ECON 327 Economic History of North America

Instructor: Rob Gillezeau  
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Room: David Strong Building C108  
Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30 & TH 2:30-3:30 or by appointment  
Class Times: T, TH 4:30-5:50

Textbook:  

Course Objectives:  
The first part of the course covers a chronological economic history of North America from approximately 1600 until the 1950s. The second part of the course covers a number of important themes in North American economy history including: slavery, the railroad, the War on Poverty, the role of race in American economy history and other topics. The goal of the course is to provide students with a basic understanding of North American economy history along with an introduction to the kind of methodology employed by contemporary economic historians.

Evaluation:  
Participation 10%  
Midterm 25%  
Term Paper 30%  
Paper Summaries 10%  
Final 25%

Participation:  
This course is intended to present economic history as an active subject that is continuously evolving and open to questioning and reinterpretation. The second half of the course on selected topics should be viewed as a seminar and students are expected to actively participate in class with questions and comments. Small group participation exercises will occur during some classes.
Research Essay:
You will be required to write an essay on a topic of your choice. It may address any content from the economic history of North America, although it is recommended you choose a topic not thoroughly discussed in class. The essay should be 8-12 pages in length and may take one of two forms. The first option is to write an argumentative essay on a topic of your choice. This argument should be original in nature, but supported by existing literature in economic history. The second option is to write an essay that reviews an existing area of research, identifies gaps, and suggests a research strategy to fill these knowledge gaps. Regardless of the essay type chosen, you are encouraged to attend office hours regularly to discuss your paper. There are two components to the paper:

- You may choose to submit a one-page outline on October 3rd for preliminary feedback. Ideally, this would include a statement of the paper’s topic, an outline of the argument that will be made, and at least 3 references.
- The final essay is due November 26th.

Paper Summaries and Discussion:
In groups of four students, you will be required to write concise, one page summaries of two of the academic papers on the syllabus. Groups will be formed in the second week of class. These summaries are due the Sunday evening prior to the class where the paper will be discussed.

Midterm and Final Exams:
The midterm and final will be written in class. They will cover the class material and assigned readings using essay-based questions. The final exam will be comprehensive in its coverage.

Submission of work and Late assignments:
Electronic copies of your term paper must be emailed to gillezr@uvic.ca by 4:30 PM on the due date. Late work will not be accepted without prior agreement. All submissions must be typed and double-spaced.

Grades
Letter grades will be assigned according to the Department guidelines:

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Students with final averages below 50% will be assigned a grade of F.

Electronic Devises
Electronic devices are not permitted during the exam and midterm. Laptops may be used in class to take notes.
Accessibility

“Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations http://rcsd.uvic.ca/. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.”

Plagiarism and Cheating

“The standards and reputation of a University are the shared responsibility of its faculty and student body. …Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. Students who are found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the Calendar, are subject to penalty by the University (University Calendar http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2010/GRAD/FARc/AcIn.html).

Course Experience Survey

“I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete an online confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.”
Schedule of Topics and Key Dates

Week 1 (September 5th):
Introduction
- Course Syllabus
Approaches to Economic History / The Settlement of Canada [1]
- Norrie et al. Introduction (ix – xiv, xvii – xxvii)
- Atack and Passell Introduction (xiii – xxi)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 1: The Background to Colonization (4-16)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 2: The Atlantic Colonies to 1763 (18-20, 24-29)

Week 2 (September 10th and 12th):
The Settlement of Canada [2]
- Norrie et al. Chapter 4: The Atlantic Colonies (52-57, Optional: 60-72)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 5: Quebec and Lower Canada (74-79, 85-90)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 6: Upper Canada (92 - 119)
Industrial Development & Confederation
- Norrie et al. Chapter 7: The Western Economy, 1713-1870 (121-125, 128-130)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 8: Adjustment to the End of Mercantilism (142-143, 144, 147-148, 149-156)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 9: Railways and Early Industrialization (158-169)
- Norrie et al. Chapter 10: Confederation and the British North America Act (171-183)
The Settlement of the United States and Independence [1]
- Atack and Passell Chapter 2: The Colonial Economy (29-51)
- Atack and Passell Chapter 3: The American Revolution: Some Causes and Consequences (54-78)

Week 3 (September 17th and 19th):
The Settlement of the United States and Independence [2]
- Atack and Passell Chapter 5: Foreign Trade and Commercial Policy Development (112-116)
- Atack and Passell Chapter 6: The Transportation Revolution and Domestic Commerce (143-148, 160-171)
- Atack and Passell Chapter 7: The Beginnings of Industrialization (175-180, 191-193, 201-205)
- Atack and Passell Chapter 9: Westward Expansion and Public Land Policy (249-254)
Slavery [1]
- Atack and Passell Chapter 11: Slavery and Southern Development (299-323)
Slavery [2]
- Atack and Passell Chapter 12: How the Southern Slave System Worked (326-352)
Week 4 (September 24th and 26th – NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 26th):

The Civil War

- Attack and Passell Chapter 13: The Economics of the Civil War (355-374)
- Attack and Passell Chapter 14: The South After the Civil War (376-378)

Industrialization


Week 5 (October 1st and 3rd):

Railroads

- Attack and Passell: Chapter 16: Railroads and Nineteenth Century American Economy Growth and Development

World War I

- Norrie et al. Chapter 14: World War I (256-278)
- Attack and Passell Chapter 20: America Comes of Age (554-560)

Immigration & Migration


Week 6 (October 8th and 10th):

Economic Mobility


Natural Resources and Agriculture


Health and Mortality

Week 7 (October 15th and 17th):
The Great Depression [1]
• Norrie et al. Chapter 15: Uneven Growth (280-281, 283-291, 297-299)
• Norrie et al. Chapter 17: The Great Depression (317-339)
The Great Depression [2]
• Atack and Passell Chapter 21: The Great Depression: Explaining the Contraction (583-618)
World War II
• Norrie et al. Chapter 18: World War II (342 – 359)
• Walton and Rockoff Chapter 25: World War II

Week 8 (October 22nd and 24th – MIDTERM OCTOBER 22nd):
Reconstruction and Post-War Growth
• Norrie et al. Chapter 19: Growth and Prosperity (362 – 399)

Week 9 (October 29th and 31st):
Collective Bargaining
• https://eh.net/encyclopedia/labor-unions-in-the-united-states/
Pensions
The Baby Boom and The Women’s Revolution

Week 10 (November 5th and 7th):
Race in Modern America [1]

Race in Modern America [2]

Urbanization and Suburbanization

Week 11 (November 12th and 14 – NO CLASS NOVEMBER 12th):
War on Poverty
• Bailey and Danziger Chapter 1: Legacies of the War On Poverty

Week 12 (November 19th and 21st):
Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the United States [1]
• Norrie et al. Chapter 1: The Background to colonization (13-16)
Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the United States [2]
  • Christian Dippel. "Forced Coexistence and Economic Development: Evidence from Native American Reservations" (Econometrica vol. 82 No. 6, November 2014, p.2131-2165)

Institutions, Path Dependence, and Long Run Outcomes [1]

Week 13 (November 26th and 28th):
Institutions, Path Dependence, and Long Run Outcomes [2]

November 28 – Review Class

Week 14 (December 3rd):
December 3 – Final Exam