

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 4320/7910: GLOBAL ECONOMIC HISTORY 1300-THE PRESENT.
Autumn 2020-Winter 2021: Erik Thomson

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Meets (remotely): Mondays, 2:30-5:20.

Office hours: Tbd, or contact via email for appointment.

Introduction

This course investigates the economic history of the world between roughly 1300 and the present day. It covers a period of more than eight centuries. For many of them, economic growth by modern standards was so slow as to be considered nearly non-existent. People responded to the limitations of energy and resources in creative ways, developing different technologies, practices and institutions which continue to play important roles in economic life. Despite their creativity, peoples' lives were on average short, and their standards of living, by contemporary Canadian standards, were low. (In the pre-modern world, life expectancy was roughly 30 years.) However, these centuries also features what many people have argued is the largest single revolution in human history, the creation of sustained "modern" or "intensive" economic growth and the great divergence in living standards between rich and poor places in the world that accompanied it. We will explore the causes of these shifts, and some features of global economic development until the present day.

This course also offers an opportunity to become familiar with the techniques of economic history. Like other historians, economic historians use a wide range of sources to document and explain the wide range of social, cultural, political, legal and ecological reasons for economic development and change. Economic history, however, enjoys a particularly close relation with the discipline of economics, and often draws upon economic concepts and models to explain the changes they see. (This is as it should be; historians have much to learn from other disciplines, and scholars from many disciplines.)¹ This does not mean that historians should merely defer to economic theory—apart from other reasons, economists also disagree!—or allow their investigations into the past to be driven by current economic debates or the problems of current policy. Historians though can enrich their understanding of economic development both by engagement with source material, and by drawing upon and elaborating theories, arguments, and even constructing models to explain change.

Obviously, this course can not pretend to cover all aspects or even all important aspects of the global economy of a period of seven centuries. I have tried to find a balance between a sense of the crucial changes, and presenting interesting approaches.

Remote Learning

The Covid-19 pandemic makes it necessary for this course to meet on line. We will have a seminar on Monday afternoons, from 2:30-5:30, on Webex. Given the nature of the subject, it

¹ See Philip Hoffman, "Opening our eyes: History and the Social Sciences", *The Journal of the Historical Society*. 6, 1 (March, 2006) 93-117).

is sometimes useful to look at a slide showing a graph or other material together, so it would be best to have a computer and network access sufficient to be connected to online learning during this time, but should you have access only via a phone, please talk to me. Please try to upload a photo to the UMLearn profile, and have your name associated with your account on Webex. I have a terrible time associating names and faces, and so having your photo on your UM Learn profile helps me.

Office hours: I will discuss what time would be best for a dedicated office hour, however, I am always willing to make a time to discuss with you via some form of video conference by email. If you do not receive an answer to an email within twenty four hours, please email again. Email messages sometimes go astray. Please do not hesitate to ask me a question, or to ask for help.

Course Materials:

Books available for purchase at the University Bookstore

Ronald Findlay and Kevin H. O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): ISBN: 978-0-691-14327-9

Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ISBN: 978-0-521-68785-0

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), ISBN: 978-0-691-09010-8

Joe Studwell, *How Asia Works: Success and Failure in the World's Most Dynamic Region* (New York: Grove Press, 2013), 978-0-8021-2132-5.

The bulk of the course material is located in journal articles and book chapters.

Assignments and Marking

15 %: Class Participation.

This class will be conducted as a seminar. Attendance and participation is required.

Beyond that, you should not merely have “read” the readings before the class, because these works will require substantially more preparation in order to contribute usefully to the seminar. Most of the assigned readings for this class are complex works of analysis and interpretation. Many are written for advanced specialists, draw upon economic theory and some express their arguments and parts of their evidence as mathematical formulae. Others may make reference to historical periods and geographical regions with which you will have little familiarity. You may need to do some background reading to understand the readings; I am happy to recommend readings, as well as those references that I will list under the “useful references” sections. You should attempt to have some idea of the authors’ arguments and how they relate to one another before coming to class, and be ready to contribute your opinions and questions. On some

occasions I will ask you to examine statistics. We will talk about how to approach quantitative material, and what sort of questions to pose.

Taking notes on readings is useful, and whenever possible, you should bring assigned material to class with you. Although seminar discussions can meander, they are none the less important. Taking notes is useful to help recall the discussion.

Remember that asking questions in history is very valuable. It can be useful to prepare questions about the readings to pose in class. If you have questions, you will probably help your classmates to understand the material better as well.

Paper #1: 25% Assessing the Great Divergence or British Industrial Revolution

Undergraduate students ten pages (roughly 3000 words); graduate students fifteen pages (c.4500 words). Due 14 December.

Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence* was published in 2000; Robert C. Allen's *The British Industrial Revolution* in 2009. Both books have provoked debate, as all good books do.

Choose one of the two books. Read it closely, and analyze its arguments. Identify an aspect of the book that you believe to be of particular importance—for example, the role of energy, assets from slavery, or comparative wage data—and prepare a bibliography of books and articles that have appeared since the book's publication. You may have to expand or narrow your focus depending on what you find. Write a paper that explains how you think more recent scholarship confirms, challenges, or modifies Pomeranz's or Allen's evidence and arguments, and what new questions might now be posed.

Paper #2: Research Paper Total: 40 %

Explore a topic in global economic history, during the period of 1300-the present.

The paper can treat a subject, depart from a source or body of sources, or review a historiographical question, or even analyze the career and works of a single economic historian. It need not be global in scope, but can analyze a problem from a particular country or perspective.

Hopefully, the library will be open. However, even if it is not, there are many online collections of online sources and scholarship in economic history. I am happy to discuss preliminary ideas or even vague areas of interest, and suggest ways of narrowing, refining and pursuing them.

Please consult with me in the first weeks of the winter term about your topic—even if it only involves running the topic by me.

Seminar Presentation: 10% Prepare a conference style paper fifteen minutes long to present in one of the three class spaces—February 22, and March 2 and 8. Spaces will be divided in the first class of winter term.

A fifteen minute paper is generally seven double-spaced pages, without notes—the notes are usefully placed as end notes in such a paper. If using slides, there should usually be no more than a slide every minute and a half including the title. This demands concision. Good

conference papers pose a good and clear research question, explain its significance, and suggest how you will answer it.

Research Paper: 30 % Due April 5. 10-15 pages (3,000-5,000 words) for undergraduate students; 14-20 pages (4,200-6,000 words) for graduate students. You should have a bibliography, in addition to these pages. Drawing upon the questions and comments you have received, revise and expand your paper into its final form.

Final Exam: 20 %. In exam period. Three hours. Questions will test the concepts and matters discussed in the course.

Paper Formats, Honesty, and Marking

A note on academic honesty: Education and scholarship depends upon a certain sort of basic honesty. I expect that when you claim to have done work, you will actually have done it. When you use the work or ideas of another scholar or student, you should respect them by treating their work fairly and accurately, and give them public credit by citing them openly. Always err on the side of giving too much credit to others than too little. In formal essays, I prefer citations in footnotes using the form known as the Chicago humanities style; see the quick guide at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

The University cares about academic honesty as well, because it has to maintain a standard of fairness and equity. You can find the section on “Academic Integrity” of the General Academic Regulations in the online Academic Calendar, and Catalog and the Faculty of Arts regulation online at http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student_resources/student_responsibilities_integrity.html

which reads:

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

Please note that if you wish to appeal a grade given for term work you must do so within ten working days after the grade has been made available to you. Any unreturned work will be kept for four months, after which it will be destroyed in a confidential manner.

Marking: I will make every effort to return papers within a week, and you will thus have considerable feedback before the voluntary withdrawal (VW) date of 29 January 2021.

When marking, I will take into account the quality and diligence of research, the creativity, strength, and coherence of thought and argument, and the correct use of grammar, usage,

proofreading and citation. Extensions will not be granted except in highly unusual circumstances, which may require documentation. 4 % a day may be deducted for unexcused lateness.

A+, 90-100 %: Exceptional: Astonishingly excellent work, which demonstrates originality and a singular command of the subject.

A, 80-89 %. Truly excellent work, free from errors. A strong thesis, well organized paragraphs, and substantial evidence of close reading on single source papers or broad research in the research paper. In research papers, some awareness of the development of historiographical traditions. Excellent and error free citations, and in the research paper a large and intriguing bibliography.

B+, 75-79 %. Very good work, but with some errors.

B, 70-75 %. Good, with evidence of hard work. Certainly must have a suitable thesis. Errors in grammar and usage, and less creativity and coherence in argument and interpretation. Sporadic references to the literature.

C+, 65-69 %. Satisfactory, but little coherence in argument and poor writing, and in the research paper, little evidence of creativity and diligence in research.

C, 60-64 %. Poorly written, and with little evidence of being familiar with the subject about which they are writing, and little evident effort placed into finding material for research.

D, 50-59 %. Poorly organized, without a useful thesis. Many errors in editing, sloppy writing, and little sign of diligent research or close reading. Using only the textbooks as a source in the research paper.

F, 0-49 %. Unacceptable work. Demonstrates little knowledge of economic history.

Graduate Student Expectations

I expect graduate students, apart from writing somewhat longer papers, to perform at a higher level than undergraduate students. Sometimes this may mean drawing upon a larger number of books and articles, but a longer bibliography means nothing if the research is still shallow. Rather, by “perform at a higher level”, I mean an increase in the quality of analysis, the assiduity of participation, the clarity, creativity and cogency of argumentation, and the command of the materials in depth and detail.

General Resources Available to You

Writing tutors, study skills, and other workshops and resources are available through the Academic Learning Centre, which can be found here:

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/studentlife/index.html>

If you have concerns about your mental health or well-being, please take advantage of the Student Counselling Centre, <http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html> If you are concerned about another student or yourself, and do not know where to turn, please go to Student Support Case Management, <http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>

UM History Student Association (UMHiSA) is a history undergraduate student run organization that seeks to establish a sense of community for students studying all facets of history, and provide support for them in their academic career. Students interested in fun times, spirited debate, new opportunities, a community of like-minded students, or all of the above. Check out UMHiSA on instagram www.instagram.com/umhisa_undergrad/ or by emailing umhisau@gmail.com.

AUTUMN TERM READING SCHEDULE

P&P = Ronald Findlay and Kevin H. O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

I: 14 September 2020. Introductions

We'll go over the syllabus, but also start with the work of the course.

Readings:

Max Roser, "Economic Growth" *Our World In Data*, 7 July 2020,
<https://ourworldindata.org/economic-growth>

Susan B. Hanley, "A High Standard of Living in Nineteenth-Century Japan: Fact or Fantasy?" *The Journal of Economic History* 43, 1 (March, 1983); 183-192.

II: 21 September: Classic Theories and Thinking in Models

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edwin Cannan, ed. (Originally 1776, this edition London: Methuen, 1904), I, Introduction and plan of the work, and Book one Chapter 1-3, available at: <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/smith-an-inquiry-into-the-nature-and-causes-of-the-wealth-of-nations-cannan-ed-vol-1>

Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London, 1798), pp. 1-11. available at <http://www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf>

Karl Marx, *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy* (German 1867, First English edition 1887), I, chapters 26, 27, and 31, available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/>

Evsey D. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis," *The Journal of Economic History* 30, 1 (March, 1970): 18-32.

III: 28 September: Black Death and the Reshaping of Eurasian Economies

P & P, read pp. xvi-xxvi, and 101 to 142. Skim 1-100, if you like.

Guido Alfani and Thomas E. Murphy, "Plague and Lethal Epidemics in the Pre-Industrial World," *The Journal of Economic History*, 77, 1 (March 2017): 314-343.

Bruce M.S. Campbell, "Nature as historical protagonist: environment and society in pre-industrial England," *Economic History Review* 63, 2 (2010): 281-314.

Optional: Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth, "The Three Horsemen of Riches: Plague, War and Urbanization in Early Modern Europe," *Review of Economic Studies* 80 (2013): 774-811.
(Warning! This one is hard.)

IV: 5 October: Industrious revolutions, institutions and household power

Jan de Vries, "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution," *Journal of Economic History*, 54, 2. (1994): 249-270.

Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Girl Power: the European Marriage pattern and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late-medieval and early modern period." *Economic History Review* (2010): 1-33.

Shireen Moosvi, "The World of Labour in Mughal India," *International Review of Social History* 56, S19 (Nov, 2011): 245-261.

Regine Mathias, "Japan in the Seventeenth Century: Labour Relations and Work Ethics," *International Review of Social History* 56, S19 (Nov, 2011): 217-243.

12 October: Thanksgiving: No Class.

V: 19 October: Approaching European Empires: 1, Companies

P & P, 143-225.

Ron Harris, "The institutional dynamics of early modern Eurasian trade: the *the commenda* and the corporation," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*. 71 (2009): 606-622.

Emily Erikson and Peter Bearman, "Malfeasance and the Foundations for Global Trade: The Structure of English Trade in the East Indies, 1601-1833", *American Journal of Sociology*, 112, 1 (July, 2006): 195-230.

VI:26 October: Approaching European Empires: 2 Slavery

P & P: 227-364.

Trevor Burnard and Giorgio Riello, "Slavery and the New History of Capitalism," *Journal of Global History* 15, 2 (2020): 225-244.

Klas Rönnbäck, "On the economic importance of the slave plantation complex to the British economy during the eighteenth century: a value-added approach," *Journal of Global History* 13 (2018): 309-327.

Nathan Nunn, "The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123, 1 (2008): 139-176.

VII: 2 November: Great Divergence

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 1-165.

Fall Break: No Class 9 November

VIII: 16 November: Great Divergence, II.

Pomeranz, *Great Divergence*, 166-297.

Kent Deng and Patrick O'Brien, "Establishing statistical foundations of a chronology for the great divergence: a survey and critique of the primary sources for the construction of relative wage levels for Ming-Qing China." *The Economic History Review* 69, 4 (2016): 1057-1082.

IX: 23 Nov: Industrial Revolution, I

Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-131.

X: 30 Nov: Industrial Revolution

Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*, 135-275.

Judy Stephenson, "'Real' wages? Contractors, workers, and pay in London building trades, 1650-1800," *The Economic History Review*, 71, 1 (2018), 106-32.

XI: 7 Dec: Retrospect and the fiscal state.

Philip T. Hoffman, "The Great Divergence: Why Britain Industrialised First," *Australian Economic History Review* 60, 2 (July, 2020): 126-147.

Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, 4 (Dec, 1989): 803-832.

Richard Bonney, "Towards the comparative fiscal history of Britain and France during the 'long' Eighteenth century," in *Exceptionalism and Industrialism: Britain and its European Rivals, 1388-1815*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 191-215.

R. Bin Wong, "Taxation and good governance in China, 1500-1914," in *The Rise of Fiscal States: A Global History, 1500-1914*. Patrick Karl O'Brien and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 353-377.

