

ECONOMICS 113 AMERICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

This course has two purposes: 1) To cover the economic history of the region now known as “The United States” from colonial times to present; and 2) To explore the historical approach to understanding economic phenomena.

Lecturer

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GSI

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Materials

A course reader is available from Copy Central on Bancroft containing required readings. These readings will form the bases for lectures, in-class discussions, and exams. Students are required to complete readings according to the schedule below.

Assignments

Exams

Midterm Exam: Thursday, March 16, 8-9:30 AM

Final Exam: Thursday, May 18, 8-11 AM

Writing Assignment I: Economic History Research Proposal

A brief research proposal of 750 words or less is due in class on Thursday, March 2nd. This proposal should 1) present and motivate a focused historical research question; and 2) describe how historical data and economic concepts might be used to develop an answer.

Writing Assignment II: Historical Data Analysis

A preliminary analysis of an historical research question, of 750 words or less, is due in class on Thursday, April 13. This analysis should draw upon historical data and economic concepts to suggest a preliminary answer to an historical research question.

Writing Assignment III: Term Paper (Optional)

An optional term paper of 10 to 15 pages is due in class on Tuesday, May 9. The maximum of your grade on this assignment and your grade on the midterm will be used to calculate your final grade in the course (see below). If you decide to write a term paper, you must provide notification of your intent to do so by Thursday, April 13.

Grading

Midterm Exam (or Term Paper).....	25%
Final Exam.....	35%
Writing Assignment I.....	15%
Writing Assignment II.....	15%
Class Participation.....	10%

Policies

No late assignments will be accepted. If you miss the midterm for any reason, no make-up exam will be offered and you must submit a term paper in order to receive a grade. Section attendance is mandatory. If you require special accommodations, please inform your instructor and also contact UC Berkeley's DSP (dsp.berkeley.edu).

Schedule of Readings**Week 1:**

- January 17: Course overview
January 19: Paul A. David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," *American Economic Review* (1985)

Week 2:

- January 24: Gavin Wright, "Quantitative Economic History in the United States," photocopy.
January 26: Daniel Scott Smith, "A Malthusian-Frontier Interpretation of U.S. Demographic History Before c. 1815," in W. Borah, *Urbanization in the Americas* (1980)

Week 3:

- January 31: David Galenson, "The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude: An Economic Analysis," *Journal of Economic History* 44 (March 1984)
February 2: Curtis P. Nettels, "British Mercantilism and the Economic Development of the Thirteen Colonies," *Journal of Economic History* (1952)

Week 4:

- February 7: Daniel B. Klein, "The Voluntary Provision of Public Goods?" Turnpike Companies of Early America," *Economic Inquiry* (October 1990)
February 9: Albert Fishlow, "The Dynamics of Railroad Extension to the West," in Fogel and Engerman (eds.), *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*

Week 5:

- February 14: Paul A. David, "The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest," in Fogel and Engerman (eds.), *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*
February 16: 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)

Week 6:

- February 21: Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, "Capitalists Without Capital," *Agricultural History* 62 (Summer 1988)
February 23: Gavin Wright, "Slavery and American Agricultural History," *Agricultural History* 77 (Fall 2003)

Week 7:

- February 28: Nathan Rosenberg, "Why in America?" in *Exploring the Black Box* (1994)
March 2: Paul A. David and Gavin Wright, "Increasing Returns and the Genesis of American Resource Abundance," *Industrial and Corporate Change* 6 (March 1997)

Week 8:

- March 7: Alfred D. Chandler, "The Emergence of Managerial Capitalism," *Business History Review* 58 (Winter 1984)
March 9: Gavin Wright, "Understanding the Gender Gap: A Review Article," *Journal of Economic Literature* 29 (September 1991)

Week 9:

- March 14: William J. Collins, "When the Tide Turned: Immigration and the Delay of the Great Black Migration," *Journal of Economic History* 57 (September 1997)
March 16: Midterm Exam

Week 10:

- March 21: Claudia Goldin, "The Human-Capital Century and American Leadership," *Journal of Economic History* 61 (June 2001)
- March 23: Eugene White, "The Stock Market Boom and Crash of 1929," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 4 (Spring 1990)

Week 12:

- April 4: Charles Calomiris, "Financial Factors in the Great Depression," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7 (Spring 1993)
- April 6: Martha Olney, "Avoiding Default: The Role of Credit in the Consumption Collapse of 1930," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (February 1999)

Week 13:

- April 11: Chiaki Moriguchi, "Implicit Contracts, the Great Depression, and Institutional Change," *Journal of Economic History* 63 (September 2003)
- April 13: Alexander Field, "The Most Technologically Progressive Decade of the Century," *American Economic Review* (September 2003)

Week 14:

- April 18: Moses Abramovitz, "Catching Up, Forging Ahead, and Falling Behind," *Journal of Economic History* 46 (June 1986)
- April 20: Gavin Wright, "The Civil Rights Revolution as Economic History," *Journal of Economic History* 59 (June 1999)

Week 15:

- April 25: Stacey Jones, "Dynamic Social Norms and the Unexpected Transformation of Women's Higher Education, 1965 to 1980," photocopy
- April 27: Stuart Leslie and Robert Kargon, "Selling Silicon Valley," *Business History Review* 70 (1996)

Week 16:

- May 2: Kevin J. Stiroh, "Information Technology and the U.S. Productivity Revival: A Review of the Evidence," *Business Economics* (January 2002)
- May 4: Paul A. David, "The Dynamo and the Computer," *American Economic Review* 80 (May 1990)

Week 17:

- May 9: Wrap-Up Session

Final Exam: Thursday, May 18, 8-11 AM