This course provides a broad survey of the causes and course of economic growth through European history. Instead of a course text, the course covers a number of scholarly articles (in roughly chronological order) which address various aspects of European economic development. Students will thus also learn how the scholarly literature is developed in the field of economic history.

Grading:
Class Presentation: 20%
Term paper (due Thursday, November 24): 30%
Final Examination (Monday, December 12, 9:00): 50%  [Old exams will be placed online for students]

A penalty of 1% of the final mark per day will be imposed on all late term papers.

The instructor assigns letter grades at the end of the course in a manner that ensures that a change of one or two points in numerical grade does not cause a change in letter grade. There is no fixed formula for converting numerical grades to letter grades, though the instructor seeks to achieve an appropriate class average.

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. Policy about course outlines can be found in 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Class Presentation:
Groups of two or three students will select a paper on the reading list that they will present in class. They must discuss the question(s) being addressed, the results obtained, and the methodology employed. (They must also provide a written outline of one or two pages in length of the major arguments in the paper.) They should provide their opinion of the strength of the results. Class presentations should take no more than one 80-minute class. Groups must be formed and papers chosen by the end of class on Jan. 21. Ideally papers are discussed in the order provided on the outline below, though there can be a little flexibility in scheduling presentations.

Term Paper:
Each student will write a 10-15 page paper on some aspect of European Economic History. Students are urged to start thinking about their paper as soon as possible. The term paper must be analytical. That is, it should be structured around a question or set of questions. I am not impressed by papers that are merely descriptive. A detailed set of guidelines on how to write an economic history paper has been placed on the course website.
Course Outline:
(All papers are available online through the university library; just type the journal title into the library search engine and you will be given directions. The exception is the Mokyr paper which will be available on the course website at www.uofaweb.ualberta/economics/)

We will begin with an overview of the purpose and methodology of economic history research. We then move roughly chronologically through papers examining key issues in European economic development. While a variety of topics are discussed, special attention is devoted to the role of institutions, and technology in economic growth. I will try in the lectures to provide a historical background for the papers discussed. Additional papers may be added at the whim of the instructor.

Course Readings:


Greif, Avner (1992) “Institutions and international trade: Lessons from the commercial revolution” American Economic Review, 82:2, 128-33 [Cannot be used for class presentation.]

Jones, E.L. “Time and Chance in the Old World economies” Journal of Economic History Sept 2000, 856-9; also


