

York University
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Department of Economics
Winter 2017

Course # and Title

GS/ECON 5750 M: Topics in North American Economic History

Course Webpage

<https://moodle.yorku.ca/>

Course Instructor/Contact

Name: Laura Salisbury
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Lecture Time and Location

Time: F 2:30-5:30pm
Location: R N814

Course Description:

This is a graduate level course aimed to familiarize students with select important topics in economic history, with a focus on the United States and Canada, and to acquaint them with empirical methods of research in economic history. The course will focus on micro themes (i.e. research analyzing individuals, localities or firms) that are important across North America, with some focus on topics unique to the United States. These topics include an overview of the importance of history and institutions to economic development; slavery in the United States and its long-term economic impacts; industrialization and manufacturing in the U.S. and Canada; migration and economic mobility; natural resources and agriculture in Canadian and American development; urbanization and suburbanization in the U.S.; health and mortality; marriage and fertility; and the economics and politics of early social assistance programs. In addition to familiarizing students with important topics and methods in economic history, this course will develop computational, writing, and presentation skills.

Course Evaluation:

- 1) **Research proposal (50%).** Students will design a research project in economic history and will write a detailed proposal describing the project. The proposal should contain an introduction that clearly outlines the motivation for undertaking the project; a detailed literature review; a description of the proposed data source, and a plan for any data collection the project would involve; a description of the proposed empirical strategy; and some preliminary results. While students are not expected to collect new data for this research proposal, they should plan to access relevant existing data in order to present motivating or preliminary results. This should be done using a statistical software package like Stata, SAS, or R. **The research proposal is due in class on March 18th.**
- 2) **Presentation (15%).** Students must choose one paper on the reading list to present to the class. Presentations should be approximately 30 minutes in length.
- 3) **Class participation (10%).** We will discuss papers on the reading list in class, and students will be graded on attendance and participation in these class discussions.
- 4) **Final exam (25%).** The final exam will be in essay format and will cover all class discussion and required readings.

Missed Exams and Late Assignments

A deferral for the final exam will be granted only for medical reasons. In such cases students should submit a deferred exam application together with the supporting documents (attending physician's statement) to the economics department to my attention. The date and time of the deferred exam will be set at a later date. Students who may require further extensions or accommodation will have to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. **I must receive your paper by the end of the semester (April 4th), or it will receive a grade of zero.**

Grading

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

Important Course Information for Students

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage; <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html/>

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants

- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

Reading List [Bolded entries required]:

1) Institutions and Development through History

- **Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson (2001). “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Developments: An Empirical Investigation.” *American Economic Review*. 91: 1369-1401.**
- **Stanley Engerman and Kenneth Sokoloff (2002). “Factor Endowments, Inequality, and Paths of Development among New World Economies.” *Economia* 3: 41-102.**
- Nathan Nunn (2008). “The Long Term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 123: 139-176.

2) Slavery in the U.S. and its Aftermath

- **Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman (1977). “Explaining the Relative Efficiency of Slave Labor in the Antebellum South,” *American Economic Review*. 67: 275-296. And (1980), “Reply” *American Economic Review*. 70: 672-690.**
- **Suresh Naidu (2012) “Suffrage, Schooling, and Sorting in the Post-Bellum U.S. South,” NBER Working Paper no. 18129.**
- **Leah P. Boustan (2009). “Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migration and Racial Wage Convergence in the North, 1940-1970,” *Journal of Economic History* 69: 756-783.**
- Bruce Sacerdote (2005). “Slavery and the Intergenerational Transmission of Human Capital,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 87: 217-234.

3) Innovation, Industrialization, and Skill

- **Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz (1998). “The Origins of Technology-Skill Complementarity.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 113: 693-732.**

- Jeremy Atack, Fred Bateman and Robert A. Margo (2008). “Steam Power, Establishment Size, and Labor Productivity in Nineteenth Century American Manufacturing.”
- **Ian Key (2000).** “Scapegoats or Responsive Entrepreneurs: Canadian Manufacturers, 1907-1990.” *Explorations in Economic History*. 37: 217-240.
- Kris Inwood and Thanasis Stengos (1991). “Discontinuities in Canadian Economic Growth.” *Explorations in Economic History*. 28: 274-286.

4) Geographic and Economic Mobility

- **Jason Long and Joseph Ferrie (2013).** “Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Britain and the United States since 1850.” *American Economic Review*. 103: 1109-1137.
- **Ran Abramitzky, Leah P. Boustan, and Katherine Eriksson (2012).** “Europe’s Tired, Poor, Huddled Masses: Self Selection and Economic Outcomes in the Age of Mass Migration.” *American Economic Review*. 102: 1182-1856.
- **William Collins and Marianne H. Wanamaker (2014).** “Selection and Economic Gains in the Great Migration of African Americans: New Evidence with Linked Census Data.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. 6: 220-252.

5) Natural Resources and and Agriculture

- **Fabian Lange, Olmstead, Alan, and Paul Rhode (2009).** “The Impact of the Boll Weevil, 1892-1932,” *Journal of Economic History* 69: 685-718.
- **Richard Hornbeck (2012).** “The Enduring Impact of the American Dust Bowl: Short and Long-Run Adjustments to Environmental Catastrophe,” *American Economic Review* 102: 1477-1507.
- **Ann Carlos and Frank Lewis (1999).** “Property Rights, Competition and Depletion in the Eighteenth-Century Fur Trade: The Role of the European Market.” *Canadian Journal of Economics*. 32: 705-728.

6) Urbanization and Suburbanization

- **Nathaniel Baum-Snow (2007).** “Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122: 775-805.

- William Collins and Robert A. Margo (2007). “The Economic Aftermath of the 1960s Riots: Evidence from Property Values,” *Journal of Economic History* 67: 849-883.
- Katherine L. Shester (2013). “The Local Economic Effects of Public Housing in the United States, 1940-1970,” *Journal of Economic History* 73: 978-1016.
- **Leah P. Boustan (2013). “Local Public Goods and the Demand for High-Income Municipalities.” *Journal of Urban Economics*. 76: 71-82.**
- Leah P. Boustan and Robert A. Margo (2009). “Race, Segregation, and Postal Employment: New Evidence on Spatial Mismatch.” *Journal of Urban Economics*.

7) Health and Mortality

- Douglas V. Almond (2006). “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* 114: 672-712.
- **Hoyt Bleakley (2007). “Disease and Development: Evidence from Hookworm Eradication in the American South,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122: 73-117.**
- Joseph Ferrie and Werner Troesken (2008). “Water and Chicago’s Mortality Transition, 1850-1925,” *Explorations in Economic History* 45: 1-16.
- **Ann Carlos and Frank Lewis (2012). “Small Pox and Native American Mortality: the 1780s Epidemic in the Hudson Bay Region.” *Explorations in Economic History*. 49: 277-380.**

8) Marriage and Fertility

- **Jeremy Greenwood, Ananth Seshadri, and Guillaume Vandembroucke (2005). “The Baby Boom and Baby Bust,” *American Economic Review* 95: 183-207.**
- **Martha J. Bailey and William Collins (2011). “Did Improvements in Household Technology Cause the Baby Boom? Evidence from Electrification, Appliance Diffusion, and the Amish,” *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 3: 189-217.**
- **Martha J. Bailey (2006). “More Power to the Pill: The Impact of Contraceptive Freedom on Women’s Lifecycle Labor Supply.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 121: 289-320.**

- Laura Salisbury (2014). “Women’s Income and Marriage Markets in the United States: Evidence from the Civil War Pension.” NBER Working Paper no. 20201.
- Marianne Wanamaker (2012). “Industrialization and Fertility in the Nineteenth Century: Evidence from South Carolina.” *Journal of Economic History*. 72: 168-196.

9) Development of the Welfare State in North America

- **Anna Aizer, Shari Eli, Joseph Ferrie, and Adriana Lleras-Muney (2014). “The Long-Term Impact of Means-Tested Transfers: Evidence from the Mothers’ Pension Program.” NBER Working Paper no. 20103.**
- **Lee J. Alston and Joseph P. Ferrie (1993). “Paternalism in Agricultural Labor Contracts in the U.S. South: Implications for the Growth of the Welfare State.” *American Economic Review*. 83: 852-876.**
- Dora Costa (1995). “Pensions and Retirement: Evidence from Union Army Veterans.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 110: 297-320.
- Price V. Fishback and Shawn E. Kantor (1998). “The Adoption of Workers’ Compensation in the United States: 1900-1930.” *Journal of Law and Economics*. 41: 305-341.
- Martha Bailey and Nicolas J. Duquette (2014). “How the U.S. Fought the War on Poverty: The Economics and Politics of Funding at the Office of Economic Opportunity.” *Journal of Economic History*.
- Shari Eli and Laura Salisbury (2014). “Patronage Politics and the Development of the Welfare State: Confederate Pensions in the American South.” Unpublished paper.

Approximate Schedule

Date	Topic
January 6	Introduction
January 13	Institutions and Development
January 20	Slavery and its Aftermath
January 27	Innovation, Industrialization and Skill
February 3	Geographic and Economic Mobility
February 10	Natural Resources and Agriculture
February 17	Reading Week, NO CLASS
February 24	Urbanization and Suburbanization
March 3	Workshop for papers
March 10	Health and Mortality
March 17	Marriage and Fertility [Paper Due]
March 24	Marriage and Fertility cont'd
March 31	History of Welfare