The Founders: Portrait of an American Elite

*Lecture notes*

Thesis: Founders wrote Constitution that promoted their own interests. But they were able to get their blueprint accepted because it addressed other problems.

**What the Founders Wanted** (the sweeteners)

- Broader Tax Powers
  - To pay back bonds (bondholders)
  - To block foreign imports (merchants)
  - To fund internal improvements (speculators)
  - To pay military pensions (Cincinnati)
- Centralized Policy Making
  - To prevent states from coining money (money lenders and bondholders)
  - To negotiate international trade (merchants and planters)
  - To prevent internal tariffs (merchants and planters)
  - To promote “national” leadership like them
- A National Military
  - To run off the Native Americans (speculators)
  - To suppress farmer insurrections (money lenders)
  - To protect against slave revolts (planters)
  - To foil pirates (merchants)
  - To provide career opportunities (Cincinnati)
- Protection for Contracts & Wealth
  - Contracts guaranteed to protect land claims (speculators) and loans (money lenders)
  - Federal court system allowed to enforce such protections
  - Ban on income taxes (merchants, etc.)
  - Slavery safeguards (planters)
  - Voting qualifications (just about everyone)