

Syllabus

Economic History Economics 2450

Professor Werner Troesken
Office: Posvar Hall, 4715
Office hours: Th 3:30-5:30
Office phone: (412) 648-2823
email: troesken@pitt.edu

Course Overview

This course surveys research in economic history. The course includes a mix of older, classic articles and newer articles in general interest journals. A wide range of topics are covered, but special emphasis is given to questions related to the origins of American economic progress, particularly institutional factors. Questions regarding economic mobility, race, and the environment also receive special attention. The goals of the course are twofold: to introduce students to the most important events in American economic history; and to introduce students to some of the most creative and rigorous research taking place in economic history. Each class period will revolve around a lecture from the instructor as well as short presentations by chosen students. Students who are not presenting in a given week will have to write a short review essay of a relevant reading. Your course grade will be determined by your performance in three areas: class presentations (35 percent); review papers (35 percent); and a final exam (30 percent).

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Week 1. Introduction to the Course

Week 2. The State in Theory and History

Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson, "The Origins of State Capacity: Property Rights, Taxation, and Politics," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (Sep., 2009), pp. 1218-44.

Peter T. Leeson, "Better Off Stateless: Somalia Before and After Government Collapse," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol. 35 No. 4 (October, 2007), pp. 689-710.

Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, and Barry R. Weingast, "A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History." Working Paper #1275. National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA., 02138. December, 2006.

Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Dec., 1989), pp. 803-32.

Gregory Clark, "The Political Foundations of Modern Economic Growth: England, 1540-1800," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Spring, 1996), pp. 563-88.

Week 3. Disease, Geography, and Institutions in Economic History

- Nathan Nunn and D. Puga, "Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2012), pp. 20-36.
- Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, and Simon Johnson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Economic Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 91 (Dec. 2001), pp. 1369-1401.
- John Luke Gallup and Jeffrey D. Sachs, "The Economic Burden of Malaria," *American Journal of Tropical Medicine*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Sept., 2001), pp. 85-96.
- Quamrul Ashraf and Oded Galor, "The 'Out-of-Africa' Hypothesis, Human Genetic Diversity, and Comparative Economic Development," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 103, no. 1 (Jan., 2013), pp. 1-46.
- Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, and Simon Johnson, "The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (June, 2005), pp. 1369-1401.

Week 4. The American State: Origins, Economic Implications, and Broader Context

The Declaration of Independence

The Constitution

James Madison, *Federalist Papers No. 10 and No. 51*

Werner Troesken, *The Pox of Liberty: How the Constitution Left Americans Rich, Free, and Prone to Infection*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Becker, Sasha, and Ludiger Woessman, "Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 124, No. 2 (2009), pp. 1133-1172.

Jeremiah Dittmar, "Information Technology and Economic Change: The Impact of the Printing Press," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 126, No. 3 (2011), pp. 1133-1172.

Week 5. American Economic Progress: The Roles of Natural Resources and Imperialism

Gavin Wright, "The Origins of American Industrial Success," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (September 1990), pp. 651-68.

Joshua D. Angrist and Adriana D. Kugler, "Rural Windfall or a New Resource Curse? Coca, Income, and Civil Conflict in Columbia," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (May, 2008), pp. 191-215.

Stanley Lebergott, "The Returns to U.S. Imperialism, 1890-1929," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 40, No. 2. (June 1980), pp. 229-252.

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 117, No. 4 (Nov. 2002), pp. 1231-94.

Kris Mitchener and Marc Weidenmier, "Public Goods and the Roosevelt Corollary," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Sept., 2005), pp. 658-92.

Week 6. The Welfare Effects of Industrialization

- Gregory Clark, "The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1209-2004," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 113, No. 6 (December 2005), pp. 1307-1340.
- Robert W. Fogel and Dora L. Costa, "A Theory of Technophysio Evolution, With Some Implications for Forecasting Health Care Costs," *Demography*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Feb., 1997), pp. 49-66.
- Simon Szreter, "Economic Growth, Disruption, Deprivation, Disease, and Death: On the Importance of the Politics of Public Health for Development," *Population and Development Review*, 23(1991):693-728.
- John Komlos, "Shrinking in a Growing Economy? The Mystery of Physical Stature During the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Sept., 1998), pp. 779-802.
- Price Fishback, "Operations of 'Unfettered Labor Markets: Exit and Voice in American Labor Markets at the Turn of the Century," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jun., 1998), pp. 722-65.

Week 7. Slavery

- Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-bellum South," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 66., No. 2 (April, 1958), pp. 95-130.
- Jonathan Pritchett and Mallorie Smith, "Sequential Sales as a Test of Adverse Selection in the Market for Slaves," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (June 2013), pp. 477-493.
- Nathan Nunn and L. Wantchekon, "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 101, No. 7 (2011), pp. 3221-252.
- Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, "Biological Innovation and Productivity Growth in the Antebellum Cotton Economy," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Dec., 2008), pp. 1123-1171.

Week 8. On the Economic History of African Americans

- James J. Heckman and Brook S. Payner, "Determining the Impact of Federal Antidiscrimination Policy on the Economic Status of Blacks: A Study of South Carolina," *American Economic Review*, Vol.79, No. 1 (March., 1989), pp. 138-77.
- Christopher L. Foote, Warren C. Whatley, and Gavin Wright, "Arbitraging a Discriminatory Labor Market: Black Workers at the Ford Motor Company," *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (July 2003), pp. 493-532.
- Daniel Aaronson and Bhashkar Mazumder, "The Impact of Rosenwald Schools on Black Achievement," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 119, No. 5 (2011), pp. 821-888.
- Fabian Lange, Alan Olmstead, and Paul W. Rhode, "The Impact of the Boll Weevil, 1892-1932," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Sept., 2009), pp. 685-212.

Week 9. Economic Mobility in the United States

- Jason Long and Joseph P. Ferrie, "Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Great Britain and the United States Since 1850," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 103, No. 4 (June 2013), pp. 1109-37.
- Steven Herscovici, "Migration and Economic Mobility: Wealth Accumulation and Occupational Change among Antebellum Migrants and Persisters," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (December 1998), pp. 927-56.
- Jason Long, "Rural-Urban Migration and Socioeconomic Mobility in Victorian Britain," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 1-35.
- William J. Collins and Marriane Wanamaker, "Selection and Economic Gains in the Great Migration of African Americans: New Evidence from Linked Census Data," Working Paper 19124, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2013.

Week 10. Water

- Jordan Rappaport and Jeffrey D. Sachs. 2003. "The United States as a Coastal Nation," *Journal of Economic Growth*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 5-46.
- David Cutler and Grant Miller, "The Role of Public Health Improvements in Health Advances: The Twentieth Century United States," *Demography*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Feb., 2005), pp. 1-22.
- Joseph P. Ferrie and Werner Troesken, "Water and Chicago's Mortality Transition, 1850-1925," *Explorations in Economic History*, volume 45, no. 1 (January, 2008):1-16.
- Werner Troesken, "Race, Disease, and the Provision of Water in American Cities, 1889-1921," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Sept. 2001), pp. 750-76.
- Brian Beach, Joseph Ferrie, Martin Saavedra, and Werner Troesken, "Typhoid Fever, Water Quality, and Human Capital Formation," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper, 20279, July 2014.

Week 11. Topics in the Economic History of the Environment

- Zeynep K. Hansen and Gary D. Libecap. 2004. "Small Farms, Externalities, and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s," *Journal of Political Economy*, 112:665-94.
- M. Scott Taylor. "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison." *American Economic Review*.
- Dean Lueck, "The Extermination and Conservation of the American Bison," *Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol. 31, No. S2 (June 2002), pp. S609-S652.
- Alan Barreca, Karen Clay, and Joel Tarr, "Coal, Smoke, and Death: Bituminous Coal and American Home Heating," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 19881, February 2014.
- Karen Clay, Werner Troesken, and Michael Haines, "Lead and Mortality," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (July 2014), pp. 458-70.

Week 12. Property Rights and Agricultural Performance

Richard Hornbeck, "Barbed Wire: Property Rights and Agricultural Development," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2010, p. 767.

Gary D. Libecap and Dean Lueck, "The Demarcation of Land and the Role of Coordinating Property Institutions," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 119, No. 3 (June 2011), pp. 426-67.

Timothy Besley, "Property Rights and Investment Incentives: Theory and Evidence from Ghana," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 103, No. 5 (October 1995), pp. 903-37.

Week 13. Persistence and Early-Life Shocks

Anna Aizer, Shari Eli, Joseph Ferrie, and Adrianna Lleras-Muney, "The Long Term Impact of Cash Transfers to Poor Families," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 20103, May 2014

Douglas Almond, "Is the 1918 Influenza Pandemic Over? Long-Term Effects of *In Utero* Influenza Exposure in the Post-1940 U.S. Population," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 114, No. 4 (August 2006), pp. 672-712.

Gerard J. Van Den Berg, Maarten Lindeboom, and France Portrait, "Economic Conditions Early in Life and Individual Mortality," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 290-302.

Melissa Dell, "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining Mita," *Econometrica*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (November 2010), pp. 1863-1903.

Week 14. The Great Depression

Eugene N. White, "The Stock Market Boom and Crash of 1929 Revisited." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 67-83.

Gary Richardson and William Troost, "Monetary Intervention Mitigated Banking Panics During the Great Depression: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from a Federal Reserve District Border," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 117, No. 6 (December 2009), pp. 1031-1073.

Robert Higgs, "Wartime Prosperity? A Reassessment of the U.S. Economy in the 1940s," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 1992), pp. 41-60.

Christina D. Romer, "What Ended the Great Depression?" *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (December 1992), pp. 757-784.

Week 15. The New Deal

Price Fishback, Michael Haines, and Shawn Kantor, "Births, Deaths and New Deal Relief During the Great Depression," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (February 2007), pp. 1-14.

Harold L. Cole and Lee E. Ohanian, "New Deal Policies and the Persistence of the Great Depression: A General Equilibrium Analysis," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 112, No. 4, p. 779.

Carl Kitchens, "A Dam Problem: the TVA's Fight Against Malaria, 1926-51," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Sept. 2013), pp. 694-.

Chris Vickers and Nicolas Ziebarth, "Did the National Industrial Recovery Act Foster Collusion? Evidence from the Macaroni Industry," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Sept. 2014), pp. 831-.