Description

Economics 210A covers World Economic History from the Stone Age to the twentieth century. The big issues we examine are the long persistence of the Malthusian economy to around 1800, the Industrial Revolution, and the subsequent Great Divergence in world incomes per capita.

Requirements

There will be a final exam, in class, Thursday Dec 11, 3:30-5:30. The grade will be 70% for the final and 30% for a research project. For students doing the course for the economics field exam it will be a research paper on a topic determined in consultation with the instructor. For first year students doing the course in satisfaction of the history course requirement the research project will be to write a critique of a book or article in economic history (such as a paper presented at this quarter’s economic history workshop).

Readings

The background text for this course is my book, A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World (Princeton University Press, 2007). This is available from the bookstore (under ECN 210A or ECN 110A) (price $29.95), or more cheaply from Amazon. My web site has links to a bunch of reviews of the book, with some responses by me.

This book is written at a fairly intuitive level. The syllabus below thus lists more technical readings also on each topic. Required readings are indicated with a *. The material is available online though links on the syllabus to either JSTOR or to PDF versions of the articles.

The following abbreviations are used for journals, working paper series

AER - American Economic Review
EEH - Explorations in Economic History
EHR - Economic History Review
JEH - Journal of Economic History
JPE - Journal of Political Economy
QJE - Quarterly Journal of Economics
NBER - National Bureau of Economic Research (www.nber.org)
OUTLINE AND READINGS

I The Malthusian Economy – the world to 1800

1. The Logic of the Malthusian Model

*FTA, Chapters 1-2.

*Symposium on A Farewell to Alms, European Review of Economic History, August 2008.
*Exchange with Bryan Caplan


2. Testing the Malthusian Model – Material Living Standards

*FTA, Chapter 3


3. Testing the Malthusian Model – Fertility and Mortality

*FTA, Chapters 4-5

4. Survival of the Richest

*FTA, Chapter 6

*Gregory Clark, "The Indicted and the Wealthy: Surnames, Reproductive Success, Genetic Selection, and Social Class in Pre-Industrial England."


5. Economic Change Within the Malthusian Era

*FTA, Chapters 7

Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches* (1990)


6. Institutions and Economic Growth

*FTA, Chapter 8.


*Clark, Gregory. 2007. “A Review of Avner Greif’s, Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy.” *Journal of Economic Literature*.


7. The Emergence of Modern Man

*FTA, Chapter 9


Crosby, Alfred W. *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600*.


De Vries, Jan. 2007. *The Industrious Revolution*


II  The Industrial Revolution

1. Modern Economic Growth

*FTA, Chapter 10

2. The Transition Between Regimes - Theory

*FTA, Chapter 11

3. The Transition Between Regimes - Facts

*FTA, Chapter 12-13
4. The Social Consequences of the Industrial Revolution

*FTA, chapter 14
Clark, Gregory and Marianne Page. 2008. Welfare Reform, 1834

III The Great Divergence

1. The Spread of the Industrial Revolution

*FTA, chapters 15-18
Haber, Stephen. 1989. Industry and Underdevelopment: The Industrialization of Mexico, 1890-1940. Chs 2,3