

Economics 8534 : Economic History of the United States

Spring 2022 • Econ 5 • Tuesday · Thursday • 12:45-2:00pm

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Office: Econ 14C • Office Hours: By Appointment

Description

This is one of two graduate courses in economic history. The goal is to provide PhD students an introduction to debates, methods, and recent topics in US economic history. Topics covered include government, property rights, slavery and reconstruction, globalization and immigration, transportation, the Great Depression, race, women, and mobility. 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 & research ideas*: Students are required to attend class and actively participate. In addition, during the first two weeks of
- *Replication Assignment (30%, 10% presentation + 20% assignment)*: Students will complete a presentation and replication of one published economic history paper. The presentations will take place in **Week 6** and the replication will be due on **March 18**.
- *Job Market Paper Presentation (20%)*: Students will present a recent job market paper selected in consultation with the instructor. The presentations will take place in **Week 12**.
- *Final Paper (50%, 10% proposal + 10% presentation + 30% paper)*: Students will complete a presentation and final research paper on a topic of their choice. The proposal presentations will take place in **Week 10**. The final presentations will take place in **Week 15** and the final paper will be due on **May 1**.

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 Link-

Readings

The *Background Readings* and *Required Readings* are listed on the **Course Outline** below. In addition, I have also listed a number methodology papers that you may find useful below. 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 of interest to you.

Useful Methodology

- Manski, *Identification Problems in the Social Sciences* (1999).
- Angrist & Jörn-Steffen Pischke, *Mostly Harmless Econometrics* (2009).
- Cunningham, *Causal Inference* (2021).
- Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (2021).
- Lee & Lemieux, "Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics," *JEL* (2010).
- Lewbel, "The Identification Zoo," *JEL* (2019).
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