Details:
Class: Monday, Wednesday 9:00-10:15, 9383 Bunche Hall
My email: whanlon@econ.ucla.edu
My office: 9357 Bunche Hall
Office hours: By appointment

Course Overview:
The goal of this course is to introduce students to recent research in economic history and to prepare students to undertake their own economics history research. The course will be organized around understanding the Industrial Revolution and the Great Divergence. While my focus will be on research in economic history, I will be particularly interested in how this research can inform current economic policy debates. The course is designed so that students with a particular interest in one topic area can focus their attention in that area, while still being exposed to a broader set of research. Classes will include both classic papers related to the topic we are studying as well as one or two new cutting-edge research papers related to the topic. The class will focus on developing some core skills: writing, presenting, proposing new research questions, and critiquing other’s work.

Class Setup
The course lasts for 1:15. I will generally start class by introducing the topic we will discuss and going over one or two papers, which will normally take about 45 minutes. We will then generally have one or two student presentations of 10 minutes each. I will be tough on making sure the presentations fit in the allotted time (an important skill to learn). The remaining time will be used for a class discussion of the papers that were presented.

Books
The following book is recommended:

Course Requirements:

1. Presentation (20% of grade) – you are required to give one 10 minute presentation in class covering one of the required readings.

2. Referee Report or Second Presentation (20% of grade) – you are required to turn in one 3-5 page referee report critiquing one of the readings. The report cannot be on the same paper as the presentation. It must be completed and turned in before we discuss the paper in class. You can substitute a second presentation if you prefer.

3. Paper (30% of grade) – you must turn in a research paper which can be either (1) an overview and critique of research related to one important debate in economic history or (2) a proposal for an economic history research project. The paper should be roughly 5-8 pages. DUE DATE: Dec. 20.

4. Proposal of research ideas (10%) – I will ask you to write up short abstracts proposing two “big” research papers. The goal here is to step back from the literature and think about big ideas without being constrained by what is practical. One of these ideas should have a history component; the other can be about any topic. DUE DATE: Nov. 1.

5. Class participation, questions and comments (20% of grade) – you should attend class and participate actively in class discussions. It is particularly important that students be prepared to participate in the class discussions following each presentation. Before each class, you have to email me 3 questions/comments about one of the papers being covered in class. I will tell you which paper to focus your questions on in the preceding class. After each presentation, you are required to email me a set of comments for the speaker. I will put these together anonymously pass them on to help the presenter improve.

Topics and Readings:
Note: Papers marked with a * will be discussed by me. Papers marked with a $ will be open for student presentations. I will assign 1-2 papers per class that are required reading.

Sept. 28: Introduction, Malthusian Economies


Sept. 30: Malthusian Economies


- Clark, Gregory. *A Farewell to Alms.* Chapters 2-5. (I will review)

Oct. 5: Unified growth


Oct. 7: Introduction to the Industrial Revolution


Oct. 12: The Commercial Revolution and Human Capital Formation – Nico Voigtlander will guest lecture

• * Squicciarrini and Voigtlander (2014). Human Capital and Industrialization: Evidence from the Age of Enlightenment. QJE Forthcoming


Oct. 14: Technology - Demand and supply side arguments


• § Allen, Robert (2009). The Industrial Revolution in Miniature: The Spinning Jenny in Britain, France, and India. The Journal of Economic History


Oct. 19: Institutions


Oct. 21: Technology and Institutions - IPRs


Oct. 26: Trade and Transportation - The Columbia Exchange

Oct. 28: Natural resources


Nov. 2: Urbanization


Nov. 4: Health in cities


• Cain and Hong (2009). Survival in 19th century cities: The larger the city, the smaller your chances. *Explorations in Economic History.*

Nov. 9: The Demographic Transition


Nov. 11: No School – Veteran’s Day

Nov. 16: Explaining the Great Divergence – Colonialism and Institutions I


• Dell, Melissa (2010). The Persistent Effects of Peru’s Mining Mita. *Econometrica.*
Nov. 18: Explaining the Great Divergence – Colonialism and Institutions II


Nov. 23: Gains from Trade I


Nov. 25: Gains from Trade II


Nov. 30: Trade and Deindustrialization


• Acemoglu and Zilibotti (2001). Productivity Differences. *Quarterly Journal of Economics.* (Focus on intuition, the specifics of the theory are not required).

Dec. 2: Technology Flows and Why Britain Lost its Lead


