

Topics in Economic History

Course: ECON 315

Term: Fall 2017

Professor: Dr. Melanie Meng Xue

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Office Hours: 245–4 pm Tuesdays

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Overview of class

This course will deal with the economic history of China from a comparative perspective. It mainly tackles Chinese economic history from the late imperial period to the modern period, but also aims to provide a historical perspective for understanding the strength and limitations of the contemporary Chinese economy.

The first part of the class (before the midterm) surveys watershed events in Chinese history in a global context. The second part of class considers special topics in Chinese history. These include considering how culture and institutions have shaped modern growth in China.

There will be two lectures a week. These lectures will integrate class discussion and student participation. The lecture materials and readings should be viewed as largely complementary. All lecture slides will be made available on the Canvas site for this course following the lectures.

Discussion sections will be held on Fridays from 2–320 pm. However, discussion sections will be held only in certain weeks: please watch the announcements on the course home page. TA office hours are offered on the same days as the discussion sections. Time and locations are to be decided.

Registration Requirements

The following classes are required: ECON 310-1 and ECON 311.

Assignments & Evaluation

- Students will write a one page (typed) summary of a paper that we have studied in class. It should outline the main argument of paper or book and assess in details the type and quality of evidence they bring to bear. This will be graded by the TA. 10%.
- A midterm. 40%.
- A final. 50%.

There will be one mandatory midterm exam and an inclusive final exam. The midterm will cover all reading materials and lecture material of weeks 1-4. Students who score in the top 50% in the midterm will have the option of writing a paper in lieu of the exam. The topic and methodology have to be approved and the paper has to be submitted by the day of the final. The final exam is on December 6 from 12 to 2pm. There will be review sessions on Fridays before both the midterm and final.

Recommended Books

- Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* Cambridge University Press, 2016
- Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth* Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford UP, 1990.
- Jack A. Goldstone, *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History 1500-1850* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

1 Readings

1.1 Introduction and Overview: September 19 & 21

- Nathan Nunn, The Importance of History for Economic Development., *Annual Review of Economics* 1, Nr. 1 2009
- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson, The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth, *American Economic Review* 95, Nr. 3 June 2005

1.2 A Brief History of imperial China: September 26 & 28

- Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter 3 & 6.
- Loren Brandt, Debin Ma and Thomas G. Rawski, From Divergence to Convergence: Reevaluating the History behind China's Economic Boom, *Journal of Economic Literature* 52, Nr. 1 2014

1.3 The Great Divergence: October 3 & 5

- Jack A. Goldstone, *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History 1500-1850* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. Chapters 1–2, 4–5.

- Kenneth Pomeranz, Beyond the East-West binary: Resituating development paths in the eighteenth-century world, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, Nr. 02 2002.

1.4 The Treaty Port Era: October 10 & 12

- Ruixue Jia, The legacies of forced freedom: China's treaty ports, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 96, Nr. 4 2014
- Mark Koyama, Chiaki Moriguchi and Tuan-Hwee Sng, Geopolitics and Asia's Little Divergence: State Building in China and Japan After 1850 June 2017

1.5 Communism: October 17 & 19

- Philip A. Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002. Chapter 3.
- Xin Meng, Nancy Qian and Pierre Yared, The Institutional Causes of China's Great Famine, 1959–1961, *The Review of Economic Studies* 82, Nr. 4 2015

1.6 Midterm: October 24

1.7 Trade and Markets: October 26 & 31

- Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter 8.
- Carol H. Shiue and Wolfgang Keller, Markets in China and Europe on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution, *American Economic Review* 97, Nr. 4 September 2007

1.8 State and Society: November 2 & 7

- Peer Vries, Public Finance in China and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century, Working Paper 167/12 LSE, August 2012
- Melanie Meng Xue and Mark Koyama, Autocratic Rule and Social Capital: Evidence from Imperial China September 2017

1.9 Gender and Family Structure: November 9

- Alberto Alesina, Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn, On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128, Nr. 2 2013
- Melanie Meng Xue, High-Value Work and the Rise of Women: The Cotton Revolution and Gender Equality in China July 2016

1.10 Religion, Confucianism, Hierarchy, and Autocracy: November 14

- Davide Cantoni and Noam Yuchtman, The political economy of educational content and development: Lessons from history, *Journal of Development Economics* 104, Nr. C 2013
- James Kai-sing Kung and Chicheng Ma, Can cultural norms reduce conflicts? Confucianism and peasant rebellions in Qing China, *Journal of Development Economics* 111 2014

1.11 Scientific Development in China: November 16

- Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth* Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2016. Chapter 9, 16 & 17.
- Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford UP, 1990. Chapter 9.

1.12 Cultural Persistence and Modern Growth: November 21

- Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Chapter 1.
- Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano, Culture and Institutions, *Journal of Economic Literature* 53, Nr. 4 2015

1.13 Reading Period: November 28 & 30