

The University of Alberta  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

**ECONOMICS 412-A1**  
*European Economic Development*

**Rick Szostak**

**Fall 2011**

Office Hours: Tues 12:30- 1:30; even numbered Fridays 1:30 – 2:30

Tory 9-13F; 492-7645

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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](http://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*.

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**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/](http://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:**

- Szostak, Rick (2006) "Economic History as It Is and Should Be; Toward an Open, Honest, Methodologically Flexible, Theoretically Diverse, Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Causes and Consequences of Economic Growth" *Journal of Socio-Economics*. August, 2006, 727-50.
- Gerahty, Ryan M. (2007) "The impact of globalization in the Roman Empire, 200 BC -- AD 100" *Journal of Economic History* 67:4, 1036-61.
- Mokyr, Joel (1992) "Understanding Technological Change," from his *The Lever of Riches*.
- Fenoaltea, Stefano (1975) "The rise and fall of a theoretical model: The manorial system" *Journal of Economic History*, 35:2, 386-409.
- Allen, Robert C, (2003) "Progress and poverty in early modern Europe" *Economic History Review* 56:3, August, 403-443.
- Clark, Gregory (1988) "The cost of capital and medieval agricultural techniques" *Explorations in Economic History* 25: 3, 265-94.
- Wrigley, E.A. (2006) "The transition to an Advanced Organic Economy: half a millennium of English agriculture." *Economic History Review* 59:3, August, 2006, 435-80.
- Ogilvie, Sheilagh (2007) "'Whatever is is right?': Economic Institutions in Pre-industrial Europe." *Economic History Review* 60:4, November, 2007, 649-84. Read also Epstein, S.R. "Craft guilds in the pre-modern economy: a discussion." *Economic History Review* 61:1, February, 2008, 155-74; and Ogilvie, Sheilagh, "Rehabilitating the guilds: a reply" *Economic History Review* 61:1, February, 2008, 175-82
- 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 Szostak, Rick (1996) "Review of J.M. Claut's 'The Colonizer's Model of the World'" *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. [Cannot be used for class presentation.]
- Razzell, Peter (1993) "The growth of population in eighteenth century England: A critical reappraisal" *Journal of Economic History* 53:4, December.
- Steckel, Richard H. (1995) "Stature and the standard of living" *Journal of Economic Literature*, December, 33:4, 1903-40.
- Grantham, George (1999) "Contra Ricardo: On the macro-economics of pre-industrial economies;" *European Review of Economic History* August, 3:2, Pp. 199-232.
- Szostak, Rick (1989) "The organization of work: The emergence of the factory re-visited" *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, May, 343-58. Plus comment by SRH Jones and Reply by Szostak in 1992.
- Berg, Maxine, and Pat Hudson (1992) "Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution" *Economic History Review* February, 45:1, 24-49.
- Offer, Avner (1993) "The British Empire 1870-1914: A waste of money?" *Economic History Review*, 46:2, 213-58.
- Clark, Gregory (1987) "Why isn't the whole world developed?: Lessons from the cotton mills" *Journal of Economic History*, 47:1, 141-74.
- O'Rourke, Kevin, and Jeff Williamson (1997) "Around the European periphery 1870-1913: Globalization, schooling, and growth" *European Review of Economic History* August, 153-90.
- Szostak, Rick (2005) "Evaluating the Historiography of the Great Depression: Explanation or Single-Theory Driven?" *Journal of Economic Methodology* 12:1, 35-61.
- Temin, Peter (1997) "The Golden Age of European growth: A review essay" *European Review of Economic History* April, 127-49.