situations requiring a decision-making process, and recognise the need for a complex approach towards issues;
* assess the importance of social and cultural variables (always considering their historical evolution) in the implementation of business operation mechanisms;
* launch business innovations, considering the social and environmental aspects on which they could have an impact (in a direct or indirect way).

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. The contemporary theories about business and entrepreneurship.
2. The international and the Italian historiography of business.
3. The analysis of the structure, the size, and the geographical distribution of businesses in post-unification Italy.
4. Technology, finance, business relations, and economic policies.
5. State-owned enterprises.
6. Rise and fall of industrialist culture in Italy during the 20th century.

***READING LIST***

P.A. Toninelli, *Storia d’impresa. Seconda edizione,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2012 (part I and V).

R. Giannetti-M. Vasta, *Storia dell’impresa italiana. Seconda edizione,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2012.

G. Berta, *L’Italia delle fabbriche. La parabola dell’industrialismo nel Novecento,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, supported by slides on the topics explained, and audio-visual contents.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of a final oral exam with questions relating to the six parts of the syllabus, each of which is worth the same number of marks.

The four equally important assessment criteria are as follows: relevance of answers (1/4 of the final mark out of 30), appropriate use of specialist lexis (1/4 of the final mark out of 30), coherent and logical structure of argumentation (1/4 of the final mark out of 30), ability to make conceptual links and identify open issues (1/4 of the final mark out of 30).

In-depth study of the course reading list is essential for exam preparation. During the course, students may present a case study of particular interest to them, individually or in groups, subject to the lecturer's approval. This extra activity is worth up to four additional points (in addition to the results of the oral exam).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In order to get the most out of this course, students should have a good knowledge of modern and contemporary world history.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.