

**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**  
**ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT**

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Econ 1740-090  
3 credit hours  
Summer 2018

**U.S. Economic History**  
**Online session**

### **About the Course**

When I was about 27 years old, I had a plan to end poverty in Kenya (where I was working as an international aid practitioner); when I was about 28 years old, I learned that my plan had already been tried ... lots of times ... by lots of people ... throughout the world. This, students, is why you are required to take a U.S. Economic History class - to inform your ideas and plans for the world with what has already been proven not to work ... but also what *does* work.

In this history class we start with reviewing the general history of the U.S. in one module, then each week add a new "angle" from which to reconsider that history, with an emphasis on sub-populations in the U.S. Each student will identify, early on, some current economic policy or issue that they think is interesting. Economic policies and issues include things like labor laws (for example, the minimum wage or overtime laws), the healthcare system (like medicaid or Obamacare), the education system (like HeadStart or school voucher systems), environmental issues (like pollution regulation), infrastructure (like the modern highway system), agriculture (did you know our government *subsidizes* tobacco farms?), etc. If something is being produced, eaten, sold, traded, or otherwise provided (for example, by the government), it has an economic angle to it – and an economic history.

As we add complexity to the history we know each week, students will look for historical events that caused, shaped or influenced the current policy they find interesting. The goal is to identify relevant historical antecedents to current issues that inform us about how economic events can shape history, so we can learn and progress (not regress) in strengthening human society and well-being. The history we cover is primarily economic – related to how people in the U.S. have gotten their daily bread and shelter, how firms and industries have developed and grown, and how the role of the local, state, and federal governments have evolved. We will review examples of real-world events that substantiate theoretical claims in economics. And we will discuss (and hopefully respectfully argue about) all of this together.

Welcome to class – I'm thrilled to have you join us!

### **Official course description**

Historical foundations of American economic growth and development from the colonial period to the present. Institutional and structural change and processes of growth.

### **Pre- or co-requisites**

There are no enforced pre- or co-requisites for this course. Students from all departments are happily welcomed in this course, as it creates a more interdisciplinary discussion.

### **Course objectives:**

By the end of the semester, a student who is successful in this course will be able to

1. Identify everyday issues that are economic in nature, and explain why they are economic,
2. Trace out the historical development of various current economic issues, including discrimination, climate change, automation, immigration, and rural-urban tensions
3. Describe historical periods in terms of various economic undercurrents, such as labor, natural resources, and technological advancement, including how they are experienced by different sub-populations
4. Argue for an economic policy that addresses a modern issue, founded on at least two historical examples
5. Use historical economic situations as examples of different economic theoretical arguments/assumptions

### **Texts and Other Materials**

- Walton and Rockoff, History of the American Economy, 12th EDITION. OH: Cengage, 2014.
  - Any edition is fine - I have made the 12th edition available in the campus bookstore.

### **Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Policy**

The University of Utah does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, status as a disabled individual, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information or protected veteran's status, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services.

Additionally, the University endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations and to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. Inquiries concerning perceived discrimination or requests for disability accommodations may be referred to the University's Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action  
201 South Presidents Circle, Rm.135  
Salt Lake City, UT, 84112  
801-581-8365 (voice/tdd)

801-585-5746 (fax)

[www.oeo.utah.edu](http://www.oeo.utah.edu) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) and Sections 504 and 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972 (Sections 503 & 504)**

University policy, the ADA, and Sections 504 & 503, prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's status as a person with a disability, require equal opportunity and access, a process for a person with a disability to request a reasonable accommodation, and a grievance process for an individual to complain of discrimination. The University endeavors to ensure that its campus and programs are accessible and in compliance with state and federal disability standards and to provide reasonable accommodations so as to remove a barrier that may prevent an individual with a disability from equally participating in academics, employment, or other University program. Reasonable accommodations may include specialized equipment, auxiliary aids, policy modifications, academic adjustments or other accommodation that is effective. University policy, as well as state and federal law, strictly prohibit retaliation against an individual for requesting a disability accommodation, for participating in a disability discrimination complaint process.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

"All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee."

Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated in this course. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the university. The first instance will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, exam, etc. The second will result in a further action, and at the instructor's discretion a failing grade in the class may be given and potential disciplinary action by the university may be taken.

## **Requirements and Grading**

**Discussions** (approx. 100 points \*\*this may change\*\*)

Each week you will be asked to post to a group discussion (of about 10 students), and respond to your peers. There will be 11 opportunities to do this, but I will record the scores only for the highest 10. Your original post must be completed by Wednesday

11:59 pm of the week indicated in the discussion name; your comments on others' posts must be completed within one week. (Due dates are set in Canvas to remind you!)

### **Activities** (approx. 100 points \*\*this may change\*\*)

Each week you will be given an activity to do that isn't too mentally strenuous. The purpose of these activities is to force me to keep the classroom creative for you, and give you something to do other than just reading then writing. There will be 11 opportunities to do earn activity points, but I will record the scores only for the highest 10. Activities will generally be due 11:59 pm on Wednesdays. (Due dates are set in Canvas to remind you!)

### **Applications** (100 points)

Each week you will be asked to prepare some kind of application of what we learned to either your final project or to demonstrate understanding. These are not big assignments, but will require some thinking to do well. There will be 11 opportunities to do earn activity points, but I will record the scores only for the highest 10. Activities will generally be due 11:59 pm on Wednesdays. (Due dates are set in Canvas to remind you!)

### **Peer Reviews** (50 points)

Four times during the semester you will be asked to review the work of another student and give them feedback. To many students, this is very scary. The truth is, it's how academia works best. When I have a new research proposal, I have to announce it to everyone in my department and they tell me what problems they see with it. Then I fix those problems and announce it to everyone at a conference, and they tell me what's wrong with it. You will learn \*so much\* just by seeing another student's work, and also by hearing what someone else has to say on the topic. Don't worry, your peers can't hurt your grade - just give you ideas.

### **EXAMS** (300 points)

There will be three exams: two midterms and a final. Each exam is worth 100 points.

The two midterms have the same structure: the exam will open Wednesday and remain open until Wednesday, 11:59 pm of the next week. Exams 1 & 2 consist of a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. Each exam is timed and you are required to take the exam in the testing center. You will need to schedule time to take the exams in the Testing Center during exam week (information is provided if this is new to you). **Exam 1 will take place during Week 4. Exam 2 will be during Week 8.**

**\*\* You are expected to work alone, without the use of any materials (including the internet) on both Exam 1 and Exam 2.** Any instances of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the entire exam (both the multiple choice and essay question portions).

**The final exam will become available the Wednesday before finals week (Week 11).** The final will be all short essay questions, and will be cumulative. You may discuss

these questions with other students, however you must all write and submit your own answers. This is not timed; it just must be uploaded by the due date.

\*All exams must be taken during the week they are assigned. Plan your time accordingly so you are able to complete the exam by the due date. Exams may not be taken before the week they are assigned either. Late exams may be given in cases of documented medical or other emergency. Otherwise, failure to take an exam at the scheduled time will result in a 0 for the exam.

**FINAL PROJECT** (150 points)

Your final project will be a video presentation on relevant historical situations related to a current economic issue, and policy recommendations grounded in historical evidence. It's a 10-minute video, which takes time to create, and thoughtfulness to make effective. There is a list of topics provided that you can choose from, but you may also select a topic not from the list. A specific Research Project module has been created with a page containing the list of topics, guidelines for the project, and all the details of each piece of the project, as well as due dates.

**EXTRA CREDIT**

Because you are only required to participate in 10/11 discussions, 10/11 applications, and 10/11 activities, there're 30 points of extra credit already built into this class! You don't have to do anything to get it!

**Grading of assignments:**

**Grade Scale**

Exams (100 points each) – 74.9	300 points	A: 94+	C: 70
Discussion (approx.) – 69.9	100 points	A-: 90 - 93.9	C-: 65
Activities (approx.) – 64.9	100 points	B+: 88 - 89.9	D+: 63
Applications (approx.) – 62.9	100 points	B: 82 - 87.9	D: 57
Peer reviews 55 – 56.9	50 points	B-: 80 - 81.9	D-:
Research paper 55	150 points	C+: 75 - 79.9	E: <
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Total	(approx.) 800 points		

Note that I do not round grades, and I do not curve.

## Other things to keep in mind:

- 1) While this class is online, you are expected to stay on top of all material. The material is only available for the week that it is covered. I will be available almost any time of day or night to answer questions. As this is an online class, email is the best way to get a hold of me. I will respond to emails within 48 hours Monday-Friday unless I state otherwise. I am also perfectly happy to received text messages, but again, it make take me a day or two to get back to you.
- 2) Canvas will be utilized for submitting all of the assignments as well as for posting grades. You may not email me any assignments, unless I say otherwise. You are responsible for monitoring your grades on Canvas that are posted throughout the semester and making me aware of any discrepancies or concerns on or before the last day of class. No changes will be made after the Friday of finals week, to any grades on assignments, exams, etc., posted to or recorded on Canvas prior to that date.
- 3) Make-up assignments will be given at the discretion of the instructor, only for very serious medical reasons, and **only if cleared in advance.**
- 4) You are expected to post and respond to discussions each week. While you are not required to attend an actual classroom, you must plan to spend time in the “virtual classroom” (i.e. Canvas) on a regular basis. I will be posting announcements, assignments, and grades all online, and you are responsible for staying on top of the information I post.
- 5) Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Any indication of cheating will be handled in accordance with the university’s academic integrity policy.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>
<b>Week 1</b> May 14 - May 22	Introductions; Why study economic history?
<b>Week 2</b> May 23 - May 29	The general U.S. historical timeline
<b>Week 3</b> May 30 - Jun 5	Economic angles to history
<b>Week 4</b>	Labor in U.S. history

Jun 6 - Jun 12

**\*\*EXAM 1\*\***(Open Wed. Week 4 – Wed. Week 5)

**Week 5**

Jun 13 - Jun 19

Economic growth in the U.S.

**Week 6**

Jun 20 - Jun 26

U.S. Agriculture

**Week 7**

Jun 27 - Jul 3

Technology in the U.S.

**Week 8**

Jul 4 - Jul 10

Urbanization

**\*\*EXAM 2\*\***(Open Wed. Week 8 – Wed. Week 9)

**Week 9**

Jul 11 - Jul 17

The role of government

**Week 10**

Jul 18 - Jul 24

Energy and environment

**Week 11**

Jul 25 - Jul 31

Finance

**Week 12 (Finals Week)**

Aug 1 - Aug 3

**\*\*FINAL EXAM\*\*** (Opens Wed. Week 11)