

# Economics 8534 : Economic History of the United States

Fall 2018 Economics 5 Monday Wednesday 1:30-2:45pm

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Office: Economics 14C Office Hours: MonWed, 8-10am

## 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, human capital, economic integration, regions and cities, 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.

## Readings, Data, & Statistical Software

Course readings are available through JSTOR or as working papers. Students are strongly encouraged to read *Creating Abundance* by Paul Rhode and Alan Olmstead and *The Race Between Education and Technology* by Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz.

Students must have access to Stata. These can be downloaded through University of Colorado's Office of Information Technology. I also recommend that students download (for free) and become familiar with QGIS.

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). From ICPSR specifically, 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).

## Grading

*Short Assignments* (15% total, 3 – 5%): There will be three short assignments where students will use data from IPUMS and ICPSR to briefly answer a question in US economic history. Students must submit a short write-up describing their method and results.

*Presentations* (20% total): Students will be responsible for giving several short presentations throughout the course. All students should come to class with a 3-5 slide presentation that critiques the presentation paper for that day.

*Research Project* (45% total, 10% proposal + 25% paper + 10% presentation): Students are required to complete a research project including a one-page proposal, 10-15 page paper, and 15 minute in-class presentation.

*Final Exam* (20% total): There will be an oral final exam. Students will be asked to read and discuss a recent working paper or job market paper in economic history with the professor.

*Attendance and Participation*: Students are expected to attend each class and come ready to actively participate in discussion of research papers.

## **Background Reading**

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.

Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*

Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty*

Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*

James McPherson,

## *Origins of Social Order*

### **Week 2: Culture**

09/03 No class { Labor Day

09/05 Lecture on "America's Founding Cultures"

? Giuliano & Nunn, "Understanding Cultural Persistence and Change"

? Bazzi et al, "Frontier Culture," Working Paper

Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*

Henrich et al, "The Origins of WEIRD Psychology," Working Paper

Ball et al, "Clustering of 770,000 genomes reveals post-colonial population structure of North America," *Nature Communications*

### **Week 3: Institutions**

09/10 Lecture on "America's Founding Institutions"

09/12 Lecture on "America's Founding Institutions" (continued)

? **Short assignment #1 due on 09/12**

? North, "Institutions," *JEP*

? Bardhan, "State and Development" *JEL*

? Lamoreaux & Wallis, "States, Not Nation"

Engerman & Sokolo , "Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World," *JEP*

Bloch & Lamoreaux, "Voluntary Associations, Corporate Rights, and the State," in *Organizations, Civil Society, and the Roots of Development*

## *Agricultural Development*

### **Week 4: Farming**

09/17 Lecture on "American Agricultural Development"

09/19 Student presentation of "Scale versus Scope in the Diffusion of New Technology" (by Gross in *RAND*)

? **Short assignment #2 due on 09/19**

? Olmstead & Rhode, *Creating Abundance*

Hornbeck, "Barbed Wire," *QJE*

Libecap & Lueck, "The Demarcation of Land," *JPE*

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

Scott, "Dynamic Discrete Choice Estimation of Agricultural Land Use"

## Week 5: Environment

09/24 Student presentation of "Small Farms, Externalities, and the Dust Bowl" (by Hansen & Libecap in *JPE*)

09/26 Lecture on "Responses to Environment and Climate"

? **Short assignment #3 due on 09/26**

? Dell, Jones, & Olken, "What Do We Learn from the Weather?" *JEL*

? Hornbeck, "The Enduring Impact of the American Dust Bowl," *AER*

Dell, Jones, & Olken, "Temperature Shocks and Economic Growth," *AEJ-Macro*

Lange, Olmstead, & Rhode, "The Impact of the Boll Weevil, 1892-1932," *JEH*

## *Human Capital*

## Week 6: Race

10/01

## Week 8: Women

10/15 Lecture on "The Changing Status of Women"

10/17 Student presentation of "The Power of Abortion Policy" (by Myers in *JPE*)

? Goldin & Katz, "The Power of the Pill," *JPE*

? Bailey, "More Power to the Pill," *QJE*

? Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family," ?

- ? Jaworski & Kitchens, "National Policy for Regional Development," Working Paper
- Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth*
- Michaels, "The Effect of Trade on the Demand for Skill," *ReStat*
- Donaldson & Costinot, "How Large Are the Gains from Economic Integration?" Working Paper
- Donaldson, "The Gains from Market Integration," *ARE*

### **Weeks 11: Regional Development**

- 11/05 Lecture on "Regional Development"
- 11/07 Student presentation of "Local Economic Development, Agglomeration Economies, and the Big Push" (by Kline & Moretti in *QJE*)
  - ? Breinlich et al, "Regional Growth and Regional Decline," *Handbook*
  - ? Kitchens, "The Role of Publicly Provided Electricity in Economic Development," *JEH*
  - Heim, "Structural Changes," *Cambridge Economic History of the United States*
  - Caselli & Coleman, "The US Structural Transformation and Regional Convergence," *JPE*
  - Michaels, Rauch, & Redding, "Urbanization and Structural Transformation," *QJE*
  - Jaworski, "World War II and the Industrialization of the American South," *JEH*
  - Holmes, "The Effect of State Policies on the Location of Manufacturing," *JPE*
  - Carruthers & Lamoreaux, "Regulatory Races," *JEL*

### **Week 12: Urbanization and Suburbanization**

- 11/12 Lecture on "Cities and Suburbanization"
- 11/14 Student presentation of "Freeway Revolts!" (by Brinkman & Lin as Working Paper)
  - ? Diamond, "The Determinants and Welfare Implications of US Workers' Diverging Location Choices by Skill," *AER*
  - ? Hornbeck & Keniston, "Creative Destruction," *AER*
  - ? Boustan, "Was Postwar Suburbanization 'White Flight'?" *QJE*
  - ? Baum-Snow, "Did Highways Cause Suburbanization," *QJE*
  - Bleakly & Lin, "Portage and Path Dependence," *QJE*
  - Glaeser & Gyourko, "Urban Decline and Durable Housing," *JPE*
  - Shertzer & Walsh, "Racial Sorting and the Emergence of Segregation in American Cities," *ReStat*

## *Political Economy*

### **Week 13: Media**

11/26 Lecture on "Ideology"

11/28 Student presentation of "The Effect of Newspaper Entry and Exit" (by Gentzkow, Shapiro, & Sinkinson in *AER*)