

Economics 420
Professor Joel Mokyr
Winter 2019

The New Economics of History: Syllabus and Readings

Note: This is a course in economic history. The course will be devoted to recent papers in economic history written in the language and tradition of modern economics. In the past decade, a great deal of economic history has been written by scholars (some full-time economic historians, others part-timers and interlopers) who are applying economic theory and econometric methods to historical issues and have produced and utilized new and innovative databases. The purpose is to survey a sample of this recent literature, provide it with more historical context and motivation, and stimulate similar research.

After two introductory lectures by me in the first week, the course will be student-driven. Each student will be in charge of a number of class presentations of the chapters and papers below (starting with week 2). The readings will be allocated on a first-ask first-serve basis, subject to the constraints (1) that all papers have to be covered and (2) that distribution is about as equitable as is humanly possible and (3) nobody presents twice in one week. Each student should prepare a powerpoint lecture of about 30-45 minutes on her/his assigned papers, summarizing the most interesting and important findings, while reviewing and criticizing the methodology and sources used. Note that a substantial proportion of the items are “packages” of two papers — so take that into account.

Out of courtesy to your fellow students, class attendance is mandatory except when excused in advance.

All papers and chapters articles have been placed on the canvas site of this course. They can be found in the “files section” of the Canvas site.

Week 1 (Jan 8, 10): Introduction/Mokyr

Background reading:

Enrico Spolaore and Romain Wacziarg. 2013. “How Deep Are the Roots of Economic Development?” *Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol. 51, pp. 1-45.

Symposium: “The Future of Economic History” *Journal of Economic History* Dec. 2015, pp. 1228-1259.

Week 2: (Jan. 15 and 17): Long-term Economic growth

Oded Galor, *Unified Growth Theory* (2011), chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-66) and ch. 5, pp. 140–78 and Galor, Oded and Moav, Omer. 2002. “Natural Selection and the Origins of Economic Growth.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 117, No. 4 (Nov.), pp. 1133-91 (package: overlaps a bit; read the union).

Ashraf, Quamrul and Galor, Oded. 2013. “The “Out of Africa” Hypothesis, Human Genetic Diversity,

and Comparative Economic Development.” *American Economic Review*, 2013, January, pp. 1-46. (plus critique by Guedes et al)

Mayshar, Joram; Moav, Omer and Neeman, Zvika. “Geography, Transparency and Institutions,” *American Political Science Review*, 2017, pp. 622-626; Mayshar Joram; Moav, Omer; Neeman, Zvika; and Pascali, Luigi. “Cereals, Appropriability and Hierarchy”, working paper (package).

Andrea Matranga, “The Ant and the Grasshopper: Seasonality and the Invention of Agriculture,” Working paper, 2017.

Week 3: (Jan. 22 and 24): The Great Malthusian Debate

Gregory Clark, *A Farewell to Alms*, pp. 1-189.

Rohan Dutta et al., “Entertaining Malthus: Bread, Circuses, and Economic Growth,” *Economic Inquiry* Vol. 56, No. 1, January 2018, 358–380

Ashraf, Quamrul and Galor, Oded. “Dynamics and Stagnation in the Malthusian Epoch,” *American Economic Review* 101 (August 2011), pp. 2003–2041.

Kelly, Morgan and Ó Gráda, Cormac. “The Preventive Check in Medieval and Pre-industrial England,” *Journal of Economic History* 2012, pp. 1015-35; and “Living Standards and Mortality since the Middle Ages” *Economic History Review* May 2014, pp. 358-81 [Package].

Hans-Joachim Voth and Nico Voigtländer, “The Three Horsemen of Growth: Plague, War and Urbanization in Early Modern Europe,” *Review of Economic Studies*, 2012, pp. 774-811; and “How the West Invented Fertility Restriction (2010)”, *American Economic Review*, 2013, pp. 2227-64. [Package].

Week 4: (Jan. 29 and 31): Issues in the Early Rise of Europe

Jeremiah Dittmar, 2011. “Information Technology and Economic Change: The Impact of the Printing Press.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 126, No. 3 (August), pp. 1033–72 and Luis Angeles, “The Economics of Printing in Early Modern China and Europe.” *Economic history Review* 2016, pp. 30-51. Package

Jeremiah Dittmar and Skipper Seabold, “New Media and Competition: Printing and Europe’s Transformation after Gutenberg.” Unpublished. Package.

Davide Cantoni, Jeremiah Dittmar and Noam Yuchtman, “ Reformation and Reallocation: Religious and Secular Economic Activity in Early Modern Germany.” Unpublished, Nov. 2016.

Davide Cantoni and Noam Yuchtman, “Medieval Universities, Legal Institutions, and the Commercial Revolution,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 2014, pp. 823-87.

Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, “Tax Farming and the Origins of State Capacity in England and France,” *Exploration in Economic history* 2014, pp. 1-20.

Week 5 (Feb. 5, 7): Cities and Growth in the European Past

Jeremiah E. Dittmar, and Ralf Meisenzahl, “State Capacity and Public Goods: Institutional Change, Human Capital, and Growth in Early Modern Germany” unpublished. 1-22.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and Robinson, James A., 2005. “The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth.” *The American Economic Review* 95 (2005), pp. 546-579.

Michel Serafinelli and Guido Tabellini, “Creativity over Time and Space,” 2018, working paper.

Maarten Bosker, Eltjo Buringh, and Jan Luiten van Zanden, “From Baghdad to London: unraveling urban development in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, 800–1800” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, October 2013, 95(4): 1418–1437.

Lars Boerner and Battista Severgnini, “Time for Growth,” Working Paper, 2018.

Week 6 (Feb. 12, 14): The Industrial Revolution and Technological Progress

Morgan Kelly, Cormac Ó Gráda and Joel Mokyr, “Precocious Albion: A New Interpretation of the British Industrial Revolution” *Annual Review of Economics* . 2014, pp. 1-27 [NOT a choice option, to be presented by the author].

Brian Beach and W. Walker Hanlon, “Coal Smoke and Mortality in an early Industrial Economy,” *The Economic Journal*, 128 (November 2017), pp. 2652–2675; Walker Hanlon, “Pollution and Mortality in the Nineteenth century.” Unpublished, NBER WP 21647 (2015). Package.

Matthias Doepke and Fabrizio Zilibotti, 2008. “Occupational Choice and the Spirit of Capitalism,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 123(2), pp. 747-793, May.

Oded Galor and Omer Moav, “Das Human Kapital: A Theory of the Demise of the Class Structure” *Review of Economic Studies*, 73, pp. 85-117 (January 2006).

Réka Juhász, “Temporary Protection and Technology Adoption: Evidence from the Napoleonic Blockade.” *American Economic Review* 2018, 108(November), pp. 3339–3376

Walker Hanlon, “Necessity is the Mother of Invention: Input Supplies and Directed Technical Change.” *Econometrica*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (January 2015), pp. 67-100.

Week 7 (Feb. 19, 21): Mysteries of Persistence

Nunn, Nathan. 2009. “The Importance of History for Economic Development.” *Annual Review of Economics* Vol. I, pp. 65-92.

Hans-Joachim Voth and Nico Voigtländer, “Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 2012 pp. 1339-92

Melissa Dell, 2010. “The Persistent Effects of Peru’s Mining *Mita*.” *Econometrica* Volume 78, Issue 6, pp. 1863–1903, November.

Guiso, Luigi, Sapienza, Paola, and Zingales, Luigi. 2014. “Long Term Persistence.” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Volume 14, Issue 6, 1 December 2016, pp. 1401–1436.

Jha, Saumitra. 2013. “Trade, Institutions and Religious Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia.” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 107, No. 4 November, pp. 806-32.

Alberto Alesina, Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn, “On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2013, pp. 469-530.

Week 8 (Feb. 26, 28): Institutions and the Evolution of Modern Economies

Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano, “Culture and Institutions”, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 2015, pp. 898–944.

Acemoglu, Daron, Johnson, Simon, and Robinson James. “Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Economic Growth.” In the *Handbook of Economic Growth*, edited by Philippe Aghion and Steven Durlauf, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005, pp. 385-465 (overlaps with some of the other readings — do new materials only).

Diego Puga and Daniel Trefler. 2014. “International Trade and Institutional Change: Medieval Venice’s Response to Globalization” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2014) 129 (2), pp. 753-821.

Jonathan F. Schulz, “Why Europe? The Church, kin-networks and Institutional Development,” Working paper, 2017.

Anton Cheremukhin, Mikhail Golosov, Sergei Guriev and Aleh Tsyvinsky, “The Industrialization and Economic Development of Russia through the Lens of a Neoclassical Growth Model.” *Review of Economic Studies* 2017, pp. 613-649.

Week 9 (March 5, 7): The New Economic History of Culture and Religion

Voigtländer, Nico and Mara P. Squicciarini, “Human Capital and Industrialization: Evidence from the Age of Enlightenment” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November 2015, pp. 1825-83.

Benabou, Roland, Ticchi, Davide, and Vindigni, Andrea. 2016. “Forbidden Fruits: The Political Economy of Science, Religion and Growth.” Unpublished working paper, Princeton University; Eric Chaney “Religion and the Rise and Fall of Islamic Science.” Unpublished working paper, Harvard University, 2016 (package).

Tabellini, Guido. 2008. "Institutions and Culture: Presidential address." *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Volume 6, Issue 2-3, pp. 255–294, April-May 2008. Idem., 2010. "Culture and Institutions: Economic Development in the Regions of Europe" *Journal of the European Economic Association* Volume 8, Issue 4, pages 677–716, (June). [Package].

Sasha O. Becker and Ludger Woessmann. 2009. "Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2009, pp. 531-96; Davide Cantoni. 2014. "The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands" *Journal of the Eur. Economic Assoc.* August 2015 13(4), pp. 561–598 [Package].

Thomas B. Andersen et al., "Pre-reformation Roots of the Protestant Ethic," *Economic Journal*, Vol. 127 (September 2017), pp. 1756–1793.

Sascha O. Becker and Luigi Pascali, "Religion, Division of Labor and Conflict: Anti-semitism in German Regions over 600 Years." Unpublished, 2016; Robert W. Anderson, Noel Johnson and Mark Koyama, "Jewish Persecutions and Weather Shocks: 1100-1800." *Economic Journal* Volume 127, Issue 602 June 2017, pp. 924–958 [package].

Week 10 (March 12, 14): Economic Riddles of China's past

Shiue, Carol H. and Wolfgang Keller. 2007. "Markets in China and Europe on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution" *American Economic Review*, Vol. 97 (4), pp. 1189-1216.

Greif, Avner and Tabellini, Guido, 2016. "The Clan and the City: Sustaining Cooperation in China and Europe." *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol. 45, 2017, pp. 1-35.

Sng, Tuan-Hwee. 2014. "Size and Dynastic Decline: The Principal-Agent Problem in Late Imperial China 1700-1850." *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 54, October 2014, pp. 107–127 and Chiu Yu Ko, Mark Koyama and Tuan-Hwee Sng, "Unified China and Divided Europe," *International Economic Review*, forthcoming. [Package].

Jia, Ruixue. 2011. "The Legacies of Forced Freedom: China's Treaty Ports." *Review of Economics and Statistics* October 2014, Vol. 96, No. 4, pp. 596-608; and "Weather Shocks, Sweet Potatoes and Peasant Revolts in Historical China," *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 124, March 2014, pp. 92–118 [package].

Ting Chen, James Kung, and Chicheng Ma, "Long Live Keju! The Persistent Effects of China's Imperial Examination System," *Econometrica*, forthcoming.