

**ECONOMICS 116
AMERICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY**

This course covers the economic history of the United States from colonial times to the present. Economics 1 is a firm prerequisite. Lectures are TTh 9-10:50am; sections meet each week, Thursday evening or Friday.

A course reader is available containing most articles required (*) for the course. **Purchase online at <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>.** (You will have the option of selecting a printed copy, a digital copy, or both.) Students are also responsible for materials posted on Course Work.

The first assignment will be an exercise with historical data, due on Friday April 24th. Also required is a 10-15 page research paper, which may build on the earlier data exercise if you so choose. The paper itself is due Friday, May 29th. There will be an in-class midterm exam Thursday, May 7th. The final is June 5th (12:15).

Exam dates and assignment deadlines are not flexible. The only exceptions are for the death of a family member or for illness requiring the immediate attention of a physician. Non-Stanford activities away from campus are not valid reasons for an exception. Students who may need an academic accommodation based on a disability must initiate the request through the Office of Accessible Education (OAE), 563 Salvatierra Walk (723-1066), URL: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oea>. Contact with the OAE should be as soon as possible.

TOPICS AND READINGS

1. Overview: The Historical Approach to Economics (March 31-April 2)

- *Paul A. David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," **American Economic Review** (1985)
- *Gavin Wright, "Quantitative Economic History in the United States" (photocopy)
- Barry Eichengreen, "Economic History and Economic Policy," **Journal of Economic History** (2012)

2. From Colonial Economy to Independence (April 7-9)

- *Daniel Scott Smith, "A Malthusian-Frontier Interpretation of U.S. Demographic History Before c. 1815," in W. Borah, **Urbanization in the Americas** (1980)
- Evsey Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom," **Journal of Economic History** (1970)
- *Gavin Wright, "The Role of Nationhood in the Economic Development of the USA," in A. Teichova and P. Matis (eds.), **Nation, State and the Economy in History** (2003)
- *Richard Sylla, "Financial Foundations," in D. Irwin and R. Sylla (eds.), *Founding Choices* (2011)
- *Farley Grubb, "U. S. Land Policy: Founding Choices and Outcomes," in Irwin and Sylla (2011)
- Staughton Lynd and David Waldstreicher, "Free Trade, Sovereignty, and Slavery: Toward an Economic Interpretation of American Independence," **William and Mary Quarterly** (2011)

3. Transportation Revolution and Market Revolution (April 14-16)

- *Daniel B. Klein, "The Voluntary Provision of Public Goods?" Turnpike Companies of Early America," **Economic Inquiry** (October 1990)
- *Albert Fishlow, "The Dynamics of Railroad Extension to the West," in Fogel and Engerman (eds.), **The Reinterpretation of American Economic History**
- Douglas J. Puffert, "The Standardization of Track Gauge on North American Railways, 1830-1890," **Journal of Economic History** (December 2000)
- *Paul David, "The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest," in Fogel and Engerman (eds.), **The Reinterpretation of American Economic History**
- *Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, "The Red Queen and the Hard Reds: Productivity Growth in American Wheat, 1800-1940" **Journal of Economic History** (December 2002)

4. Slavery and the Southern Economy (April 21-23)

- *Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, "Capitalists Without Capital," **Agricultural History** 62 (1988)
- *Gavin Wright, "Slavery and American Agricultural History," **Agricultural History** 77 (Fall 2003)
- Melinda Miller, "Land and Racial Wealth Inequality," **American Economic Review** (2011)

5. The Rise of American Industry to World Pre-Eminence (April 28-May 5)

- *Joshua L. Rosenbloom, "Path Dependence and the Origins of Cotton Textile Manufacturing," in D.A. Farnie and D.J. Jeremy (eds.), **The Fibre that Changed the World** (2004).
- *David F. Weiman and John A. James, "The Political Economy of the US Monetary Union: The Civil War As a Watershed," **American Economic Review** 97 (2007)
- *David R. Meyer, "Midwestern Industrialization and the American Manufacturing Belt," **J. Econ History** (1989)
- *Paul A. David and Gavin Wright, "Increasing Returns and the Genesis of American Resource Abundance," **Industrial and Corporate Change** 6 (1997)
- Richard White, "Information, Markets and Corruption: Transcontinental Railroads in the Gilded Age," **Journal of American History** (2003)
- *Alfred D. Chandler, "Organizational Capabilities and the Economic History of the Industrial Enterprise," **Journal of Economic Perspectives** 6 (1984)
- *Joshua L. Rosenbloom, "Looking for Work, Searching for Workers," **Social Science History** 18 (Autumn 1994)

MIDTERM EXAM: Thursday, May 7th

6. The "New Economy" of the 1920s the Great Depression, and the New Deal (May 12-14)

- *Claudia Goldin, "American Leadership in the Human Capital Century," **New England Econ Review** (2002)
- *Eugene White, "The Stock Market Boom and Crash of 1929," **Journal of Economic Perspectives** (1990)
- *Nicholas Crafts and Peter Fearon, "Lessons from the 1930s Great Depression," **Oxford Review of Economic Policy** (2010)
- *Ben Bernanke, "Money, Gold and the Great Depression," H. Parker Willis Lecture (2004)
- Gauti Eggertson, "Great Expectations and the End of the Depression," **American Economic Review** (2008)
- *Chiaki Moriguchi, "Implicit Contracts, the Great Depression, and Institutional Change," **Journal of Economic History** 63 (September 2003)
- Robert J. Gordon and Robert Krenn, "The End of the Great Depression 1939-41," NBER W. Paper (2010)

8. The Golden Age of American Capitalism (May 19-21)

- Alexander Field, "Origins of U.S. Total Factor Productivity Growth in the Golden Age," **Cliometrica** (2007)
- *Peter Temin and Frank Levy, "Inequality and Institutions in 20th-Century America," MIT Working Paper (2009)
- *Gavin Wright, "The Civil Rights Revolution as Economic History," **Journal of Economic History** 59 (1999)
- *Stacey Jones, "From 'Coeds' to Careers: Dynamic Social Norms and the Unexpected Transformation of Women's Higher Education," **Social Science History** (2009)
- *Stephen B. Adams, "Regionalism in Stanford's Contribution to Silicon Valley," **Enterprise & Society** (2003)
- Ricard Gil and Ryan Lampe, "The Adoption of New Technologies," **Journal of Economic History** (2014)
- Alan Blinder and J. Rudd, "Supply-Shock Explanation of the Great Stagflation Revisited," **The Great Inflation** (2013)

9. The New High Technology Global American Economy: Age of Anxiety? (May 26-28)

- *Paul A. David, "The Dynamo and the Computer," **American Economic Review** 80 (May 1990)
- *Charles Hirschman, "Immigration and the American Century," **Demography** (2005)
- *Nick Bloom, Raffaella Sadun and John Van Reenen, "It Ain't What You Do It's How You Do I.T." **CentrePiece** (Winter 2005/2006): pp. 8-11
- *Richard B. Freeman, "One Ring to Rule Them All? Globalization of Knowledge and Knowledge Creation," NBER Working Paper (2013)
- *David H. Autor, "Polarization of Job Opportunities in the U.S. Labor Market," **Community Investments** (2011)
- *Emmanuel Saez, "Striking It Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States," (updated 1/25/2015) <http://eml.berkeley.edu/~saez/saez-UStopincomes-2013.pdf>
- Robin Greenwood and David Scharfstein, "The Growth of Finance," **Journal of Economic Perspectives** (2013)
- Raj Chetty et al, "Is the United States Still a Land of Opportunity?" **American Economic Review** (2014)

10. Review (June 4)

FINAL EXAM June 5 (12:15pm-3:15pm)