

Economics 8534 : Economic History of the United States

Spring 202X • TBD • Monday • Wednesday • TBD

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Description

This is a course in the economic history. The goal is to provide PhD students an introduction to debates, methods, and recent topics in the economic history of the American past. Topics covered include institutions and culture, agricultural development, transportation and economic integration, immigration, innovation, the Great Depression, regions and cities, the welfare state, media and politics, and interventions in foreign affairs by the US government. We will emphasize the role of history in understanding economic process as well as the use of theory, data, and computation in addressing research questions.

Grading

Participation (10%): Students are required to attend class and actively participate.

Data Assignment (10%): Students are required to complete one assignment using data from the Historical Statistics of the United States and ICPSR. This is due on [1/29](#).

Replication (30%, 10% presentation + 20% assignment): Students are required to complete a presentation and replication of one published economic history paper. The presentations will take place on [2/1](#) and [2/3](#) and the replication will be due on [3/5](#).

Paper (50%, 5% proposal presentation + 15% final presentation + 30% final paper): Students are required to complete a presentation and final research paper on an economic history topic of their choice. The proposal presentations will take place on [3/15](#). The final presentations will take place on [4/26](#) and [4/28](#) and the final paper will be due on [5/3](#).

Data

In addition, students should familiarize themselves with census data at the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) and county-level data at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). IPUMS includes complete count data for the US Census from 1850 to 1940 (except 1940). These data can be combined with information from the Census Linking Project to create samples of individuals or family members linked over time. From ICPSR, students should download the following series: Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data, 1790-2002 (#2896); United States Agriculture Data, 1840-2012 (#35206); and U.S. County-Level Natality and Mortality Data, 1915-2007 (#36603).

Reading

The readings marked with a “★” are required and should be completed before first class in the week listed. The readings marked with a “†” provide methodological background and are optional (but strongly encouraged). The *Oxford History of the United States* series provides excellent overviews of the United States since the founding. Students interested in conducting research in economic history should become familiar with these volumes. I am happy to provide other recommendations on specific time periods or topics that you may be interested in.

Course Outline

1/20: Introduction

Goldin, “The Economist as Detective”

Collins et al, “The Future of Economic History,” *JEH*

Dippel & Leonard, “Not-So-Natural Experiments in History,” *JHPE*

*Jaworski, “Specification and Structure in Economic History,” *EEH*

*Eichengreen, “Economic History and Economic Policy,” *JEH*

1/25: Paths of Development

Acemoglu & Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*

Engerman & Sokoloff, “Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development,” *JEP*

*Allen et al, “The Colonial Origins of the Divergence in the Americas,” *JEH*

*Dell, “The Persistent Effects of Peru’s Mining *Mita*,” *Ecta*

*Abad & Maurer, “The Long Shadow of History?”

1/27: Indigenous Peoples

*Carlos et al, “Indigenous Nations and the Development of the US Economy”

*Feir et al, “The Slaughter of the Bison and Reversal of Fortunes on the Great Plains”

*Dippel, “Forced Coexistence and Economic Development,” *Ecta*

2/1: Early American Institutions

North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*

Bardhan, “State and Development” *JEL*

*Link & Maggor, “The United States As A Developing Nation,” *Past & Present*

*Lamoreaux & Wallis, “Fixing the Machine that Would Not Go of Itself”

2/3: The Role of Culture

Fischer, *Albion's Seed*

Woodard, *American Nations*

Ball et al, "Clustering of 770,000 Genomes," *Nature Communications*

Giuliano & Nunn, "Understanding Cultural Persistence and Change," *ReStud*

*Bazzi, Fiszbein, & Gebresilasse, "Frontier Culture," *Ecta*

2/8: Slavery

Fogel & Engerman, *Time on the Cross*

Wright, "Slavery and American Agricultural History," *Agricultural History*

*Hilt, "Revisiting Time on the Cross After 45 Years," *Capitalism*

*Rhode & Olmstead, "Slave Productivity in Cotton Picking"

2/10: The Postbellum South

Ransom & Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*

Alston & Ferrie, *Southern Paternalism and the American Welfare State*

*Logan, "Do Black Politicians Matter?" *JEH*

2/15: Agriculture

Rhode & Olmstead, *Creating Abundance*

*Davis et al, "Harvests and Business Cycles in Nineteenth-Century America," *QJE*

*Lange et al, "The Impact of the Boll Weevil, 1892-1932," *JEH*

*Fiszbein, "Agricultural Diversity, Structural Change and LR Development," *AEJ: Macro*

2/22 & 2/24: Railroads

Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth*

†Redding & Rossi-Hansberg, "Quantitative Spatial Economics," *ARE*

†Murphy et al, "Industrialization and the Big Push," *JPE*

*Donaldson & Hornbeck, "Railroads and American Economic Growth," *QJE*

*Hornbeck & Rotemberg, "Railroads, Reallocation, and the Rise of American Mfg"

*Donaldson, "Railroads of the Raj," *AER*

3/1: Globalization

Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*

O'Rourke & Williamson, *Globalization and History*

*Jaworski & Keay, "Openness to Trade and the Spread of Industrialization"

*Redding & Fajgelbaum, "Trade, Structural Transformation and Development"

3/3: The Age of Mass Migration

Hatton & Williamson, *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact*

Abramitzky & Boustan, "Immigration in American Economic History," *JEL*

*Abramitzky, Boustan, & Eriksson, "A Nation of Immigrants," *JPE*

*Karadja & Prawitz, "Exit, Voice, and Political Change," *JPE*

3/8: Industrialization

Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932*

Davis, "Davis, "An Annual Index of US Industrial Production, 1790-1915" *QJE*

Wright, "The Origins of American Industrial Success, 1879-1940" *AER*

*Goldin & Sokoloff, "The Relative Productivity Hypothesis of Industrialization," *QJE*

*Fiszbein et al, "New Technologies, Productivity, and Jobs"

3/10: Innovation

Mowery & Rosenberg, *Technology and the Pursuit of Economic Growth*

Khan, *The Democratization of Invention*

Schmookler, "Economic Sources of Inventive Activity," *JEH*

*Lampe & Moser, "'Do Patent Pools Encourage Innovation?" *JEH*

*Jaworski & Hanlon, "Spillover Effects of Intellectual Property Protection"

3/15: The Welfare State Before 1940

Fishback & Kantor, *A Prelude to the Welfare State*

Alston & Ferrie, "Paternalism in Agricultural Labor Contracts in the US South," *AER*

*Aizer et al, "The LR Impact of Cash Transfers to Poor Families," *AER*

*Fetter & Lockwood, "Government Old-Age Support and Labor Supply," *AER*

3/17: The Great Depression

Fishback, “How Successful Was the New Deal?” *JEL*

Richardson & Troost, “Monetary Intervention Mitigated Banking Panics,” *JPE*

*Mitchener & Richardson, “Network Contagion and Interbank Amplification,” *JPE*

*Hausman, “Fiscal Policy and Economic Recovery,” *AER*

3/22: World War II

Wilson, *Destructive Creation*

Fishback & Jaworski, “Two World Wars in American Economic History,” *Handbook*

Gross & Sampat, “Organizing Crisis Innovation”

*Brunet, “Stimulus on the Home Front”

*Jaworski, “World War II and the Industrialization of the American South”

3/24: Women War on Poverty

Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap*

Goldin, “The Quiet Revolution,” *AER P&P*

Goldin, “The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women’s Employment,” *AER*

*Jaworski, “You’re in the Army Now” *JEH*

*Fogli et al, “Mothers and Sons,” *QJE*

3/29: The Great Migration

Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns*

Boustan, *Competition in the Promised Land*

*Boustan, “Competition in the Promised Land,” *JEH*

*Derenoncourt, “Can You Move to Opportunity?”

3/31: Race in Postwar America

Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*

Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*

*Cook et al, “Competition and Discrimination in Public Accommodations”

*Kuziemko & Washington, “Why Did the Democrats Lose the South?” *AER*

4/5 & 4/7: **Cities & Regions**

Glaeser, *Cities, Agglomeration, and Spatial Equilibrium*

Breinlich, Ottaviano, & Temple, "Regional Growth and Regional Decline," *Handbook*

Heim, "Structural Changes: Regional and Urban," *Handbook*

*Shertzer & Walsh, "Racial Sorting and the Emergence of Segregation," *ReStat*

*Kitchens, "The Role of Publicly Provided Electricity in Economic Development," *JEH*

*Kline & Moretti, "Local Economic Dev, Agg Economies, and the Big Push," *QJE*

*Eckert & Peters, "Spatial Structure Change"

4/12 & 4/14: **Highways**

Nall, *The Road to Inequality*

Michaels, "Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?" *ReStat*

Herzog, "National Trans Networks, Market Access, and Regional Econ Growth," *JUE*

*Baum-Snow, "Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?" *QJE*

*Brinkman & Lin, "Freeway Revolts"

*Jaworski et al, "Highways and Globalization"

4/19: **The War on Poverty**

Bailey & Danziger (eds), *Legacies of the War on Poverty*

Bailey & Duquette, "How the US Fought the War on Poverty," *JEH*

*Bailey & Goodman-Bacon, "The War on Poverty's Experiment in Public Medicine," *AER*

*Jaworski & Kitchens, "National Policy for Regional Development," *ReStat*

4/21: **Foreign Affairs**

Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*

Mitchener & Weidenmier, "Empire, Public Goods, and the Roosevelt Corollary," *JEH*

Berger et al, "Commercial Imperialism?" *AER*

Kuziemko & Werker, "How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth?" *JPE*

*Dube, Kaplan, & Naidu, "Coups, Corporations, and Classified Information," *QJE*

*Dell & Querubin, "Nation Building Through Foreign Intervention," *QJE*

4/26: Media

Gentzkow, Glaeser, & Goldin, “The Rise of the Fourth Estate,” *Corruption and Reform*

Gentzkow et al, “The Effect of Newspaper Entry and Exit on Electoral Politics” *AER*

*Wang, “Media, Pulpit, and Populist Persuasion”

*Gentzkow & Shapiro, “What Drives Media Slant?” *Ecta*

*Dittmar & Seabold, “New Media and Competition,” *JPE*

4/28: Polarization

Klein, *Why We Are Polarized*

Gentzkow, Kelly, & Taddy, “Text as Data,” *JEL*

Jensen et al, “Political Polarization and the Dynamics of Political Language,” *Brookings*

*Gentzkow, Shapiro, & Taddy, “Measuring Group Diff in High-Dimensional Choices,” *Ecta*

Methods

Lee & Lemieux, “Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics,” *JEL*

Imbens & Wooldridge, “Recent Dev in the Econometrics of Program Evaluation,” *JEL*

Abadie, “Using Synthetic Controls,” *JEL*

Abramitzky et al, “Automated Linking of Historical Data,” *JEL*

Bailey et al, “How Well Do Automated Methods Linking Perform?” *JEL*

Gentzkow et al, “Text as Data,” *JEL*

Kline, “Oaxaca-Blinder as a Reweighting Estimator,” *AEA P&P*

Oster, “Unobservable Selection and Coefficient Stability,” *JBES*

Sloczynski, “Interpreting OLS Est When Treatment Effects Are Heterogeneous,” *ReStat*