



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

**DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMICS**

Econ 5470/6470-090: Industrialization and Economic Development: The American Case

Spring 2023

Online

Prerequisites: Econ 2010 and 2020

Fulfills upper division writing (CW) requirement. Fulfills history focus area requirement for Econ majors.

Instructor: Aashima Sinha

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Office Hours: by appointment (please email me to set up a date and time); mode: Zoom

Zoom details:

Topic: Office hour (by appointment)

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/7252386156>

Meeting ID: 725 238 6156

Passcode: 0507

Course Description: “What were the primary forces driving the rise of the United States from a set of agricultural colonies in the 1600s to the dominant global economic power in the 1900s? How were the benefits of that growth distributed across groups – men and women, minority populations, and successive waves of immigrants? In this course, we use economic models and statistical tools to better understand US history, and we use this history to gain insight into current debates about issues like immigration policy, economic inequality, taxation, and government spending. Graduate students should register for ECON 6470 and will be held to higher standards and/or additional work.”

While this course is to a great degree a "survey," or a broad overview, of this history, we will give particular emphasis to the study of several **“big questions”**:

- Can economic growth be sustained in the future in the US? Should growth be our primary policy objective?
- Why is inequality rising in the US, and does inequality matter for the functioning of the US economy and society?
- What does new technology do to the conditions faced by workers – levels of pay, unemployment, working conditions?
- Why has the economic presence of the government grown, and how does the growth of government affect the economy?

Objectives:

- By the end of the semester, a student who is successful in this course will
- (1) Have a detailed understanding of the evolution of the US economy from colonial times to the present in terms of industrial composition, growth rates, methods of production, and living standards,
 - (2) Become familiar with important measures of economic performance (output measures, income measures, inequality measures, etc.) and sources of these measures, (3) Gain insight into how economists use models to understand changes in the economy,
 - (4) Be able to interpret current economic issues (unemployment immigration, discrimination, inequality, the pace of growth) in the context of related historical phenomena,
 - (5) Be better able to write about and discuss economic content in a way that is engaging and persuasive.

Reading material: The required reading for this class will consist of journal articles and book chapters which will be made available through Canvas. There is no required text. It may, however, be useful to have a textbook to rely on as a basic reference. Two that I find useful are

- Walton and Rockoff, *History of the American Economy* (Cengage). The newest edition is quite expensive. Other recent editions are likely to be much cheaper and just about as good.
- Atack and Passell, *A New Economic View of American History* (Norton). The most recent edition is 1994, but it's still useful and should not be too expensive.

(I have not ordered these books, but they should be easy to find through online booksellers if you choose to buy one.)

In the lecture videos, I will also present a considerable amount of material that is not specifically available in the readings. It is therefore essential to watch these videos and take notes on them.

Canvas

Canvas is where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course. I expect you have some experience using Canvas at this point, but I want to emphasize a couple of details:

- Canvas Notification Preferences:
- please make sure your Canvas notification preferences are set so that you will receive course announcements immediately or at least daily. (Notification settings are found in your general Canvas profile – click on your “avatar” to see this.)
- Instructor Feedback/Communication:

This is an “asynchronous” online course, which means lectures are recorded, not live. However, I will be in the course several times a week to follow up on any discussion

questions. Please allow 48 hours for turnaround time on questions, requests, or feedback. I will also hold office hours by Zoom (by appointment), so email me to set up a date and time to meet via zoom. I will use a recurring Zoom link posted on the course front page and at the top of the syllabus.

Econ 3905-001 ("Modes of Learning"):

Econ 3905 is a one-credit course which provides additional instruction in writing research papers and essays in economics. It is **not** necessary to register for Econ 3905 to fulfill the CW requirement (successful completion of Econ 5470 fulfills the requirement). Nonetheless, some students will find enrolling in Econ 3905 useful, both because it will provide an additional hour of credit and because it will give you access to resources which will help you improve your writing and thereby improve your grade in Econ 5470 (and in other classes).

Econ 6470-090 (Graduate Section):

Students planning to use this course for graduate credit must register for Econ 6470 (rather than Econ 5470). Note, though, that I have combined the Canvas sites for 5470 and 6470 into one site for greater efficiency in communicating.

Plan of the Course / Grading:

1. Lectures, core readings, and quizzes: 50 Points Total

Most of the modules and lecture videos are devoted to presenting a survey/overview of key topics in US economic history. Most (but not quite all) of these modules include required readings. The list of topics and readings is presented below. Six times during the term we will have relatively short quizzes on the preceding weeks' material. Each of these quizzes will be worth 10 points. I will drop your lowest quiz. Quizzes will be made available on the listed dates, and you will have 20 minutes to take each quiz once you start it. If you fail to take a quiz during the assigned time, that becomes your lowest quiz, so don't miss more than one.

Quiz	Due date
Quiz 1 (Modules 2 and 3)	February 3
Quiz 2 (Modules 4 and 6)	February 17
Quiz 3 (Modules 7, 8, 9, and 10)	March 3
Quiz 4 (Modules 12 and 13)	March 24
Quiz 5 (Module 17)	April 7
Quiz 6 (Module 23)	April 28

2. "Class Participation" assignments: 10 Points Total

There are several “class participation” assignments consisting of a background survey (2 points), an introduction of yourself (2 points), and discussion of three of the general readings (2 points each=6 points).

- The background survey asks about your educational and career goals and your experience in economics. It also asks you to rank the “big question” groups in order of your preference. This survey must be submitted by January 21. It is worth 2 points.

- All students will be asked to submit an introduction of themselves in text, audio, or video form to the “Introductions” discussion board by January 21. Submitting some sort of reasonable introduction of yourself on time is worth 2 points.

- I will provide detailed presentations (in the lecture videos) of most of the general course readings. For three, however, I will provide only a brief overview, and you will need to discuss these articles in Canvas on the respective discussion pages for these three readings. Post at least one comment indicating your understanding of the article(s) and/or key takeaway/main message of the article(s). Responsible participation in each of these discussions is worth 2 points, so there are 6 total points available in these reading discussions. The three articles that we will discuss this way, and the dates of discussion, are as follows:

- o Engerman and Sokoloff (Module 1): January 16 to 20

- o Lewchuck (Module 19): April 3 to April 7

- o Coates (Module 21): April 10 to April 14

3. “Big Question” outlines and presentations: 40 Points Total

Each student will explore deeply one of the big questions listed above by reading, writing on, and presenting journal articles or book chapters relating to that topic. This will work as follows: Four times during the semester, you will read a research paper dealing with your “big question.”

- For three of the articles connected to your “big question,” you will write and submit an outline of the paper, no more than 2 sides of a page in length. These outlines are worth 10 points each and are due by April 15. However, I encourage you to submit your outlines as and when you finish reading the respective articles/ readings.
- For ONE of the four papers connected to your “big question,” rather than write an outline you will create a presentation examining the argument made in the paper, the evidence presented, and your critique, pointing out both effective and ineffective parts of the paper, and making suggestions for improvement or extension of the work. This presentation is worth 10 points and is due by April 15. However, I encourage you to submit your presentation as and when you finish reading the respective articles/ readings.

Additional details on the “big question” outlines and essays can be found in the “modules” area under “Important Documents,” and also in Module 1, “Course Background and Logistics.”

4. Research/Policy paper: 50 Points Total

There are two parts to this assignment–

4.1 You will turn in a “proposal,” worth 10 points, by April 1. [1-2 pags]

4.2 You will turn in your final paper, worth 40 points, by May 1.

Each student will write a roughly 10-page (counting pages of text, not cover pages or reference pages) paper making a policy argument related to your “big question” topic. This paper should draw on historical evidence including, but not limited to, the papers you read during the term.

Your paper topic might be something along these lines:

- "To sustain economic growth, the US should...."
- "US economic policy should reduce its emphasis on growth and shift its focus to....."
- "To reverse growing inequality, the US should..."
- "Economic inequality should not be a policy concern because...."
- "New robotic technology threatens the living standards of workers, so we should...."
- "Excessive government regulation harms economic growth, so we should...."\
- “Increasingly complex market economies require greater government oversight, so we should...”

Note that your final papers will be submitted to Turnitin, a plagiarism checking utility, through Canvas. Additional details on the Research/Policy Papers can be found in the “Important Documents” module.

Assignment summary

Assignment	Points
Class participation- Introduction, background, 3 discussion essays	5x2=10
Quizzes	5x10= 50
3 Outlines on three of the four readings/articles on the big question you select	3x10= 30
1 presentation on the remaining article/reading on the big question you select	1x10=10
Research proposal	1x10=10
Final research paper	1x40=40
Total points	150

Final Semester Grade: There are 150 points available in total. The percentage score will be calculated on 150. There will not be any other extra credit. The grade scale is below-

Grading Scale:

94-100%: A

90-93%: A-

87-89%: B+

84-86%: B

80-83%: B-

77-79%: C+

74-76%: C

70-73%: C-

67-69%: D

64-66%: D

60-63%: D

0-59%: E

Course Schedule

Week 1: 1/9 to 1/13: Module 1 – Course Background and Logistics

Week 2: 1/16 to 1/20: Module 2 – Introduction and Overview of Growth

READING:

Sokoloff and Engerman, “History Lessons: Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14:3 (Summer 2000).

Week 3: 1/23 to 1/27: Module 3 – Colonial Economic History

READING:

Rosenbloom, Joshua. "Indentured Servitude in the Colonial U.S.". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. March 16, 2008.
URL <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/indentured-servitude-in-the-colonial-u-s/>

Week 4: 1/30 to 2/3: Two modules

Module 4 – Early Industrialization in the US

READINGS:

Sokoloff, "Inventive Activity in Early Industrial America: Evidence from Patent Records, 1790-1846," *Journal of Economic History* December 1988 (48:4), p. 813-850.

Module 5– Big Question Readings on Growth (Reading 1) and Inequality (Reading 1)

Week 5: 2/6 to 2/10: 2 modules

Module 6 - Demography and US Economic History: Fertility, Mortality, and Health

READINGS:

Steckel, "Stature and the Standard of Living," *Journal of Economic Literature* December 1995 (33:4), p. 1903-1940.

Velde, Francois R., "What Happened to the US Economy During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic? A View Through High-Frequency Data," *Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Working Paper* 2020-11, July 7, 2020.

Module 7: Big Question Readings on Technological Change (Reading 1) and Government (Reading 1)

Week 6: 2/13 to 2/17: 2 modules

Module 8 – Immigration and US Economic History

READINGS:

Abramitzky and Boustan, "Immigration in American Economic History," *NBER Working paper* 21882, January 2016.

Module 9– Big Question Readings - Growth (Reading 2) and Inequality (Reading 2)

Week 7: 2/20 to 2/24: 2 modules

Module 10 – Slavery and the South

READINGS:

Hanes, "Turnover Cost and the Distribution of Slave Labor in Anglo-America," *Journal of Economic History* 56:2 (June 1996).

Module 11: Big Question Readings on Technological Change (Reading 2) and Government (Reading 2)

Week 8: 2/27 to 3/3: Module 12 – The Post-Civil War South

[No new reading this week.]

[3/5 to 3/12 – Spring Break]

Week 9: 3/13 to 3/17: 2 modules

Module 13 - Wealth Inequality in the Mid-1800s

No new reading for this topic.

Module 14– Big Question Readings on Growth (Reading 3) and Inequality (Reading 3)

Week 10: 3/20 to 3/24: 2 modules

Module 15 – Change in Industrial Structure

READING:

McCurdy, "American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation, 1875-1890," *Journal of Economic History* 38:3 (September 1978).

Module 16: Big Question Readings on Technological Change (Reading 3) and Government (Reading 3)

Week 11: 3/27 to 3/31: 2 modules

Module 17 – The Evolution of Labor Markets in the 19th Century

[No new reading this week.]

Module 18– Big Question Readings on Growth (Reading 4) and Inequality (Reading 4)

Week 12: 4/3 to 4/7: 2 modules

Module 19 - Female Labor in the 20th Century

Module 20- Big Question Readings on Technological Change (Reading 4) and Government (Reading 4)

Week 13: 4/10 to 4/4: Module 21 - African American Labor in the 20th Century

READINGS:

Maloney, "African Americans in the Twentieth Century," in Whaples, ed., EH.Net Encyclopedia, January 2002.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* 313:5 (June 2014), p. 54-71.

Week 14: 4/17 to 4/21: Module 22 - The Great Depression and The New Deal

READING:

Olney, "Avoiding Default: The Role of Credit in the Consumption Collapse of 1930," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* February 1999 (114:1), p. 319-335.

Week 15: 4/24 to 4/25: Module 23 - Late 20th Century Economic Performance

READING:

Gordon, "Two Centuries of Economic Growth: Europe Chasing the American Frontier," NBER Working Paper No. 10662, August 2004.

Faculty and Student Rights and Responsibilities:

My commitment to you is that we will cover the material described above and carry out the quizzes and other assignments on the scheduled dates (barring unforeseeable complications such as my becoming severely ill, closure of the campus, destruction of the internet, etc.). I will also enforce the student code to ensure fairness in evaluating your work (particularly with regard to the originality of your writing assignments). Your responsibilities include keeping up with lectures and assignments, observing a high level of academic integrity in all of your work, and helping to create a respectful atmosphere conducive to learning.

Please contact me as soon as possible regarding any confusion you have with regard to the course, the schedule, the assignments, etc. Have a great semester.

ONLINE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

While all of the academic expectations of this online course are equivalent to those in the traditional course section, there are a number of additional expectations that students should be aware of when participating in the course online.

Student Expectations

Though the online format allows students greater flexibility to complete their work, this course does have a structure and timeline, including due dates for course assignments. As such, the following is expected of all students in this class:

- Students will log in to the course a minimum of 3 times per week.
- Students may be expected to work with classmates; however, students are not expected to interact with their classmates in person. A good alternative to meeting in person would be online video conferencing, which allows students to find a time to meet that works best for their schedule. Depending on the assignment, students can also choose to interact with their classmates with whatever technology they are most comfortable with (Groupme, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etc).
- To do well in online courses, students must be self-motivated, organized, and willing to stay on top of their schedule. Students should take control of their learning while in this course.
- Students will regularly check course announcements. The **Announcements** area is the instructor's official means of communication when distributing information to the entire class.
- Students will update their Canvas settings to ensure they receive timely notifications from the course.
- If students have any questions, are struggling with course materials, or need further assistance from their instructor, they will take the initiative to contact their instructor via the **Inbox** feature in Canvas or via email.
- Email isn't perfect; sometimes, messages sent to instructors are lost before they are read. If you do not hear back from your instructor 3 days after sending a message, please contact your instructor again.
- Students will engage with the course, students, and the instructor in a respectful and professional manner at all times.

Netiquette

Students are expected to follow the [core rules of netiquette](#) [Links to an external site.](#) at all times while participating in the class, interacting with other students, and communicating with the course instructor and teaching assistants.

COURSE POLICIES

[Policies vary from course to course; here are some possible categories. Also, this can address faculty and student responsibilities – so you can add expectations about work outside of class, your

grading turnaround time, etc. – general expectations for instructor and students. Please add those here.]

Technology Issues and Tech Help

Your instructor has invested time before the start of the semester to ensure that the technologies used in this online class will operate smoothly. Nevertheless, technology doesn't always do what we want it to do! As such, this course has the following expectations regarding tech problems:

- Students are **required** to contact the instructor immediately when they notice broken links or inaccessible files in the course. Links and files are assumed to work, unless students indicate otherwise. Points lost on assignments, due to inaccessible links and files, **cannot** be made up if students did not notify the instructor of the problem prior to the assignment due date.
- The instructor is committed to fixing broken links and inaccessible files as soon as possible after being notified by the students. In the case that there will be a significant delay before these items can be fixed, the instructor will post an announcement to let the class know about the problem and to describe any alternate files/links or alternate due dates for assignments, if applicable, that students should be aware of.
- Students are responsible for submitting all assignments and activities by their due dates. In the very rare case that technical problems prevent a student from submitting an assignment, students are required to—
 - Immediately contact their instructor via email or the Canvas **Inbox**, to let them know about the problem and to submit a copy of their assignment as an attachment (where possible).
 - Then, immediately contact the Canvas help desk to troubleshoot and resolve the problem.
 - Submit an email updating the instructor on whether the problem was resolved and of any additional steps the student or instructor needs to take to get the assignment properly submitted to Canvas.
- It is **not** appropriate to send an email to your instructor informing them about tech problems after an assignment due date.
- Students are expected to read all assignment instructions and to submit work in the required file formats. Work submitted as improper file formats will **not** be considered to have been handed in on time. The instructor will only grade work submitted using the proper file format.
- It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the appropriate help desk to troubleshoot and resolve tech problems in the course,

24/7 help is available to all students via the *Help* button in the far-left Canvas menu.

For more detailed information about getting tech help, please review the information on the [Tech Help](#) page of the course.

