

ECONOMICS 210A
INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMIC HISTORY

COURSE INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Course Description

This course provides a graduate-level introduction to economic history. The focus is on the approaches and tools of historical analysis, and how those approaches can be useful to economists in a wide range of fields. Thus, the topics and readings are chosen largely with the goal of illustrating various approaches, techniques, and issues; the course does not attempt to provide a comprehensive introduction to all of economic history. Geographically, the course deals primarily with the United States and Europe, although some readings focus on other regions or on the world as a whole. Temporally, the focus is on the period since the beginning of industrialization, though, again, some readings consider earlier periods. Substantively, the emphasis is on long-run growth and on sectors and markets that are important to long-run growth, with a few classes and selected other papers devoted to issues related to macroeconomic fluctuations.

Prerequisites

The course is designed for first-year Ph.D. students in Economics. An understanding of the material in Economics 201A, 202A, and 240A will be presumed.

Readings

Most of the readings on the syllabus are available to Berkeley students through the links given. A few readings are from books and are not available electronically. A reader containing these readings is available at Copy Central on Bancroft.

Course Requirements

Class participation. The class will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. You are expected to read the papers carefully and critically before class, and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

Research paper. A research paper intended as a genuine contribution to knowledge (not a summary of existing work) is due on Friday, May 8 (5 p.m.). Students are required to submit a brief (1- to 2-page) sketch of 2 or 3 possible paper ideas by Sunday, March 8 (5 p.m.); to meet with one of the course instructors during the week of March 9; and to submit a brief (2- to 4-page) paper prospectus by Friday, March 20 (5 p.m.). More information about the paper requirement will be distributed a few weeks into the semester.

Final exam. Tuesday, May 12, 9–11 a.m. (tentative).

Instructors

Christina Romer, 681 Evans Hall, cromer@econ.berkeley.edu, office hours: Thursday 2–4.

David Romer, 679 Evans Hall, dromer@econ.berkeley.edu, office hours: Thursday 2–4.