

**Vanderbilt University**  
**Department of Economics**  
Economics 3160  
*Economic History of Europe*  
Fall 2018

*Revised November 19, 2018*

Time:           Section 01: TR 8:10–9:25am  
                  Section 02: TR 9:35–10:50am  
Place:          Furman 007  
Instructor:     Ariell Zimran  
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Office Hours:   Tuesday 11:30am–1:30pm or by appointment

**Course Description** Around the year 1800, the western world—first England and then the rest of western Europe and North America—broke free from millennia of poverty and entered the period of modern economic growth that persists to today. This change is responsible for the high standard of living that we enjoy, complete with high income per capita, long life expectancies, and salutary epidemiological environments. This course focuses on this change. After briefly describing Europe under the pre-industrial “Malthusian” regime, we will describe the Rise of Europe. We will then discuss the changes that kicked off modern economic growth—the Industrial Revolution and the Demographic Transition. The bulk of the course will focus on understanding why these changes took place when and where they did. Finally, we will study two cases of delayed industrialization—Ireland and Italy. Besides the coverage of these themes, the course focuses on teaching students how to read, critique, and conduct research in economic history. This course satisfies the over-3035 elective requirement for the Economics major and the over-3000 economic history core requirement for the Economics and History major.

**Teaching Assistant** Colin Sharpe (colin.q.sharpe@vanderbilt.edu). Office hours Wednesday 10:00am–12:00pm, Furman 330.

**Prerequisites** Officially, only ECON 3010 (Intermediate Microeconomics) is required. However, you will find the course very difficult if you have not also taken ECON 3020 (Intermediate Macroeconomics) and ECON 1500 (Economic Statistics) or equivalent. If you are missing either of these courses, please speak with me on the first day of class. The course will also assume a high school-level familiarity with European History.

**Course Structure** This course is not a survey of European economic history. There are many interesting and important topics that we will not touch on. Instead, after some preliminaries, the course will focus on one topic per week, organized thematically rather than chronologically. On the first day of class for a topic (generally a Tuesday), I will give a lecture surveying key issues and debates, and focusing on some results of particular interest. On the second day of class for each topic (generally a Thursday), we will discuss one research paper in detail. Besides the results of these papers, we will pay particular attention to the components of a good research paper, such as choosing and motivating a research question and hypothesis and formulating and implementing the appropriate empirical strategy for the topic at hand.

**Note** This is the first time that I am teaching this course, so everything on this syllabus is subject to change. I will almost surely not change exam dates or the due date of the final paper, and I probably will not change the topics that we cover; but I may adjust the schedule and list of readings as we go, and may change the due dates for the smaller assignments if necessary. For this reason, be sure to check with me if

you are planning to read more than a week ahead, and make sure that you check regularly on Brightspace that you have the most updated version of the syllabus.

**Request** I welcome feedback and constructive criticism—if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to discuss them with me. It is most valuable to you if you provide feedback during the course so I can make use of it immediately (rather than it benefitting only next year’s students). Even if I am not able to make changes to address your requests and suggestions, it is helpful to be aware of your perspective.

**Course Materials** No textbook is required, but those interested in expanding their libraries are encouraged to purchase Allen (2009) and Mokyr (2009), of which we will cover large segments. Students are also encouraged to acquire Angrist and Pischke (2009), which is a useful handbook for applied econometrics. All readings listed below are available through Google Scholar or the library website (for published articles), from the authors’ websites (for working papers) or on Brightspace (for book chapters), except for Angrist and Pischke (2009). Note that you may have to log in from an on-campus internet connection in order to access some of the book chapters. The Term Paper and data assignments will also require access to statistical software. You may use whichever software you prefer, but the only “supported” package for this course is Stata. It is accessible on the machines in Wilson and Stevenson’s computer labs and at Peabody Library’s Learning Commons (when these classrooms are not reserved for class use).

## Evaluation

- *Take-Home Quiz* (5%). The quiz will be administered on Brightspace. It will be made available after class on Thursday, September 20, and will be due on **Monday, September 24**. It will cover all material through September 20. The quiz receives relatively little weight in determining the final grade because its primary purpose is to give you a sense of my expectations for the midterm and final.
- *Midterm Examination* (20%). To be held in class on **Tuesday, October 16**, covering all material through October 11. Details of the structure of the exam will be circulated later.
- *Final Examination* (35%). To be held at a date and time determined by the registrar, which depends on the section of the course in which you are enrolled. Tentatively dates are listed below, but you should verify them with the registrar’s website. **NO ALTERNATE EXAM WILL BE OFFERED. THE EXAM WILL BE CUMULATIVE. YOU MUST TAKE THE EXAM WITH THE SECTION IN WHICH YOU ARE ENROLLED.** Substantial improvement in performance between the midterm and final examinations will be given consideration in assigning final grades.
- *Term Paper* (30%). Due **Thursday, December 6**. I will assign you to groups of about 4 students. Together, you will identify any topic in European history (which must be approved by the TA), on which you will confront a specific research question or hypothesis using data and a carefully constructed empirical strategy. The paper is expected to be about 10–15 pages long. More details will be circulated later. An integral part of the term paper assignment is the completion of an evaluation of your group members at the end of the term. The results of the group evaluation will impact your final grade on the term paper.
- *Paper Proposal* (5%). Prior to being assigned to groups for the term paper, each student will submit, by **Tuesday, October 9**, a brief proposal of a topic for the term paper. This proposal should clearly state the research question to be studied, the data sources that you propose to use, and the empirical strategy to be followed. Besides being a useful exercise, this topic proposal will be factored into the assignment of groups for the term paper.

- *Data Assignments* (5%). There will be two or three data assignments in the course of the semester, with due dates listed in the course schedule below. These assignments are designed to help you practice using statistical software and working with data. They will also introduce you to some of the data sources available in the study of European Economic History, which may be helpful for the term paper.

## Policies

- *Missed Exams.* If you anticipate missing an exam for any reason, speak to me immediately. Unless university policy directs otherwise, students with an excused absence from the midterm exam will not be given the opportunity to take a make up; instead, they will have the weight of the midterm transferred to the final (so the final will be worth 55% of the total grade). Students with an unexcused absence from the midterm exam will receive a grade of zero for that assessment. Unless otherwise required by university policy, students will not be permitted to take the final exam at any time other than that scheduled by the registrar, and no alternate exam will be offered. Medical reasons for missing an exam require written confirmation from the University health services or your physician. Non-medical reasons require a written excuse from an appropriate official of the University (e.g., an official from the Dean's Office).
- *Late Assignments.* I will not accept late submissions of any assignment for any reason, unless University policy directs otherwise. Please plan accordingly.
- *Minimum Requirements.* To pass the class, students must, at minimum, sit for the final examination and submit, by Friday December 14 at 5:00pm, a Term Paper that I judge to represent at least a minimal attempt to complete the assignment (note that term papers submitted this late will still receive a grade of zero, but submission will make you eligible to pass the class). Note that this is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition. The College of Arts and Science's policy on incomplete grades details the circumstances under which these requirements may be completed after the conclusion of the semester.
- *Disability.* Students requiring reasonable accommodation should contact Disability Services to make appropriate arrangements.
- *Religious Observance.* Reasonable accommodation for religious observance is handled by the office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services. Contact them to make appropriate arrangements if necessary.
- *Submission of Assignments.* All assignments should be submitted electronically in PDF format via Brightspace (details to be circulated later) by 11:59pm on the due date.
- *Assignment of Final Grades.* The numerical grades assigned above yield a single score for each student at the end of the semester, on which the final grade is based. I will grade the class on a curve, meaning that—except in unusual cases—the rank of the score in the distribution of scores of the course rather than the score itself is used to determine the final grade. Approximately 30 percent of students will receive an A or A-, 40 percent will receive a B+ or B, and 30 percent will receive a B- or below. The cutoff between a B+ and B will be set at approximately the median.
- *Grading of Assignments.* All assignments besides the term paper and quiz will be graded on a 2-1-0 scale. Students who clearly complete an assignment with a reasonable level of effort will receive full credit (2 points); those who do not will receive half credit (1 point). Students who do not submit an assignment, or who have clearly not attempted to complete the bulk of it will receive no credit. In short, the bar for these assignments is low, but the penalty for failing to meet that bar is high.
- *Academic Integrity.* Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be addressed in accordance with Vanderbilt University's Honor System. Obviously, cheating on exams is prohibited. The take-home quiz must be completed individually, and will be subject to additional restrictions to be announced

when it is circulated. The data assignments should be completed individually, but you are encouraged to consult with a classmate if you have difficulty. The term paper should be the product of your group's own work, but you are encouraged to discuss your ideas and progress with other classmates. Speak to me or the TA if you are ever unsure of what is permissible.

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**Schedule of Meetings and Topics** The readings listed below in roman text form the basis for the Tuesday lecture on that topic. You should become familiar with them before the lecture and are responsible for what I cover in class. The reading in italics is the discussion paper for that topic. It is expected that you read the discussion paper in detail before coming to class, and that you are ready to participate in the discussion. I reserve the option of implementing weekly quizzes to enforce reading if that becomes necessary.

Dates	Topic	Readings	Notable Events
Aug. 23	Course Overview		
Aug. 28	Growth in the Very Long Run	Clark (2007, ch. 1) Galor (2011, ch. 2) Mokyr (1990, chs. 5, 6)	
Aug. 30–Sep. 4	Econometrics Crash Course	Angrist and Pischke (2009)	
Sep. 6	Stata Session		Stevenson 2-200

### Part I: Pre-Industrial Europe

Sep. 11–13	The Malthusian Economy	Clark (2007, ch. 2) Kelly and Ó Gráda (2012, 2014) Ashraf and Galor (2011) Voigtländer and Voth (2013) <i>Chaney and Hornbeck (2015)</i>	
Sep. 18–20	Trade	Acemoglu et al. (2005) Jha (2015) Nunn and Qian (2010, 2011) Hersh and Voth (2009) <i>Cantoni and Yuchtman (2014)</i>	Assignment 1 Due 9/20 Quiz Online 9/20
Sep. 25–27	Human Capital I	Becker and Woessmann (2009) Cantoni (2014) Akçomak et al. (2014) Hornung (2014) de la Croix et al. (2018) <i>Dittmar (2011)</i>	Quiz Due 9/24

### Part II: The Industrial Revolution

Oct. 2–4	Induced Innovation	Crafts (2011) Allen (2009, chs. 2, 4, 6) Kelly et al. (2014) Humphries and Schneider (2018) Mokyr (2009, pp. 267–278) <i>Hanlon (2015)</i>	
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Oct. 9–11	Culture	Crafts (2011) Mokyr (2009, chs. 3–6) Kelly et al. (2014) Allen (2009, ch. 10) <i>Squicciarini and Voigtländer (2015)</i>	Paper Topic Due 10/9
Oct. 16	Midterm Exam		Midterm
Oct. 23–25	Institutions	North and Weingast (1989) Acemoglu et al. (2001) Acemoglu and Johnson (2005) Shiue and Keller (2007) <i>Acemoglu et al. (2011)</i>	
Oct. 30–Nov. 1	Human Capital II	Mitch (1993) Squicciarini (2017) Galor and Moav (2006) <i>Becker et al. (2011)</i>	Assignment 2 Due 11/2
Nov. 6–8	Demographic Transition	Galor (2011, ch. 2) Guinnane (2011) Becker et al. (2010) Kesztenbaum and Rosenthal (2017) <i>Ager et al. (2017)</i>	
Nov. 13–15	Living Standards	Voth (2003) Antràs and Voth (2003) Lindert and Williamson (1983) Mokyr (1988) Feinstein (1998) Mokyr and Ó Gráda (1996) <i>Beach and Hanlon (2018)</i>	
<b>Part III: Countries in Detail</b>			
Nov. 27–29	Italy	Toniolo (2011) Hatton and Williamson (1998, ch. 6) Spitzer and Zimran (2018a,b) <i>Dimico et al. (2017)</i>	
Dec. 4–6	Ireland	Mokyr (1983, ch. 3) Ó Gráda (1999, ch. 1) Guinnane (1997, ch. 1) Connor (2018) <i>Collins and Zimran (2018)</i>	Term Paper Due 12/6
Dec. 10, 9am	Final Exam, Section 01		
Dec. 14, 3pm	Final Exam, Section 02		

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## References

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