

Econ 7400: Economic History
Fall 2006
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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:00, Wednesday 3:00-4:30, other times by appointment

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of US economic history. We will examine some classic debates in the field as well as emerging areas of research. It is hoped that you will gain insight into both the topics under study and the methods that economic historians use to study them.

There is no textbook for the class. The articles and chapters we read will be made available through WebCT and in the copy room. If you have not studied US economic history before, and in particular if you have limited knowledge of US history, you may want to pick up a textbook to use as reference. Some useful ones include

Atack and Passell, A New Economic View of American History: From Colonial Times to 1940 (Norton 1994).

Walton and Rockoff, History of the American Economy with Economic Applications (South Western, various editions).

Hughes and Cain, American Economic History (Addison Wesley, various editions).

You should be able to find used copies, especially of older editions, through Amazon, Powells, and other sources.

Mechanics of the Course:

Each week, I will discuss the background of the given topic, and I will also discuss the primary readings for the topic (listed below). For most topics, some “supplemental readings” are also listed. Each student will write a short (approximately five page) critical essay on FOUR of these readings during the semester and will also lead our discussion of the same readings. Your critical essays should include a summary of the article, a critique of the assumptions of the model/the econometric approach/ the quality of the data (whatever is most relevant), and some ideas for improvement or extension of the article. These essays should be designed to generate class discussion of the given article and related topics. You must also prepare a one-page handout for the class to promote discussion of the article. Your essays and handouts should be e-mailed to me by 5 pm Friday for a Monday presentation or by 5 pm Tuesday for a Wednesday presentation. Each critical essay/presentation counts for 10 percent of your grade.

Of course, all students are responsible for doing all of the required reading and being prepared to discuss the material in class. Participation in these discussions will constitute 5 percent of your final grade.

We will have a final, take-home exam during exam week. This will be an essay exam designed to help you review and integrate the material from the semester, and to give you an idea of what a field exam in economic history might look like. The exam will be worth 20 percent of your grade.

The remaining 35 percent of your grade will be accounted for by a research project (described below).

Research Projects:

Each student will choose some narrow topic in US economic history for intense study and will write a research paper of 15 to 20 pages on that topic. The resulting paper should (1) pose an interesting question and motivate the importance of that question, (2) review and evaluate the relevant literature and identify how answering the question at hand will contribute to the literature, (3) develop some testable hypotheses which will allow us to answer the question, (4) identify and make some preliminary evaluation of evidence for testing these hypotheses. There are several steps in the completion of the research project:

- On Wednesday, October 18th, each student should turn in a page identifying their general area of interest, proposing some potential narrow topics, and listing some of the relevant literature (at least four potential sources other than items listed on the syllabus). We will discuss these general topics on the 18th. This part of the assignment is worth 5 percent of your semester grade.
- On Wednesday, November 8th, each student should turn in a paragraph-long description of a narrow topic, along with an outline for the rest of the paper. This part of the assignment is worth 10 percent of your semester grade.
- The final papers will be due Wednesday, December 6th, and we will discuss them on that day. The final paper is worth 20 percent of your semester grade. More details concerning sources and format will be given during the first couple of weeks of the semester.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Note that dates, topics, and readings may change (with advance notice) to suit the pace of the course and the interests of the students.

W 8/23 and M 8/28: Introduction to Methods and Materials of Economic History, and Overview of European and New World Growth

Primary Readings:

- Crafts, N.F.R., "Industrial Revolution in England and France: Some Thoughts on the Question, 'Why was England First?'" Economic History Review 1977, p. 429-41.
- Voth, Hans Joachim, "Time and Work in Eighteenth-Century London," Journal of Economic History 58:1 (March 1998), p. 29-58.
- Engerman, Stanley L., and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Factor Endowments, Inequality, and Paths of Development among New World Economies," NBER Working Paper 9259, October 2002.

W 8/30 and M 9/6: Markets in the Colonial and Early Antebellum Periods

Primary Readings:

A. Markets in Rural New England:

- Henretta, James A., "Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series 35 (January 1978).
- Rothenberg, Winifred, "The Market and Massachusetts Farmers," Journal of Economic History 41:2 (June 1981).

B. Colonial Population and Labor Markets:

- Wells, Robert V., "The Population of England's Colonies in America: Old English or New Americans?" Population Studies 46 (March 1992).
- Galenson, David W., "The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis," Journal of Economic History 44 (March 1984).

Supplemental Readings:

- Clark, Christopher, "The Household Economy, Market Exchange, and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," Journal of Social History 13:2 (Winter 1979).
- Grubb, Farley, and Tony Stitt, "The Liverpool Emigrant Servant Trade and the Transition to Slave Labor in the Chesapeake, 1697-1707: Adjustments to War," Explorations in Economic History 31:3 (July 1994).

M 9/11 and W 9/13: Manufacturing in the Antebellum US

Primary Readings:

- Field, Alexander James, "Sectoral Shift in Antebellum Massachusetts: A Reconsideration," Explorations in Economic History 15:2 (April 1978).
- Goldin, Claudia and Kenneth Sokoloff, "The Relative Productivity Hypothesis of Industrialization: The American Case, 1820-1850," Quarterly Journal of Economics (1984).

Supplemental Readings:

- Sokoloff, Kenneth L. and Viken Tchakerian, "Manufacturing Where Agriculture Predominates: Evidence from the South and Midwest in 1860," Explorations in Economic History 34:3 (July 1997), p. 243-264.
- Sokoloff, Kenneth L., "Was the Transition from Artisanal Shop to the Non-Mechanized Factory Associated with Gains in Efficiency? Evidence from the US Manufacturing Censuses of 1820 and 1850," Explorations in Economic History 21 (1984), p. 351-382.

M 9/18 and W 9/20: Technological Change and Productivity in the 19th Century

Primary Readings:

- Kremer, Michael, "Population Growth and Technological Change: One Million BC to 1990," Quarterly Journal of Economics August 1993
- Sokoloff, Kenneth, "Inventive Activity in Early Industrial America: Evidence from Patent Records, 1790-1846," Journal of Economic History 48:4 (December 1988).

Supplemental Readings:

- Lazonick, William and Thomas Brush, "The 'Horndal Effect' in Early US Manufacturing," Explorations in Economic History 22 (1985).
- Olmstead, Alan L. and Paul W. Rhode, "The Red Queen and the Hard Reds: Productivity Growth in American Wheat 1800-1940," Journal of Economic History 62:4 p. 929-966.

M 9/25 and W 9/27: Health and Standard of Living in the US

Primary Readings:

- Steckel, Richard H., "Stature and the Standard of Living," Journal of Economic Literature 33:4 (December 1995).
- Lee, Chulhee, "Socioeconomic Background, Disease, and Mortality among Union Army Recruits: Implications for Economic and Demographic History," Explorations in Economic History 34:1 (January 1997).
- Carson, Scott Alan, and Thomas N. Maloney, "Living Standards in Black and White: Evidence from the Heights of Ohio Prison Inmates, 1829-1913," CESifo Working Paper No. 1775 (August 2006).

Supplemental Readings:

- Haines, Michael R., Lee A. Craig, and Thomas Weiss, "The Short and the Dead: Nutrition, Mortality, and the 'Antebellum Puzzle' in the United States," Journal of Economic History 63:2 (June 2003), p. 382-413.

- Fogel, Robert W., “Economic Growth, Population Theory, and Physiology: The Bearing of Long-Term Processes on the Making of Economic Policy,” American Economic Review 84 (June 1994).

M 10/2 and W 10/4: Immigration

Primary Readings:

- Ferrie, Joseph, “The Wealth Accumulation of Antebellum European Immigrants to the US, 1840-1860,” Journal of Economic History 54:1 (March 1994).
- Hanes, Christopher, “Immigrants’ Relative Rate of Wage Growth in the Late 19th Century,” Explorations in Economic History 33:1 (January 1996).
- Hatton, Timothy J., “The Immigration Assimilation Puzzle in Late Nineteenth-Century America,” Journal of Economic History 57:1 (March 1997).

Supplemental Readings:

- Borjas, George J., “Making It in America: Social Mobility in the Immigrant Population,” NBER Working Paper 12088 (March 2006).
- Cloud and Galenson, “Chinese Immigration and Contract Labor in the Late 19th Century,” Explorations in Economic History 24 (1987), p. 22-42.

M 10/9 and W 10/11: Slavery, the South, and the Civil War

Primary Readings:

- David, Paul and Peter Temin, “Slavery: The Progressive Institution?” Journal of Economic History September 1974.
- Hanes, Christopher, “Turnover Costs and the Distribution of Slave Labor in Anglo-America,” Journal of Economic History 56:2 (June 1996).
- Temin, Peter, “The Post-Bellum Recovery of the South and the Cost of the Civil War,” Journal of Economic History 26:4 (December 1976).

Supplemental Readings:

- Lee, Chulhee, “Wealth Accumulation and the Health of Union Army Veterans, 1860-1870,” Journal of Economic History 65:2 (June 2005).
- Brinkley, Garland, “The Decline in Southern Agricultural Output, 1860-1880,” Journal of Economic History 57:1 (March 1997).

M 10/16 and W 10/18: Internal Migration and Markets on the Frontier

Primary Readings:

- Steckel, Richard H., “The Economic Foundations of East-West Migration during the 19th Century,” Explorations in Economic History 20 (1983).
- Galenson, David, and Clayne Pope, “Precedence and Wealth: Evidence from 19th Century Utah,” in Goldin and Rockoff, eds., Strategic Factors in 19th Century American Economic History. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Supplemental Readings:

- Pope, Clayne, “Households on the American Frontier: The Distribution of Income and Wealth in Utah, 1850-1900,” in Galenson, ed., Markets in History: Economic Studies of the Past. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

WE WILL ALSO DISCUSS INITIAL PAPER TOPICS ON OCTOBER 18

M 10/23 and W 10/25: 19th Century Capital Markets/Change in Industrial Structure

Primary Readings:

A. Capital Markets

- Davis and Gallman, "Capital Formation in the United States during the Nineteenth Century," in Mathias and Postan, eds., The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Volume III: The Industrial Economics – Capital, Labour, and Enterprise, Part 2: The United States, Japan, and Russia (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- Sokoloff, Kenneth, "Investment in Fixed and Working Capital During Industrialization: Evidence from US Manufacturing Firms," Journal of Economic History 44:2 (June 1984).

B. Industrial Structure

- Lamoreaux, Naomi, The Great Merger Movement in American Business, 1895-1904. NY: Cambridge University Press, ch. 3, 4.
- O'Brien, Anthony Patrick, "Factory Size, Economies of Scale, and the Great Merger Wave of 1898-1902," Journal of Economic History 48:3 (September 1988).

Supplemental Readings:

- Levenstein, Margaret C., "Price Wars and The Stability of Collusion: A Study of the Pre-World War II Bromine Industry," Journal of Economic History 45:2 (June 1997), p. 117-37.
- McCurdy, Charles, "American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation, 1875-1890," Journal of Economic History 38:3 (September 1978).

M 10/30 and W 11/1: Labor Markets, Unemployment, Mobility, and Poverty in the 19th Century

Primary Readings

- Keyssar, Alexander, Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986, ch. 1, 2.
- Long, Jason, and Joseph Ferrie, "A Tale of Two Labor Markets: Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Britain and the US Since 1850," NBER Working Paper 11253, March 2005.

Supplemental Readings:

- Rosenbloom, Joshua, "The Extent of the Labor Market in the United States," Social Science History 22:3 (Fall 1998)
- Hannon, Joan Underhill, "Poverty in the Antebellum Northeast: The View from New York State's Poor Relief Rolls," Journal of Economic History 44:4 (December 1984), p. 1007-32.

M 11/6 and W 11/8: Women and Work in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Primary Readings

- Goldin, Claudia, "The Changing Economic Role of Women: A Quantitative Approach," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 13:4 (Spring 1983), p. 707-733.
- Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz, "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions," Journal of Political Economy 110:4 (2002), p. 740-70.

Supplemental Readings

- Folbre, Nancy, and Barnet Wagman, "Counting Housework: New Estimates of Real Product in the United States, 1800-1860," Journal of Economic History 53:2 (June 1993), p. 275-88.
- Kossoudji, Sherrie A., and Laura Dresser, "Working Class Rosies: Women Industrial Workers During World War II," Journal of Economic History 52:2 (June 1992).

WE WILL ALSO DISCUSS REVISED PAPER TOPICS ON NOVEMBER 8.

M 11/13 and W 11/15: African American Labor and Racial Inequality

Primary Readings

- Maloney, Thomas N., and Warren C. Whatley, "Making the Effort: The Racial Contours of Detroit's Labor Markets, 1920-1940," Journal of Economic History 55:3 (September 1995).
- JEH Donohue, John H. III, and James Heckman, "Continuous vs. Episodic Change: The Impact of Civil Rights Policy on the Economic Status of Blacks," Journal of Economic Literature 29:4 (Dec. 1991)

Supplemental Readings:

- Sundstrom, William A., "The Color Line: Racial Norms and Discrimination in Urban Labor Markets, 1910-1950," Journal of Economic History 54:2 June 1994.
- Collins, William J., "The Labor Market Impact of State-Level Anti-Discrimination Laws, 1940-1960," Industrial and Labor Relations Review 56:2 (January 2003), p. 244-72.

M 11/20 and W 11/22: Growth of the Public Sector / Post-World War II US Economic Performance

Primary Readings:

A. Growth of the Public Sector

- Higgs, Robert. "Crisis, Bigger Government, and Ideological Change: Toward an Understanding of the Ratchet," chapter 4 in Higgs, Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government. NY: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Lindert, Peter H., "The Rise of Social Spending 1880-1930," Explorations in Economic History 31:1 (January 1994).

B. Post World War II US Economic Performance:

- Nelson, Richard R. and Gavin Wright, "The Rise and Fall of American Technological Leadership: The Postwar Era in Historical Perspective," Journal of Economic Literature 30 (December 1992), p. 1931-1964.

Supplemental Readings:

- Lindert, Peter H., "What Limits Social Spending?" Explorations in Economic History 33:1 (January 1996).
- Abramowitz, Moses, "Catching Up, Forging Ahead, and Falling Behind," Journal of Economic History 46:2 (June 1996).

M 11/27 and W 11/29: Path Dependence

Primary Readings:

- David, Paul A., "Understanding the Economics of QWERTY: the Necessity of History," in Economic History and the Modern Economist
- Liebowitz, S.J. and Stephen E. Margolis, "The Fable of the Keys," Journal of Law and Economics 33 (April 1990).
- David, Paul A., "Why Are Institutions the 'Carriers of History'? Path Dependence and the Evolution of Conventions, Organizations, and Institutions," Structural Change and Economic Dynamics 5:2 (1994)

Supplemental Readings:

- Rosenbloom, Joshua L., "Path Dependence and the Origins of Cotton Textile Manufacturing in New England," NBER Working Paper 9182 (September 2002).

M 12/4: Catch Up

W 12/6: Review, Discuss Final Papers