# Economic History (Business History)

## Prof. Claudio Besana; Prof. Sebastiano Nerozzi

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

Enterprise has been a driving force of the contemporary economy. Firms are multi-faceted organisations, that have historically been the point of encounter between entrepreneurship and social forces, between the family and management, between technology and organisation, and between local society and the global market. The configuration and performance of firms, and the knowledge, culture and models that firms have produced have made them the focal point of development of advanced economies. The course will look at the typical main characteristics of firms, the relationships of firms with the structural dynamics of the economy, and the role of firms in the development of the productive systems in Italy and some of the world's advanced economies.

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

a) demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the characteristics of enterprises and of the role they played in developing and transforming the economies of the most advanced countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;

b) at formative level, possess a refined awareness and anability to analyse those economic institutions central to the productive life of systems based on free market and private initiative;

c) use the proposed reading list to support their independent reflection and in-depth study of the various issues;

d) use the different forms adopted during the course so as to improve their oral and written presentation skills regarding complex issues as well as their approach to the presentation of personal considerations.

e) finally, their acquired knowledge will be able to refine their understanding of complex economic phenomena, even current ones.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is organised into two modules: during the first one, held by Professor Claudio Besana, students will analyse the changes to corporate systems in Italy between the beginning and the end of the nineteenth century. In the second module, held by Professor Sebastiano Nerozzi, students will focus on the analysis of the characteristics of corporate systems in the US, Japan and advanced countries in Europe.

Module 1: *Business and organisation: the Italian case* (Prof. Claudio Besana)

The course will deal with the most significant experiences in business systems in Italy from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century.

In particular, the course will cover the following broad topics:

– The origins of industrial Italy. Chronology and players (1820-1915);

– The birth, consolidation and crisis of big businesses in Italy (1915-1980);

– The resilience of the Italian industrial system: small businesses, districts and the fourth capitalism (1980-2008).

Module 2: *Business and organisation: international horizons* (Prof. Emilio Cosma Orsi)

The course will deal, in comparative terms, with the most significant experiences in teaching the business systems that have globally established modern economic development between the 19th and the 20th century.

In particular, the course will cover the following broad topics:

– Business and entrepreneurship in the thought of the economists: from Adam Smith to neo-institutionalism.

– Businesses and the organisation of business during the first Industrial Revolution in England, France and Germany (1780-1870).

– Big businesses during the second Industrial Revolution: USA, Germany, Japan (1870-1950).

– Businesses and organisation in capitalism from World War II to globalisation (1950-2000).

***READING LIST***

For Module 1

F. Coltorti, *Le grandi imprese nello sviluppo industriale italiano,* EDUCatt, Milan-Bologna, 2012 (chapters I-VI)– available on *kindle* and in printed form.

M. Doria, *L’imprenditoria industriale in Italia dall’Unità al “miracolo economico”. Capitani d’industria,* padroni, innovatori, Giappichelli, Turin, 1998 (part II, Gli imprenditori) – text availableat the History of Economics ‘Mario Romani’ Library or on the website: *www.storiaindustria.it*.

For Module 2

F. Amatori-A. Colli, *Storia d’impresa. Complessità e comparazioni,* Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2012 (chapters 1-17).

The detailed course programme and further study material will be made available online on the dedicated Blackboard platform.

***TEACHING METHOD***

This blended course includes face-to-face activities (50%) and distance activities (50%). Distance activities include video lectures (asynchronous), practical webinars and live feedback (conducted synchronously via webconference).

Lectures will be interactive and aim to frame and examine the topics discussed. Business cases, together with entrepreneurial and managerial experiences, will be explored and discussed from a historical viewpoint.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out using procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

A) Ongoing assessment

Students who opt for ongoing assessment: 50% of the assessment will be based on two tests (a written test completed in class and a group assignment) given during the course, the content and details will be posted on the student area of Blackboard; 50% of the assessment will be based on a final oral test on parts of the course programme decided with the lecturers. Students must pass tests taken during the course in order to sit the final test. In order to pass the examination, students must pass the final test (students may take the test during only one of the three examination calls after the end of the course).

The written test in class may be substituted by a remote test on Blackboard in the event of a health emergency (see above).

B) Unified summative assessment

Students who opt for unified assessment during an examination session will have an oral test on the entire course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for the course.

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.