

# Current trends in economic history

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The purpose of this seminar is to discuss recent and current developments in the field of economic history. Opening with a short historiography of the discipline, sessions are then devoted to the relationships between economic history and history on one hand, and economic history and economics on the other. The use and abuse of quantitative methods in economic history is the focus of a methodology session. Four themes at the frontier of historical research are discussed: financial history; global history; business history; and the history of international economic relations. The seminar will conclude by examining the future of economic history, including students' own projects.

## Programme

### 12 January - The history of economic history

Herman van der Wee (2007), 'Economic history: Its past, present and future', *European Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 33-45.

### 19 January - Economic history and history

Adam Tooze (2008), 'Trouble with numbers: Statistics, politics and history in the construction of Weimar's trade balance, 1918-1924', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 3, pp. 678-700.

Francesco Boldizzoni (2011), *The poverty of Clio: Resurrecting economic history*, Princeton University Press, Princeton. [Read at least pp. 1-17; 138-71]

### 26 January - Economic history and economics

*Methodology reading:*

Randall Morck & Bernard Yeung (2011), 'Economics, history, and causation', *Business History Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 39-63.

*Papers for discussion:*

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson & James A. Robinson (2001), 'The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation', *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5, pp. 1369-1401.

Jared Diamond (2010), 'Intra-island and inter-island comparisons' in Jared Diamond & James A. Robinson (eds.), *Natural experiments of history*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, Chapter 4, pp. 120-141.

*Additional reading:*

David Y. Albouy (2008), 'The colonial origins of comparative development: An investigation of the settler mortality data', NBER Working Paper No. 14130 (forthcoming in *American Economic Review*).

### 2 February - Financial history

Timothy W. Guinnane (2001), 'Cooperatives as information machines: German rural credit cooperatives, 1883-1914', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 61, No. 2, pp. 366-389.

Richard Sylla (2006), 'Financial systems and economic modernization', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 62, No. 2, pp. 277-292.

## **9 February - Global history**

Peer Vries (2009), 'Global economic history: A survey', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften / Austrian Journal of History*, vol 20. issue 2, pp. 133-170.

Jean-Laurent Rosenthal & R. Bin Wong (2011), *Before and beyond divergence: The politics of economic change in China and Europe*, Harvard University Press, Boston MA. [Read at least the Introduction and Conclusion.]

## **16 February - Business history**

Geoffrey Jones & Jonathan Zeitlin (2008), *The Oxford handbook of business history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. [Read at least the Introduction]

Walter A. Friedman & Geoffrey Jones (2011), 'Business history: Time for debate', *Business History Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 1-8.

Leslie Hannah (2006), 'The Whig Fable of American Tobacco, 1895-1913', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 66, No. 1, pp. 42-73

## **23 February – Quantitative methods in economic history**

*Methodology reading:*

Charles H. Feinstein & Mark Thomas (2002), *Making history count: A primer in quantitative methods for historians*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [Recommended for those with little statistical background; read Chapter 4, pp. 93-114.]

Stephen T. Ziliak & Deirdre N. McCloskey (2009), 'The cult of statistical significance', *Proceedings of the Joint Statistical Meetings*, Panel 153, Section on Statistical Education, pp. 2302-2316.

*Paper for discussion:*

Hans-Joachim Voth & Timothy Leunig (1996), 'Did smallpox reduce height? Stature and the standard of living in London, 1770-1873', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 541-560.

*Additional reading:*

Peter Razzell (1998), 'Did smallpox reduce height?', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 351-359.

Markus Heintel & Joerg Baten (1998), 'Smallpox and nutritional status in England, 1770-1873: On the difficulties of estimating historical heights', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 360-371.

Timothy Leunig & Hans-Joachim Voth (1998), 'Smallpox did reduce height: A reply to our critics', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 372-381.

## **8 March – No class**

*Week reserved for preparing February paper*

## **1 March - International economic relations**

Patricia Clavin & Jens-Wilhelm Wessels (2005), 'Transnationalism and the League of Nations: Understanding the work of its economic and financial organisation', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 465-492.

Barry Eichengreen (2011), *Exorbitant privilege: The rise and fall of the dollar and the future of the international monetary system*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. [Read at least pp. 1-8; 39-68]