Economics 324: An Economic history of Europe
in the Twentieth Century
Professor Joel Mokyr
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Winter 2020

Note: This course is a survey of some of the main issues of the Industrialized World in the period 1890-1989. Each week, a different topic will be discussed. While the main emphasis will be on Europe, the North-American experience will also be discussed and comparisons with other countries will be made frequently. Because the discussion will be according to topic, the course will not be strictly chronological (though many of the readings are).

Course structure: there will be two lectures a week. The lecture material and readings should be viewed as largely complementary, since the lectures will explain and in some case may dispute some of the readings. However, considerable amounts of material covered in the readings will not be touched upon in class for lack of time, yet students will be responsible for them. Hence both lecture materials and readings will be necessary to pass the course with a good grade. All powerpoint notes, graphs and tables shown in class will be made available on the Canvas site for this course following the lectures.

Questions, special requests, etc. will be handled at my office hours Tuesdays 11-1 in Kellogg 3335 and by email to j-mokyr@northwestern.edu.

Course requirements: There will one mandatory midterm exam, and an inclusive final examination. The midterm will take place on Thursday Feb. 6, and will cover all reading and lecture materials of weeks 1-4. Students who score in the top 33% in the midterm will have the option of writing a paper in lieu of the exam. The topic and methodology of the papers have to be approved by the T.A. for the course in the week following the midterm, and the paper has to be submitted no later than the day of the final.


All other readings (all required) will be placed on the course website on Canvas in the “Files” section in a file named “Readings” divided into “weeks.”

Week I: Technological progress and Growth in the Twentieth century

2. Smil, Creating the Twentieth century, ch. 1; Smil, Transforming the Twentieth century, chs. 1-2, pp. 2–43 only.


4. Nicholas Crafts, Forging Ahead, Falling Behind, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 (background only), Chs. 3-4.

**Week II: The great demographic transition**

2. Broadberry and O’Rourke, chs. 5, 10.

**Week III: World War I and the Economies of the twenties**

1. C. Feinstein, P. Temin, and Gianni Toniolo, The World Economy between the World Wars chs. 2,3
3. Broadberry and O’Rourke, ch. 6

**Week IV: The Great Depression in Europe**

1. Feinstein, Temin and Toniolo, chs 6,7,8,9.

**Week V: The strange Economics of Fascism, Communism and Totalitarianism**

1. Ivan Berend, An Economic History of Twentieth Century Europe, ch. 3 + pp. 133–50.
2. Tortella, Origins, pp. 151–60, 204-29.

**Week VI: The Collectivist Economies: successes and failures.**

2. Tortella, *Origins*, chapter XI

**Week VII: World War II**

1. Niall Ferguson, “The Second World War” In Michael J. Oliver and Derek Aldcroft, eds., *Economic Disasters of the Twentieth century* ch. 3.
2. Mark Harrison, ed., *The Economics of World War II* chapters 1, 2.
3. Broadberry and O’Rourke, ch. 6 (reread)

**Week VIII: Postwar Growth, The “Mixed Economies” and Rise of the European Welfare State**

4. Broadberry and O’Rourke, ch. 12.

**Week IX: Institutions, European Integration and the EU**

3. Broadberry and O’Rourke, ch. 11.