

Economic History of Global Capitalism



ECON BC3028 Economic History of Global Capitalism

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Office hours: TBA

Office hours appointment calendar link:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUJid055X0lYUEl5fGRlZmF1bHR8NjE0ODM5NTE4ZWY1NjA1YTI3OWFkMzdlnDhhZjgyNzc>

Office hours Zoom link: <https://columbiauniversity.zoom.us/j/2128543868>

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

Introduction

The course is an introduction to the economic developments that gave rise to capitalist economies and economic globalization from 1500 to the 20th century. We apply economic and empirical reasoning to examine many transformations that have shaped the economies of the modern era—demographic, technological, and institutional changes. We compare the rise of Europe and other Eurasian civilizations, especially China. We examine the role of slavery and imperialism in global economic integration. We examine how the rise of modern capitalism influenced human material well-being and conflict and has led to the convergence and divergence of nations in the global economy.

Prerequisites

ECON BC BC3035 or ECON BC3033 (or equivalent), or permission of instructor

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Identify and analyze historically specific social, political and economic structures, events, processes, actors and behaviors that contributed to the long-run capitalist economic development.
- Evaluate concepts and theories for interpreting the origins, scope and principal forces that promote economic transformation and globalization in history, and to identify ways that globalization has had distinct impacts in different parts of the world.
- Apply conceptual tools of economic analysis, methods of historical investigation, including deductive and empirical reasoning, to analyze questions related to the course subject matter.
- Complete a project involving organizing, analyzing and visualizing data.
- Access a base of knowledge about historical economic processes that may help bring perspective to major changes in the present world.

Course requirements

Written requirements for the course include two short (3-5-page) empirical essays (which may be selected from several options), two midterm essays (3-5 pages each), and a final exam. Attendance (except when ill) and participation in classroom discussion are required.

Research proposal option. Students may request to substitute a short (6-10-page) research proposal for the two empirical essays, subject to approval by the instructor. The research proposal must identify a primary source to examine and provide a preliminary evaluation of the primary source and the relevant question(s) it may shed light upon. See the section [More Information About the Assignments for the Course](#) below for more detail.

Criteria for course grade

- Two short empirical essays – 15% each (or optional research proposal, 30%)
- Two midterm essays – 15% each
- Final exam – 30%
- Participation – 10%

ERC Workshop for Excel Skills

In the two short empirical essays, you will acquire and use basic Excel skill for charting, evaluating and interpreting data series on specific topics discussed in the course. An Excel training workshop is available through the Empirical Reasoning Center (ERC), Milstein Room 102, which introduces you to basic software training needed for assignments. No prior knowledge of Excel or another spreadsheet is required.¹

Sign Up for Workshop

Students are required to attend ONE of the workshop sessions being offered (attendance will be taken). You can sign up at this Doodle poll: <https://doodle.com/poll/f9g82mxncfwt5hiz> (Links to an external site.) . If you have any questions about where to go, or if you have a conflict, email the ERC at erc@barnard.edu.

Excel Pretest

If you are an experienced user of Excel, you may take an Excel pretest, which, if you complete perfectly, or near perfectly, you may be exempted from the workshop. If you have any doubts, I recommend spending the hour to take the workshop. It may help you brush up on your skills and possibly introduce you to some new ones.

Assigned Textbooks*

Ronald Findlay and Kevin O'Rourke. *Power and Plenty: Trade, War and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

Philip Hoffman. *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* Princeton University Press, 2015.

Robert C. Allen. *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

¹ Students may use Google Sheets or other software to complete the assignments as long as it is possible to include submit your spreadsheet files, including the data and all other work you did to complete the exercise along with your essay.

* Used copies of the textbooks are often available from online vendors. Other required readings are listed below under Weekly Topics and Readings, which will be available for download. Recommended readings are available from the library.

Affordable Access to Course Texts & Materials

All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. Barnard librarians have partnered with students, faculty, and staff to find ways to increase student access to textbooks. By the first day of advance registration for each term, faculty will have provided information about required texts for each course on CourseWorks (including ISBN or author, title, publisher, copyright date, and price), which can be viewed by students. A number of cost-free or low-cost methods for accessing some types of courses texts are detailed on the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability guide (library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability). Undergraduate students who identify as first-generation and/or low-income students may check out items from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library (library.barnard.edu/flip) and in Butler Library for an entire semester. Students may also consult with their professors, the Dean of Studies, and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for having access to course texts. Visit the guide and talk to your professors and your librarian for more details. <https://library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability>

Honor Code, Wellness and Access at Barnard

Honor Code

Students taking classes at Barnard College are bound by the Honor Code. Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

For more information, see <https://barnard.edu/honor-code> .

Wellness

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several areas of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them.

Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- Primary Care Health Service - <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>
- Furman Counseling Center - <https://barnard.edu/about-counseling>
- About Well-Woman - <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- Stressbusters Support Network - <https://health.columbia.edu/services/stressbusters>

Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS)

If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please feel free to contact me and/or the Center for Accessibility Resources &

Disability Services (CARDS). Any student with approved academic accommodations is encouraged to contact me during office hours or via email. If you have questions regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester, please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634, cards@barnard.edu, or learn more at barnard.edu/disabilityservices. CARDS is located in 101 Altschul Hall.

For more information, see <https://barnard.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-staff/faculty-info>.

More Information About the Assignments for the Course

Short Empirical Essays

To complete this assignment, choose TWO short empirical essays of 3-5 pages out of 3 or 4 possible topics. Each topic will include a specific empirical exercise for you to complete, related to material discussed in class. The exercises generally involve creating one or more charts or tables using data provided or downloadable. The short empirical essay provides a brief analysis and interpretation of your findings.

Options for collaboration. I encourage collaboration in these exercises. (1) You may work in pairs in this assignment. If you decide to do this, follow the instructions for working in pairs provided the instructions for the specific exercise/essay. (2) You may do separate work but work with, consult or obtain (and provide) feedback from others in the class as you complete the assignment.

Research proposal option

As an option, you may request to replace the two short empirical essays with one (6-10-page) research proposal, subject to approval by the instructor. The research proposal must identify a primary source to examine and provide a preliminary evaluation of the primary source and the relevant question(s) it may shed light upon. Acceptable primary sources may be qualitative (verbal or categorical), quantitative (data), or both. The proposal must also include a focused review of the relevant literature of secondary sources that address debates or issues related to the proposed question. You must cite a minimum of five secondary sources. The topic may address any question that fits the subject matter and periods covered by the course. Approval requires a written request (1 page or less) identifying the primary source(s) to be used and the research question that the source(s) will address. Your written request must include annotated bibliographical citations of at least three secondary sources. (Please feel free to meet with me in advance if you would like suggestions for getting started on your research.)

Options for collaboration. The research proposal option is strictly an independent assignment; however, you may consult other peers or faculty, and you may ask others for feedback, as you complete the assignment.

Midterm Essays

The midterm essays will be short 3-5-page essay responses to a question related to the material covered in the course. The first midterm essay will cover material through Week 4. The second will cover material from Weeks 5 to 8, inclusive. No collaboration or discussion of your essay with other students is permitted.

Final Exam

The final exam will cover material from Week 9 to the end of the course. It may also cover some broad themes we consider throughout the course. I will specify possible broad themes as the date for the exam approaches.

Weekly Topics and Readings (There may be some changes to this list)

First session: Course Introduction

Week 1: From Malthus to the Modern Demographic Transition

Required readings

Clark, Gregory, *A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World*, Princeton University Press, chs. 2, 4, pp. 19-39, 71-90

Ronald Lee, "The Demographic Transition," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17.4 (2003): 167-90

Livi-Bacci, Massimo. *A Concise History of World Population*, Blackwell, 1989, pp. 44-50

Recommended readings

Galor, Oded, *Unified Growth Theory*, Princeton University Press, 2011, chs. 2, 4.

Johnson, Steven, *Extra Life: A Short History of Living Longer*, New York: Riverhead, 2021, pp. 1-33.

Riley, James C., *Rising Life Expectancy: A Global History*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, ch. 2, pp. 122-44.

Week 2: Geography, Technology and Institutions: Origins and Comparisons

Required reading

Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, selected pages from chs. 3, pp. 87-98, 101-20, 124-38

Mokyr, Joel, *Lever of Riches*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 209-38

Handout on institutions

Recommended reading

Harris, Ron, *Going the Distance*, Princeton University Press, 2020, pp. 15-61.

Mokyr, *Lever of Riches*, ch. 3, pp. 31-56.

Temple, *The Genius of China: 3000 Years of Science, Discovery and Invention*, London: Prion, 1998, selected pages.

Assignment: Short Empirical Essay 1

Week 3: The Great Divergence: Europe and China

Required reading

Landes, David S., "Why Europe and the West? Why Not China?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20.2 (2006): 3-22.

Pomeranz, Kenneth, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton University Press, 2000, selected from chs. 5, 6, pp. 211-25, 264-97.

Hoffman, Philip T., *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* Princeton University Press, 2015, ch. 1, pp. 1-18

Recommended reading

- Jones, Eric, *European Miracle*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2003, ch. 3, pp. 45-69.
- Rosenthal, Jean-Laruent, and R. Bin Wong, *Before and Beyond Divergence: The Politics of Economic Change in China and Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011, ch. 4, pp. 99-128.
- Wong, R. Bin, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*, Cornell University Press, 1997, ch. 4.
- Clark, *A Farewell to Alms*, ch. 13, pp. 259-71.

Week 4: The Age of Mercantilism

Required reading

- Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, selected pages from ch. 4, pp. 141-62, 175-87
- Harris, Ron, *Going the Distance*, ch. 16, pp. 331-64
- Rodrik, *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011 ch. 1, pp. 3-23.

Recommended reading

- Baskes, Jeremy, *Staying Afloat: Risk and Uncertainty in Spanish Atlantic World Trade, 1769-1820*. Stanford University Press, 2013, ch. 3, pp. 43-68.
- Carlos, Ann, and Stephen Nicholas, "Giants of an Earlier Capitalism," *Business History Review* 62.3 (1988): 398-419.
- Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, remainder of ch. 4.
- Kuran, Timur, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East*, Princeton University Press, chs. 6, 7, pp. 97-142.
- Zelin, Madeleine, "The firm in early modern China," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 71 (2007): 623-37.

Midterm Essay 1

Week 5: The Origins of European Hegemony

- Hoffman, Philip T., *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* Princeton University Press, 2015, chs. 2, 3, pp. 19-66, 67-80, 94-102
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James Robinson, "The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth," *American Economic Review* 95.3 (2005): 546-58, 562-72

Recommended reading

- Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, ch. 5, pp. 227-310.
- Andrade, Tonio. *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History*, Princeton University Press, 2016, chs. 14, 15, pp. 196-234.
- Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* ch. 4, pp. 104-53.

Week 6: Divergence in Wages and Living Standards: Europe and Asia

Required reading

Allen, Robert C., *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, ch. 3, pp. 25-56

Allen, Robert, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, Christine Moll-Murata, and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, "Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738-1925: in comparison with Europe, Japan and India," *Economic History Review* 64.S1 (2011): 8-38

Broadberry, Stephen, and Gupta, B. "The early modern great divergence: wages, prices and economic development in Europe and Asia, 1500-1800," *Economic History Review* 59 (2006): 2-31. (30 pgs.)

Handout on real wages and the historical methods for reconstructing them

Recommended reading

Allen, Robert C., "India in the Great Divergence," in Timothy J. Hatton, Kevin O'Rourke, and Alan M. Taylor, eds., *The New Comparative Economic History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey G. Williamson*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007, pp. 9-32.

Özmucur, S. and Pamuk, Sevket, "Real wages and standards of living in the Ottoman Empire, 1489-19194," *Journal of Economic History* 62.1 (2002): 293-321.

Pamuk, Sevket, "Urban real wages around the Eastern Mediterranean in comparative perspective, 1100-2000.," *Research in Economic History* 23 (2005): 200-28.

Arroyo Abad, L., Elwyn Davis, and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Between Conquest and Independence: Living Standards in Spanish Latin America," *Explorations in Economic History*, 49.2 (2012): 149-166.

Assignment: Short Empirical Essay 2

Weeks 7 and 8: The Industrial Revolution

Required reading

Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective*, chs. 4, 7, 8, 10, pp. 80-105, 156-81, 182-216, 272-75.

Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, ch. 6, pp. 311-64

Handout on the Factor-Bias Theory of Technological Change

CO₂ and Other Greenhouse Emissions, Our World in Data, <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

Recommended reading

Allen, Robert C. *Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Clark, *A Farewell to Alms*, ch. 12, 230-58.

Landes, David. *The Unbound Prometheus*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, ch. 4, pp. 193-230.

Wrigley, E.A. *Continuity, Chance and Change: The Character of the Industrial Revolution in England*. Cambridge University Press, 1988, ch. 1, pp. 7-33.

Midterm Essay 2

Week 9: Slavery and the Industrial Revolution

Required reading

- Eltis, David, and Stanley L. Engerman, "The Importance of Slavery and the Slave Trade to Industrializing Britain," *Journal of Economic History* 60.1 (2000): 123-44
- Solow, Barbara L., "Caribbean Slavery and British Growth: The Eric Williams Hypothesis," *Journal of Development Economics* 17.1-2 (1985): 99-115
- Inikori, Joseph E., "Slavery and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in England," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17.4 (1987): 771-93.
- Nunn, Nathan, "The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trade," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (Feb. 2008): 139-56, 169.

Recommended reading

- Eltis, David, "Free and Coerced Transatlantic Migrations: Some Comparisons," *American Historical Review* 88.2 (1983): 251-80.
- Inikori, Joseph E., *Africans and the Industrial Revolution: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002, especially chs. 7, 9.
- Wright, Gavin, "Slavery and the Anglo-American capitalism revisited," *Economic History Review* 72.3 (2020): 353-83.

Assignment: Short Empirical Essay 3

Week 10: Neo-Europes and Reversals of Fortune

Required reading

- Engerman and Sokloff, "Factor endowments, institutions, and differential paths of growth among New World economies, in Stephen Haber, ed., *How Latin American Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800-1914*. Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. 260-91
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91.5 (2001): 1369-38, 1395
- Dye, Alan, and Sumner La Croix, "The Political Economy of Land Privatization in Argentina and Australia, 1810-1850: A Puzzle," *Journal of Economic History* 73.4 (2013): 901-36

Recommended reading

- Ewout Frankema, "The colonial roots of land inequality: geography, factor endowments, or institutions?" *Economic History Review* 63.2 (2010): 418-51.
- Dye, Alan, and Sumner La Croix, "Institutions for the Taking: Property-Rights and the Settlement of the Cape Colony, 1652-1750," *Economic History Review* 73.1 (2020): 33-58.
- Wright, Gavin, "The Origins of American Industrial Success, 1789-1940," *American Economic Review* 80.4 (1990): 651-68

Week 11: Globalization, Institutions and Imperialism

Required reading

Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, ch. 7, pp. 365-83, 387-402

Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," pp. 1-15.

Roy and Swamy, *Law and the Economy in Colonial India*, University of Chicago Press, 2016, chs. 7, 8, pp. 123-58

Recommended reading

Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*, ch. 16, pp. 237-56.

Frankema, Ewout, Jeffrey Williamson, and Pieter Woltier, "An Economic Rationale for the West African Scramble? The Commercial Transition and the Commodity Price Boom of 1835-1885," *Journal of Economic History* 78.1 (2018): 231-67

Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* Chs. 5, 6, pp. 154-204.

Rodrik, *The Globalization Paradox*, ch. 2, pp. 24-46.

Assignment: Short Empirical Essay 4

Week 12: The Great War and the interwar period of the 20th century

Required reading

Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*, ch. 8, pp. 429-42, 465-72

Micklethwait, John, and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Company: A Short History of a Revolutionary Idea*, New York: Modern Library, 2005, chs.4, 5, pp. 57-99

Beach, Brian, Karen Clay, and Martin H. Saavedra, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and its Lessons for COVID-19," NBER Working Paper No. 27673, August 2020, pp. 1-31, 60-61.

Recommended reading

Feinstein, Charles H., Peter Temin, and Gianni Toniolo, *The World Economy between the World Wars*, Princeton University Press, 2008, ch. 2, pp. 21-38.

Womack, James P., Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1991, ch. 3, pp. 48-69.

Week 13: Globalization and inequality in the 20th century.

Required reading

Rodrik, Dani, *Globalization Paradox*, 2011, ch. 7, pp. 135-58

Milanovic, Branko, *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 46-112.

Recommended reading

Irwin, Douglas. *Trade Under Fire*, ch. 6, pp. 209-56

Milanovich, Branko. *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality*, pp. 7-11, 140-48 (13 pgs.)

Yingyi Qian, "How Reform Worked in China," in Dani Rodrik, ed., *In Search of Prosperity: Analytic Narratives on Economic Growth*. Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 297-333.

Last class session: Final words