

Fall 2013

**Harvard Economics 1357**  
**Sever Hall 202**  
**Monday/Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:30**

Professor: Richard Hornbeck, [hornbeck@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:hornbeck@fas.harvard.edu)  
Office hours: TBD

Teaching Fellow: Sara Lowes, [slowes@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:slowes@fas.harvard.edu)  
Office hours: TBD

This course surveys research topics in economic history, with an emphasis on questions related to economic development. Class will be organized around a discussion of assigned readings on institutions, technology, and the development of the American economy. The course focuses on exposing students to research, and encouraging the creation of new research ideas. The course emphasizes quantitative empirical methods and students should be familiar with basic tools for economic analysis, though the course will provide background in relevant empirical methods.

Course requirements are:

1. Class participation. The assigned readings are to be completed by the date indicated on the reading list, and it is essential that readings be completed to facilitate class discussion. Readings are posted on the course website.
2. Reading discussion questions. Prior to each class, students will submit responses to short discussion questions (approximately one double-spaced page for each class). These will be graded as check-plus/check/check-minus. "Check" responses demonstrate familiarity with the papers. "Check-plus" responses contain new insight on the papers: critiques, potential improvements, or connecting the paper to other readings. These responses should be prepared individually by students.
3. Research proposal(s). Two short research proposals (approximately 5 double-spaced pages) should detail the economic question, setting/data, and proposed methodology for the analysis. The first research proposal is due 10/11 (at 5pm). The second research proposal is due 11/22 (at 5pm). Some proposals will be chosen for student in-class presentations. These research proposals should be prepared individually by students.
4. Final exam. A final exam during exam week will have essay questions that build on class discussions and the reading discussion questions. (Exam Group TBD)

Grading:

Class participation and reading discussion questions will combine for 30% of the grade. The research proposals will count for 40% of the grade. The course final will count for the remaining 30% of the grade. Concentrators may not take the class pass/fail.

Writing requirement:

This course fulfills the undergraduate writing requirement for economics concentrators.

## **Introduction**

### Class 1 (September 4)

## **Part 1: Institutions**

### Class 2 (September 9)

Hornbeck, Richard. 2010. "Barbed Wire: Property Rights and Agricultural Development." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 125, No. 2, pp. 767-810.

### Class 3 (September 11)

Libecap, Gary and Dean Lueck. 2011. "The Demarcation of Land and the Role of Property Coordinating Institutions," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 119, No. 3, pp. 426-467.

### Class 4 (September 16)

Hornbeck, Richard and Dan Keniston. 2013. "Creative Destruction from the Great Boston Fire of 1872: Barriers to Urban Growth Illuminated."

### Class 5 (September 18)

North, Douglass C. and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and Commitment: Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *Journal of Economic History*, 49, 803-832.

Greif, Avner, Paul Milgrom and Barry Weingast. 1994. "Coordination, Commitment and Enforcement: The Case of the Merchant Guild," *Journal of Political Economy*, 102, 912-950.

### Class 6 (September 23)

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review*, 91, 1369-1401.

### Class 7 (September 25)

(Class canceled due to sickness)

### Class 8 (September 30)

Nunn, Nathan. 2008. "The Long-run Effects of Africa's Slave Trades," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 123, No. 1, pp. 139-176.

Nunn and Wantchekon. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa," *American Economic Review*, 101, 7, 3221-3252.

## **Part 2: Technology**

### Class 9 (October 2)

Joel Mokyr, The Lever of Riches, Introduction, Chapter 9, Chapter 10.

### Class 10 (October 7)

Robert C. Allen, "The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective," presented at the NBER conference on Starting Economic Growth, June 1-2, 2006.

Goldin, Claudia and Kenneth Sokoloff, "Women, Children, and Industrialization in the Early Republic: Evidence from the Manufacturing Census," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 42, pp. 741-774.

Class 11 (October 9)

Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Chapter 1.

Murphy, Kevin, Andrei Sheilfer and Robert Vishny. 1989. "Industrialization and the Big Push," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 97, No. 5, pp. 1003-1026.

Class 12 (October 16)

Fogel, Robert. 1964. *Railroads and American Economic Growth*. Chapter 1.

Donaldson, Dave and Richard Hornbeck. 2012. "Railroads and American Economic Growth: A Market Access Approach."

Class 13 (October 21)

Moser, Petra, "How Do Patent Laws Influence Innovation? Evidence from Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 95, pp. 1214-36.

Class 14 (October 23)

Student Presentations

### **Part 3: Development of the American Economy**

Class 15 (October 28)

Bleakley, Hoyt. 2007. "Disease and Development: Evidence from Hookworm Eradication in the American South." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Feb.

Class 16 (October 30)

Hornbeck, Richard and Suresh Naidu. 2012. "When the Levee Breaks: Labor Mobility and Economic Development in the American South."

Class 17 (November 4)

Fishback, Horrace, Kantor. 2005. "The Impact of New Deal Expenditures on Local Economic Activity: An Examination of Retail Sales, 1929-1939," *Journal of Economic History*, March, pp. 36-71.

Class 18 (November 6)

Bleakley and Lin. Portage paper.

Class 19 (November 11)

Hornbeck, Richard. 2012. "The Enduring Impact of the American Dust Bowl: Short and Long-run Adjustments to Environmental Catastrophe," *American Economic Review*, June.

Goodspeed. Famine paper.

Class 20 (November 13)

Hornbeck, Richard and Pinar Keskin. 2013. Ogallala paper.

Hornbeck, Richard and Pinar Keskin. 2013. Ogallala 2 paper.

Class 21 (November 18)

Goldin, Claudia and Robert A. Margo. 1992. "The Great Compression: The U.S. Wage Structure at Mid-Century," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 107, pp. 1-34.

Costa, Dora. 2000. "The Wage and the Length of the Work Day: From the 1890s to 1991." *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 18, pp. 156-181.

Class 22 (November 20)

Acemoglu, Daron, David Autor, and David Lyle. 2004. "Women, War, and Wages: The Effect of Female Labor Supply on the Wage Structure at Midcentury," *Journal of Political Economy*, June.

Class 23 (November 25)

Boutan, Leah. 2009. "Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migration and Racial Wage Convergence in the North, 1940-1970." *Journal of Economic History*.

Class 24 (December 2)

Student presentations

Class 25 (December 4)

Student presentations