This course explores the economic history of the United States. Its purpose is to expose students to economic history as a method of economic analysis and to examine the main features of America's economic growth and development. Knowledge of standard analytical tools and empirical techniques of micro and macro-economics is strongly recommended.

**The course textbooks are**

Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell (AP) *A New Economic View of American History from Colonial Times to 1940* 2nd Ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994). They do a nice job of summarizing some of the greatest debates in the field of economic history over the period from 1960 to 1990. It is a great reference and a fine book for teaching about controversies to an advanced undergraduate class. I will assign chapters of the book associated with specific topics. If you plan to teach economic history, you should plan to read the whole book.

Price Fishback, et. al. *Government and the American Economy: A New History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. If you don’t already have a copy, I will give you one. This summarizes the research on government that had been done by economic historians through 2005.


I strongly recommend that you also obtain a copy of Jonathan Hughes and Louis Cain. *American Economic History*. You don’t necessarily need the most recent edition. This is the leading undergraduate textbook in the field and generally tells the story of economic history. Jonathan Hughes was one of the leading scholars on government in the economy and entrepreneurship until he died circa 1980. Lou Cain has done a good job of keeping the book current and adding his own expertise on public health and city governments to the book.

In my view the best research agendas in economic history is to start with a book project in mind on a larger topic. To write that book, you will need to address a series of issues. These issues typically are of interest in their own right as well as part of the larger book project. Thus, I and many colleagues often write a series of papers for economics and economic history journals about the specific issues with emphasis on how the paper fits into a larger literature on that specific topic. We then put the material together into a book. This involves rewriting everything for an audience of historians, economists, and others. Writing the book forces you to put all of the work into a larger framework.

For your own research you should be thinking about the big picture. What is your long term goal? What are you trying to understand and how does each paper you write fit into that long term goal?
Class Meetings

The class officially meets from 12:30 to 3:15 on Tuesdays. I will have to make a couple of time shifts. I will let you know well in advance if we need to make a shift.

The class grade will be determined by a paper, and your presentations and discussions in class. We should discuss the paper topic in the first couple of weeks. The typical class will include 10-15 minute student presentations of the required material and class discussions of that material.

I will also make occasional presentations. In cases where I have lecture notes for undergraduates prepared, I will provide you with the lecture notes. The ideal would be to have you sit in on an undergraduate economic history class that I am teaching, but we will not be able to reach the ideal. Thus, I am trying to prepare you as much as possible for the course.

The Research Phase of the Course

Nearly all of you are working on research projects already. Around the middle of February, we will start taking some time each class to have someone present material on their research project. We will discuss this more as we go. I want you to be able to get some comments on your work before you turn in the final draft. If you are not writing in economic history, I am amenable to nonhistory topics and we just need to discuss them.

January 15

Constructing Datasets


January 22\textsuperscript{nd}

Putting the U.S. Economy in Context


Jan 31 afternoon or Feb 1 morning. (Note Date Change)
Labor Markets


Feb 5

Mining Labor Markets


Feb 12 Hospitals and Health

Alex pick chapters of book on Hospitals. Maybe Starr.


Feb 19

Agricultural Productivity, Technology, and Long Run Climate Change.


**Feb 26 Housing Markets**

**Guest Discussant: Andra Ghent, Arizona State University.**


**March 5**

**Entry and Exit in Financial Markets**


**March 26**

**The IO of Technological Change.**


April 2 War and the Economy


April 9th

Property Rights

Guest Discussant, Sumner LaCroix

Chapters from Sumner LaCroix’s “Property Rights in an Island Economy: Hawaii from 1700 to the Present” Sumner will be here for these sessions.


April 16 Education and the Fertility Transition.


April 23

Latin American Development


April 30 and May 2

Student Paper Presentations