

Economics 366A: Topics in Economic History (Micro)
Spring 2013

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Office hours: Monday 1 to 3
Calhoun 410

The goal of the course is to introduce graduate students to new research on central themes in economic history, especially research that is essentially “micro” in the nature (i.e., studying person-, firm-, or local-level units of observation). This course is part of the required preparation for students completing a special field in economic history, but many of the topics and methods are of broad interest to economists as evidenced by the numerous articles that are drawn from the *American Economic Review*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Political Economy*, and *AEJ*'s in addition to those from the *Journal of Economic History* and *Explorations in Economic History*.

Course Requirements: All students will take a midterm and final exam (each 25 percent of course grade). Students have a choice between writing three referee reports or one research paper (25 percent of the course grade). Students are expected to have read each week’s “papers for discussion” before coming to class. Participation in class discussions will count for the remaining 25 percent of the course grade.

Referee reports: Each should be a 3 to 5 page critical review of a research paper selected from a list that I will provide. A more detailed description of the assignment will be distributed in class. The first report must be turned in before Spring Break. The last report will be due on [April 18](#).

Research paper: This must be an original, relatively short research paper (about 15 pages) on a topic in economic history. Students should discuss their paper topics with me before starting. The research paper is due on [April 18](#). No extensions will be granted.

Class presentations: At the end of the semester, students will present either their research paper or a “discussant-style” summary and constructive critique related to their referee reports. Both tasks are common and important in the profession.

Class discussions: Rather than present the material in a lecture format, I would prefer to use class time to discuss the motivation, techniques, and arguments of specific papers, and where they fit into the literature. This only works if students have read the papers ahead of time.

Readings: The reading list is fairly long. Class meetings will focus on a subset of papers within each topic which are designated on the list as “Papers for Specific Discussion.” These are predominantly new research papers, selected to give students a view of what is going on in the field today. Students who intend to complete a “field” in economic history should read broadly from the reading list (i.e., beyond the readings covered in detail in class), especially in areas they find especially interesting. The “background” readings include some landmark books, classic articles, and broad perspectives on economic history.

Exams: The midterm exam is scheduled for [February 21](#) in class. The final exam is scheduled for [April 30 \(9 am\)](#). Everyone must take the exams at those times. If you are physically unable to take the exam due to illness, please alert me ahead of time by email. All of the material from class meetings and from readings designated as “for specific discussion” is fair game for the exams.

Office hours: Monday from 1 to 3 pm. Appointments at other times can be made by email.

Honor Code: As in all classes, students must adhere to Vanderbilt’s Honor Code. If you are unfamiliar with the honor code, see: <http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/gsc/honor-council/> and http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/.

Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Assignment
Jan. 8	Institutions	
Jan. 10	Institutions	
Jan. 15	Agriculture and Environment	
Jan. 17	Agriculture and Environment	
Jan. 22	Industrialization and Innovation	
Jan. 24	Industrialization and Innovation	
Jan. 29	War and Its Aftermath	
Jan. 31	War and Its Aftermath	
Feb. 5	Education	
Feb. 7	Education	
Feb. 12	Labor Mobility	
Feb. 14	Labor Mobility	
Feb. 19	Labor Mobility	
Feb. 21	Midterm	Midterm
Feb. 26	Transportation	
Feb. 28	Transportation	1 st referee report is due before break
March 5	Spring Break	
March 7	Spring Break	
March 12	Great Depression	
March 14	Great Depression	
March 19	Health	
March 21	Health	
March 26	Urban	
March 28	Urban	
April 2	Marriage, Fertility, Family	
April 4	Marriage, Fertility, Family	
April 9	Presentations	
April 11	Presentations	
April 16	Presentations	
April 18	Open	Research Paper is due or 3 rd referee report is due
April 30	Final Exam, 9 am	Final

Reading List: Econ 366A

INSTITUTIONS AND LONG-RUN DEVELOPMENT

Background

Acemoglu and Johnson. 2005. "Unbundling Institutions." *Journal of Political Economy* 113: 949-995.

North. 1993. "Economic Performance through Time." Nobel Prize Address.
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/1993/north-lecture.html

Nunn. 2009. "The Importance of History for Economic Development." *Annual Review of Economics* 1: 65-92.

Olson. 1996. "Big Bills Left on the Sidewalk: Why Some Nations Are Rich and Others Poor." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 10, 2: 3-24.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Dell. 2010. "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining Mita." *Econometrica* 78: 1863-1903.

Hornbeck. 2010. "Barbed Wire: Property Rights and Agricultural Development." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125: 767- 810.

Nunn. 2008. "The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123: 139-176.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Background

Allen. 1992. *Enclosure and the Yeoman: The Agricultural Development of the South Midlands, 1450-1850*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Atack and Bateman. 1987. *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

Olmstead and Rhode. 2008. "Biological Innovation and Productivity Growth in the Antebellum Cotton Economy." *Journal of Economic History* 68, 4: 1123-1171.

Olmstead and Rhode. 2008. *Creating Abundance: Biological Innovation and American Agricultural Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Federico. 2005. *Feeding the World: An Economic History of World Agriculture, 1800-2000*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Hornbeck. 2012. "Quantifying Long-Term Adjustment to Environmental Change: Evidence from the American Dustbowl." *American Economic Review*, American Economic Review, 102: 1477–1507.

Libecap and Hansen. 2004. "Small Farms, Externalities, and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s." *Journal of Political Economy* 112: 665-694.

Hornbeck and Naidu. 2012. "When the Levee Breaks: Black Migration and Economic Development in the American South." NBER Working Paper 18296.

Nunn and Qian, 2008. "The Potato's Contribution to Population and Urbanization: Evidence from a Historical Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126: 593-650.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND INNOVATION

Background

Allen. 1983. "Collective Invention." *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 4: 1-24.

Crafts. 2010. "Explaining the first Industrial Revolution: Two Views." *European Review of Economic History* 15 153-168.

Devine. 1983. "From Shafts to Wires: Historical Perspective on Electrification." *Journal of Economic History* 43: 347-372.

Epstein. 1998. "Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship, and Technological Change in Preindustrial Europe." *Journal of Economic History* 58, 3: 684-713.

Khan and Sokoloff. 2001. "The Early Development of Intellectual Property Institutions in the United States." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15, 3: 233-46.

Mokyr. 2002. *The Gifts of Athena*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sokoloff. 1984. "Was the Transition from the Artisanal Shop to the Non-Mechanized Factory Associated with Gains in Efficiency?" *Explorations in Economic History* 21: 351-382.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Allen. 2009. "The Industrial Revolution in Miniature: The Spinning Jenny in Britain, France, and India." *Journal of Economic History* 69 4: 901-927.

Atack, Bateman, and Margo. 2008. "Steam Power, Establishment Size, and Labor Productivity Growth in Nineteenth Century American Manufacturing." *Explorations in Economic History* 45: 185-198.

Moser. 2005. "How Do Patent Laws Influence Innovation? Evidence from Nineteenth-Century World Fairs." *American Economic Review* 95, 4: 1214-1236.

WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

Background

Blattman and Miguel. 2010. "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature*: 3-57.

Bound and Turner. 2002. "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the GI Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?" *Journal of Labor Economics*: 784-815.

Glick and Taylor. 2010. "Collateral Damage: Trade Disruption and the Economic Impact of War." *Review of Economics and Statistics*: 102-127.

Papers for Specific Instruction

Costa and Kahn. 2007. "Surviving Andersonville." *American Economic Review*: 1467-1487.

Ichino and Winter-Ebmer. 2004. "The Long-Run Educational Cost of World War II." *Journal of Labor Economics* 57-87.

Miguel and Roland. 2011. "The Long-Run Impact of Bombing Vietnam." *Journal of Development Economics*: 1-15.

EDUCATION

Background

Buringh and van Zanden. 2009. "Charting the Rise of the West: Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, a Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries." *Journal of Economic History* 69, 2: 409-445.

Easterlin. 1981. "Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?" *Journal of Economic History* 41: 1-19.

Goldin and Katz. 2008. *The Race between Education and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Margo. 1990. *Race and Schooling in the South, 1880-1950*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Becker and Woessmann. 2009. "Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (May): 531-596.

Aaronson and Mazumder. 2011. "The Impact of Rosenwald Schools on Black Achievement." *Journal of Political Economy* 119: 821-888.

Parman. 2011. "American Mobility and the Expansion of Public Education." *Journal of Economic History* 71: 105-133.

LABOR MOBILITY AND MIGRATION (3 LECTURES)

Background

Collins. 1997. "When the Tide Turned: Immigration and the Delay of the Great Black Migration." *Journal of Economic History* 57: 607-632.

Hatton and Williamson. 1998. *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Abramitzky, Boustan, and Eriksson. 2012. "A Nation of Immigrants: Assimilation and Economic Outcomes in the Age of Mass Migration." NBER Working Paper 18011.

Boustan. 2009. "Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migration and Racial Wage Convergence in the North, 1940-1970." *Journal of Economic History* 69: 755-782.

Collins and Wanamaker. 2012. "Selection and Economic Gains in the Great Migration of African Americans: New Evidence from Linked Census Data." Working paper.

Goldin and Margo. 1992. "The Great Compression." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* CVII: 1-34.

Goldin and Katz. 2007. "The Race between Education and Technology." NBER Working Paper 12984.

TRANSPORTATION

Background

Fishlow. 1966. "Productivity and Technological Change in the Railroad Sector, 1840-1910." In *Output, Employment, and Productivity in the United States after 1800*: 583-646. National Bureau of Economic Research (available online).

Fogel. 1979. "Notes on the Social Savings Controversy." *Journal of Economic History* 39: 1-54.

Hunter. 1949. *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Atack, Bateman, Haines, and Margo. "Did Railroads Induce or Follow Economic Growth?" *Social Science History* 34, 2: 171-197.

Donaldson. 2010. "Railroads of the Raj: Estimating the Impact of Transportation Infrastructure." Working paper.

Baum-Snow. 2007. "Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122: 775-806.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION (MICRO VIEWS)

Background

Neumann, Fishback, and Kantor. 2010. "The Dynamics of Relief Spending and the Private Urban Labor Market during the New Deal." *Journal of Economic History* 70: 195-220.

Margo. 1991. "The Microeconomics of Depression Unemployment." *Journal of Economic History* 51: 333-341.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Hausman, Joshua. 2012. "Fiscal Policy and Economic Recovery: The Case of the 1936 Veterans' Bonus." Working Paper.

Gruber and Hungerman. 2007. "Faith-based Charity and Crowd-out during the Great Depression." *Journal of Public Economics* 91: 1043-1069.

Richardson and Troost. 2009. "Monetary Intervention Mitigated Banking Panics during the Great Depression." *Journal of Political Economy* 117: 1031-1073.

HEALTH

Background

Fogel. 2004. *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America, and the Third World*. Cambridge University Press.

Steckel. 1995. "Stature and the Standard of Living." *Journal of Economic Literature* 33, 4: 1903-1940.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Bleakley. 2007. "Disease and Development: Evidence from Hookworm Eradication in the American South." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122: 73-117.

Meng and Qian. 2009. "The Long Term Consequences of Famine on Survivors: Evidence from a Unique Natural Experiment Using China's Great Famine." NBER Working Paper 14917.

Niemesh. 2012. "Ironing Out Deficiencies: Evidence from the United States on the Economic Effects of Iron Deficiency." Working paper.

Ludwig and Miller. 2007. "Does Head Start Improve Children's Life Chances?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122: 159-208.

URBAN

Background

Bairoch. 1988. *Cities and Economic Development: From the Dawn of History to the Present*. Translated by Christopher Braider. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Collins and Margo. 2007. "The Economic Aftermath of the 1960s Riots in American Cities." *Journal of Economic History* 67: 849-883.

Davis and Weinstein. 2002. "Bones, Bombs, and Break Points: The Geography of Economic Activity." *American Economic Review* 92(5): 1269-1289.

Glaeser and Gottlieb. 2009. "The Wealth of Cities: Agglomeration Economies and Spatial Equilibrium in the United States." NBER Working Paper 14806.

Kim and Margo. 2004. "Historical Perspectives on US Economic Geography." *Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics*, Volume 4, North-Holland. <http://soks.wustl.edu/handbook.pdf>

Papers for Specific Discussion

Cantoni and Yuchtman. 2010. "Medieval Universities, Legal Institutions, and the Commercial Revolution." Working paper.

Ananat. 2009. "The Wrong Side(s) of the Tracks: The Causal Effects of Racial Segregation on Urban Poverty and Inequality." *AEJ: Applied Economics* 3: 34-66.

Collins and Shester. 2013. "Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal in the United States." *AEJ: Applied Economics*.

MARRIAGE, FERTILITY, AND FAMILY

Background

Becker. 1981. *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Easterlin. 1980. *Birth and Fortune*. New York: Basic Books.

Livi-Bacci. 2001. *A Concise History of World Population*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Papers for Specific Discussion

Abramitsky, Delavande, Vascelos. 2011. "Marrying Up: The Role of the Sex Ratio in Assortative Matching." *AEJ: Applied Economics* 3: 124-157.

Bailey. 2010. "Momma's Got the Pill." *American Economic Review* 100: 98-129.

Salisbury. 2012. "Women's Income and Marriage Markets in the United States: Evidence from the Civil War Pension." Working paper.