

ECON 8534  
American Economic History

Professor Ann Carlos  
Econ 208A

Fall 2013

Office Hours: M 11.00-12.00pm and by appointment

This course explores the economic history of the United States from colonial times to the present. Its purpose is to expose you to economic history as a method of economic analysis and to provide insights into some of the main features of America's economic growth and development. In a very real sense, this course is a sampler. We cannot cover everything in one semester. Depending on the class interests, missing topics can be added.

For those of you who have not had a course in American economic history, two very useful text books are Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1994 and Linda Barrington, *On the Other Side of the Frontier*, 1999. Both are available on line and in the UMC bookstore.

#### Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation. Students are expected to summarize papers and offer comments. Paper summaries and overall class participation - 20% of the course grade.
2. A final exam - 40% of the course grade.
3. A 20 page research paper that is motivated by this class - 40% of the course grade. The paper must be more than a literature review. It needs to have all the elements of a paper: Introduction placing your question in the context of the existing literature; why this question is important; how you propose to answer the question—you could do this, for example, by providing a sketch of the theoretical framework behind your hypothesis; identifying the data sources that provides the necessary evidence, your empirical strategy and methodology, results and conclusion. The paper must be 'historical' in the sense that it deals with a specific time and place (which includes the more recent past) or with change over time. Ingenuity and feasibility are two aspects of your proposal that will be valued and rewarded. All students will be asked to give a short presentation of their proposal near the conclusion of the semester, possibly on a Saturday morning to give sufficient time for presentation and discussion. The term paper may be co-authored with another member of the class.

For the university policies on disabilities, religious observance, honor code, visit:  
<http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/courses/index.html>

Suggestions for summarizing and critiquing articles (for referee reports)

Source: Leah Boustan, Course Syllabus, Econ 242 [www.eh.net/syllabi](http://www.eh.net/syllabi)

Summary:

Don't feel that you need to be comprehensive over all aspects of the analysis. Just hit the high points. Here are some basic questions to think about as you prepare your summary:  
What is the big issue at stake in this paper?

## 1. Introduction

United Nations Development Report (UNDP) any recent year.

Atack and Passell, ch. 1.

Donald McCloskey, "Does the Past Have Useful Economics,"

John McCusker, "Colonial Statistics," *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennium ed.

#### 4. Other Side of the Frontier

Linda Barrington, Editor's Introduction: Native Americans and U.S. Economic History, *Other Side of the Frontier* 1999.

Jared M. Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies*, New York: Norton, 1997, chs 8,9,10.

Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, *Commerce by a Frozen Sea: Native Americans and the European Fur Trade*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Richard H. Steckel, "Health and Nutrition in Pre-Columbian America: The Skeletal Evidence", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol 36 no. 1, summer 2005: 1-32

Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, "Property Rights, Competition and Depletion in the Eighteenth-Century Canadian Fur Trade: The Tragedy of the Commons", *Canadian Journal of Economics*, May 1999.

Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, "Trade, Consumption, and the Native Economy: Lessons from York Factory, Hudson Bay", *Journal of Economic History* 61, 2001: 1037-1064.

David M. Wishart, "Evidence of Surplus Production in the Cherokee Nation Prior to Removal." *Journal of Economic History* vol 55, no 1 1995: 120-138.

Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, "Small pox and Native American Mortality: the 1780s Epidemic in the Hudson Bay Region", *Explorations in Economic History*, vol 49, issue 3, 2012: 277-380.

Bamforth, Douglas B. "Origin Stories, Archaeological Evidence, and Post-Clovis Paleoindian Bison Hunting on the Great Plains", *American Antiquity* vol 76, 2011:24-40.

Christian Dippel, "Historical Legacies and Economic Development: Evidence from Native American Reservations", Working Paper  
<http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/faculty/christian.dippel/papers.html>

#### 5. Transportation and American Economic Growth

Atack and Passell, chs. 6 and 16

*Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, vol 2, ch. 13

Mark Kanazawa, "Possession is Nine Points of the Law: The Political Economy of Early Public Land Disposal", *Explorations in Economic History*, April 1996: 227-249.

Robert Fogel, "Notes on the Social Savings Controversy", *Journal of Economic History* vol 39, no 1, 1979: 1-54.



- September 1990: 651-668.
- Paul M. Romer, "Why, Indeed in America?" *American Economic Review* vol 86, May 1996: 202-206.
- Robert J. Gordon, "US Economic Growth Since 1870: One Big Wave?" *American Economic Review* vol 89, May 1999: 123-128
- Daron Acemoglu, "Why Do New Technologies Complement Skills?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* vol 113, issue 4, 1998: 1024-1054.
- Kenneth Sokoloff, "Was the Transition from the Artisanal Shop to the Non-Mechanized Factory Associated with Gains in Efficiency?" *Explorations in Economic History* vol 21, 1984: 351-382.
- Claudia Golden and Lawrence F. Katz, "Origins of Technology-Skill Complementarity." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* vol 113, no. 3, 1998: 693-732
- Jeremy Atack, Fred Batemen and Robert A. Margo, "Skill Intensity and Rising Wage dispersion in Nineteenth Century American Manufacturing." *Journal of Economic History* vol 64 no 1, 2004: 172-192
- Jeremy Atack, Fred Batemen and Robert A. Margo, "Steam Power, Establishment Size, and Labor Productivity Growth in Nineteenth Century American Manufacturing." *Explorations in Economic History* vol 45, 2008: 185-198
- Lawrence F Katz and Robert A. Margo, "Technical Change and the Relative Demand for Skilled Labor: The United States in Historical Perspective, NBER Working Paper, w18752, 2013.
- Claudia Goldin, "The Human-Capital Century and American Leadership." *Journal of Economic History* vol 61, no 2, 2001: 263-292.
- Alexander J. Field, "Procyclical TFP and the Quality of Growth in Output per House, 1890-2004" Working Paper, University of California Santa Cruz (2008)
- Alexander J. Field, "The Impact of the Second World War on US Productivity Growth." *Economic History Review* 61 (August 2008).
- Ian Keay, "Canadian Manufacturing Relative Productivity Performance: 1907-1990." *Canadian Journal of Economics* November 2000, Volume 33, Number 4, Page 1049-1068.

## 9. Business History

- Louis Galambos, "The US Corporate Economy in the Twentieth Century." *Cambridge Economic History of the United States* vol. III
- Alfred D. Chandler, "Organizational Capabilities and the Economic History of the Industrial Enterprise," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* vol 6, no 3, 1992: 79-100.
- Alexander Field, "Modern Business Enterprise as a Capital-Saving Innovation." *Journal of Economic History* Vol 47 no 2, 1987: 473-485.
- Charles W. McCurdy, "American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation, 1875-1890," *Journal of Economic History* vol 38 no 3, 1978: 631-649.
- Naomi Lamoreaux and Kenneth Sokoloff, "Market Trade in Patents and the Rise of a Class of Specialized Inventors in the Nineteenth Century United States." *American Economic Review* vol 91, May 2001: 39-44.
- Zorina Khan and Kenneth Sokoloff, "The Early Development of Intellectual Property Institutions in the United States." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* vol 15, no 3, 2001: 233-246.

Petra Moser, "How Do Patent Laws Influence Innovation? Evidence from Nineteenth-Century

T. Piketty and E. Saez, "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol 118, no. 1, 2003: 1-39.

## 12. Women's labor Force Participation

Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990: 83-158.

Dora Costa, "From Mill Town to Board Room: The Rise of Women's Paid labor," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol 14, no 4, 2000:101-122.

Claudia Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family," *American Economic Review*, May 2006: 1-21.

Martha Bailey, "More Power to the Pill: The Impact of Contraceptive Freedom on Women's Lifecycle Labor Supply," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol 121, no 1, 2006: 289-320.

Martha Bailey, "Momma's Got the Pill," *American Economic Review*, vol 100, 2012: 98-129.

B. Stevenson and J. Wolfers, "The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, August 2009: 190-225.

Martha J. Bailey and William J. Collins, "The wage gains of African-American women in the 1940s," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol 66, no 3, September 2006: 737-777.

Price Fishback, William C. Horrace, and Shawn Everett Kantor, "The Impact of New Deal Expenditures on Mobility during the Great Depression," *Explorations in Economic History*, April 2006: 179-222.

## 13. Health and Mortality

Robert Fogel, *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-21: Europe, America, and the Third World*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hoyt Bleakley, "Disease and Development: Evidence from Hookworm Eradication in the American South," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol 122, no 1, 2007: 73-117.

D. Cutler and G. Miller, "The Role of Public Health Improvements in Health Advances: The Twentieth Century United States," *Demography*, February, 2005: 1-22.

Douglas V. Almond, "Is the 1918 Influenza Pandemic Over? Long-term Effects of Influenza Exposure in the Post-1940 U.S. Population," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol 114, no 4, August 2006: 672-712.

Joseph P. Ferrie and Werner Troesken, "Water and Chicago's Mortality Transition, 1850-1925," *Explorations in Economic History*, vol 45, 2008: 1-16.

Melissa Thomasson, "From Sickness to Health: The Twentieth Century Development of U.S. Health Insurance," *Explorations in Economic History*, vol 39, 2002: 233-253.

J.C. Herbert Emery "Un-American' or Unnecessary? America's Rejection of Compulsory Government Health Insurance in the Progressive Era," *Explorations in Economic History*, vol 47, 2010: 68-81.

Other topics as time permits