

Rutgers University - New Brunswick  
ECO 305 American Economic History, Fall 2016  
Section 1: Tuesday and Friday, 9:50am - 11:10am  
Section 2: Tuesday and Friday, 11:30am - 12:50pm  
Office: New Jersey Hall 402  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 - 5:00pm, or by appt.

Instructor: Geoffrey Clarke  
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## Objectives

Students completing this class will learn about the broad outline of economic history in America from the Colonial period to the 1970s, with a balance of macroeconomic and microeconomic examinations of historical events and trends. Additionally, students will gain skills in synthesizing arguments and logic of economic articles with a view to constructing their own argument as a first step towards individual research.

## Prerequisites

Eco 102: Introduction to Microeconomics  
Eco 103: Introduction to Macroeconomics

This class counts as a low-level elective class for economics majors and minors.

## Textbook and Resources

Readings will be assigned every other class (see below). Readings from journals can be accessed through the university library system (an important research skill that we will discuss in the first class). Readings from books will be posted to Sakai.

Reference: "History of the American Economy" by Gary Walton and Hugh Rockoff. This is a good general reference for the periods we will be studying (and other aspects of American history).

Class materials (syllabus, homework, and practice exams) will be posted on the Sakai web site: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Students in section 1 will use MobLab a few times during the semester to illustrate concepts described in class. Further information will be provided during the class.

## Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the academic integrity policy which can be found at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>.

I will report every violation of academic integrity.

## **Format**

The class will have two kinds of sessions: on (most) Tuesdays, class will consist of a student presentation of the historical background of the subject, and then a lecture about the economic history implications. On (most) Fridays, class will be a discussion section about the relevant reading in class. Participation grades will come solely from these discussion sessions.

## **Grading**

### **Assignments**

You will earn 35% of your grade on a 5 to 7 page paper exploring one of the topics in additional depth. Other topics may be selected with the instructor's approval. This will require additional research into the topic and a synthesis of ideas into an academic paper. 5% of your grade will be earned from a two-paragraph description of your paper topic. I will not grade your final paper without previously approving your paper topic.

### **Quizzes**

There will be three quizzes given throughout the semester, each worth 10%. These quizzes will review the readings, lectures, and historical presentations to that point, and will consist of short answer questions.

Makeup policy: Makeup quizzes will be given in the event of absences. Please note that, due to the low number of makeup quiz takers, there can be no curve applied to makeup quizzes.

### **Participation**

Your participation in class discussion will earn you 15% of your grade. This includes discussion of readings for each session (and, necessarily, attendance).

Additionally, you will earn 15% of your grade in one in-class presentation. This 10-minute presentation will provide the broad historical outlines of the period we will be discussing that day.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is counted in your final grade via your participation grade. If you do need to miss a lecture, you may find the self-reporting absence website helpful:

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>.

If you miss a class, borrow notes from a classmate and review the reading. Lectures will not be repeated during office hours.

## Course Outline<sup>1</sup>

Since participation is a part of your grade, it is necessary to read the assigned text(s) and note any questions you may have.

Tuesday, September 6

Lecture: Why study economic history?

Friday, September 9

Discussion: Why study economic history?

Reading: Fleming (2012)

Tuesday, September 13

Lecture: Indentured servitude

Friday, September 16

Discussion: Indentured servitude

Reading: Galenson (1984)

Tuesday, September 20

Lecture: Development of Colonial markets

Friday, September 23

Discussion: Development of Colonial markets

Reading: Rothenberg (1981)

Tuesday, September 27

Lecture: European immigration

Friday, September 30

Discussion: European immigration

Reading: Abramitzky et al. (2012)

Tuesday, October 4

Lecture: Asian immigration

Quiz 1

Friday, October 7

Discussion: Asian immigration

Reading: Cloud & Galenson (1987) and McClain Jr. (1990)

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<sup>1</sup>Subject to change

Tuesday, October 11

Guest Lecture: Michael Elgawly

Lecture: The importance of railroads

Friday, October 14

Guest Lecture: Michael Elgawly

Lecture: Slavery: Economic justification for slavery

Tuesday, October 18

Discussion: The importance of railroads

Reading: Fogel (1994)

Friday, October 21

Discussion: Slavery: Economic justification for slavery

Reading: Fogel & Engerman (1995)

Tuesday, October 25

Lecture: Slavery: the treatment of slaves I

Friday, October 28

Discussion: Slavery: the treatment of slaves I

Reading: Fogel & Engerman (1977)

Tuesday, November 1

Lecture: African Americans after the Civil War

Friday, November 4

Discussion: African-Americans after the Civil War

Reading: Ransom & Sutch (2001)

Tuesday, November 8

Lecture: The Gold Standard

Quiz 2

Friday, November 11

Discussion: The Gold Standard

Reading: Rockoff (1990)

Tuesday, November 15  
Lecture: The Great Depression

Friday, November 18  
Discussion: The Great Depression  
Reading: Friedman & Schwartz (2008)

Tuesday, November 22  
Lecture: The New Deal

Wednesday, November 23  
Discussion: The New Deal  
Reading: Wallis (1998)

Tuesday, November 29  
Lecture: Discrimination and Civil Rights

Friday, December 1  
Discussion: Discrimination and Civil Rights  
Reading: Donohue III & Heckman (1991)

Tuesday, December 6  
Lecture: Women's Rights

Friday, December 8  
Discussion: Women's Rights  
Reading: Myers (2012)

Tuesday, December 13  
Lecture: What Did It All Mean?  
Quiz 3

## References

- Abramitzky, R., Boustan, L. P., & Eriksson, K. (2012, August). Europe's Tired, Poor, Huddled Masses: Self-Selection and Economic Outcomes in the Age of Mass Migration. *American Economic Review*, 102(5), 1832-56. Retrieved from <http://ideas.repec.org/a/aea/aecrev/v102y2012i5p1832-56.html>
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[http://journals.cambridge.org/article\\_S0022050700043588](http://journals.cambridge.org/article_S0022050700043588) doi:  
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## **Student Wellness Services**

Just In Case Web App, for a mental health crisis for you or a friend  
<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS), for non-emergency psychological health issues  
(848) 932-7884  
or visit 17 Senior Street  
New Brunswick, NJ  
[www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)  
(848) 932-1181  
or visit 3 Bartlett Street  
New Brunswick, NJ  
[www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

Disability Services  
(848) 445-6800  
or visit Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145  
Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue  
Piscataway, NJ  
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Scarlet Listeners, for confidential peer counseling and referral hotline  
<http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>  
or call (732) 247-5555