

Syllabus

Northwestern University Econ 324: Western Economic History

W. Walker Hanlon

Winter 2022

My contact information and office hours

Email: whanlon@northwestern.edu

Office: Kellogg Global Hub, Office 3323

Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00 - 2:30pm (in person) or by appointment (email me)

Zoom OH link for Wildcat Wellness period: <https://northwestern.zoom.us/j/3146349213>

OH note: Please let me know in advance if you are coming to the Zoom OH during the first two weeks

Teaching assistant: Carl Hallmann

carlhallmann2022@u.northwestern.edu

Office hours: Friday 11-11:50, during the regular discussion section time

Office hours location: TBA

Discussion sections

There will be no regular discussion sections for this course. Instead, Carl will hold office hours during that time (see above) to answer any questions you might have.

Link of questions/comments on readings:

<https://forms.gle/ZauggiL8wKkXdhU4A>

Course overview

Today, average human beings in the United States and many other parts of the world enjoy living standards that would have been unimaginable just a century or two in the past. These conditions are the product of rapid economic growth and technological progress that began during the Industrial Revolution and have been sustained over the roughly 250 years since. In this course, we will study the economic conditions that pre-dated this take-off into modern economic growth, consider explanations for why this take-off occurred, and examine some of the consequences, both positive and negative, of the changes that accompanied the onset of modern economic growth.

This course will cover a long time span, but most attention will be focused on the period just before and after the Industrial Revolution. Geographically, the course will be largely focused on Western Europe, and Britain in particular, because this is where modern economic growth first emerged. However, we will also spend some time considering the relationship between this region and the rest of the world, and how it changed after Western Europe began experiencing modern economic growth (i.e., the “Great Divergence”).

Goals of the course

The first goal of this course is to provide you with a broad understanding of western economic history. Developing this knowledge base is valuable because it provides context and perspective that will allow you to better understand the world that we live in today, and for thinking about what the world might look like in the future.

The second goal of this course is for you to gain experience in applying the economic tools you have learned. No doubt, much of your economics training has been focused on mastering theoretical and econometric tools. In this course, you will be asked to apply those tools to understand events in the past. This requires making choices, such as identifying the critical features of the events we are considering, determining the right set of economic tools to apply, and struggling with the mapping from the real world to economic theory.

The third goal of this course is to help you gain experience in writing about economic topics using economic tools. Developing the ability to clearly and concisely express economic ideas in writing is critical to being able to take full advantage of the economic tools you are learning. The assignments in the class will push you to practice, and improve, these skills.

Finally, this course aims to provide students with exposure to cutting-edge economic research. Reading and analyzing recent research economic history research papers will be an important part of the course.

Prerequisites

This course assumes that students have a functional knowledge of intermediate economics. The prerequisites for this course are EC 281, EC 310-1, and EC 311-0.

Evaluation

Grading in this course will be based on three written assignments, class participation, a midterm and a final exam. The course grade breakdown is as follows:

Written assignments:	15% each
Midterm	15%
Class participation:	15%
Final exam:	25%

Written assignments: There will be three written assignments due during the term (see schedule below for due dates). Briefly, these assignments will be based on questions that I will provide related to the material covered in the lectures and course readings. You will typically have a choice between two or three topics. The assignments will be no more than two pages with an additional 1-2 pages allowed for any tables or figures. I will provide you with more guidance on exactly what I am looking for in the assignments and how they will be evaluated. You will be free to use any course materials that you want on the assignments, or to look up additional resources.

Written assignments should be no more than two pages long, with 1.5 spacing, no smaller than 11pt font, and page margins of at least one inch on standard sized paper. You should include references for any resources used, which do not count against the two-page length limit. You can also include 1-2 pages of additional tables and figures. It is very important that you reference any sources used, and that any direct quotes are presented as such. If you make a factual claim, there should be either a reference to support that claim, or table or figure backing up the claim.

The written assignments will be somewhat like longer versions of the types of short answer questions you will encounter on the midterm and final. So, one purpose of these assignments is to provide practice that will help you prepare for the exams. For this reason, I have scheduled two of the assignments before the midterm, to provide you with extra practice before that exam.

Class participation: You will need to submit 1-2 comments or questions related to each of the class readings. There will be 15 weekly readings in this course. I will count 12 of those to calculate the grade, so you can skip sending in comments for up to 3 of the readings. These “freebies” are meant to allow you to skip readings for reasons such as feeling ill, having a busy schedule in a particular week, etc. You do not need to provide excuses for these, but use them carefully so that you don’t run out.

Submission will be through an online Google form. You can find the link to the form near the top of the syllabus, just under the TA’s contact information. The class participation grade will be based on (1) submitting the questions every week and (2) asking your question

in class if I call on you. Naturally, to get points for asking your question in class, you need to be in class on the day when we discuss the reading that your question relates to.

Midterm and Final Exams: The midterm and final will consist of a mix of knowledge questions based on information from the lectures and readings, and a short-answer question similar to the written assignments. So, the written assignments are good practice for the exams, which is why I have scheduled two of them before the midterm. The midterm and final will be in class. A midterm date is provided below. The final will take place during finals week with the exact date and location to be announced. The midterm and final will be closed-book and closed-note.

It is not possible for me to provide make-up exams. If you have to miss the midterm with a valid documented excuse, you will be able to make it up by providing an additional written assignment based on prompts that I will provide. The grades on those assignments will be normalized relative to the midterm scores too ensure that that alternative does not provide an advantage over those students who take the midterm exam. On the final, if you have to miss the exam with a valid documented excuse, you will get an incomplete in the course. You can then make up the missing exam by providing a research paper of 15 pages (following the formatting guidelines for the written assignments, with 5 additional pages allowed for references, tables, and figures) on a prompt that I will provide due no later than the start of the reading week in the following term.

Assignment guidelines and academic integrity

Academic integrity is very important in this class. Here are some basic guidelines specific for the course: On written assignments completed outside of class, you are allowed to use class notes and other resources. You can also discuss your paper with your classmates, and you can even have classmates read your paper and provide you with feedback, **but you must do your own work!** You are not allowed to seek help or advice from individuals other than your classmates or other Northwestern students. Your responses should be your own and should not be substantially similar to other student's work. You must cite any references used in the paper, even those not directly quoted. Your paper will be run through standard plagiarism-checking software.

On the midterm and final, you are not allowed to discuss the assignment with other students or to seek help from any other individuals, nor are you allowed to consult your notes, the lecture slides, or any other resources.

Here are details on the University academic integrity policies: Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at North-

western or to download the guide, visit:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>

Accommodations

Northwestern University, and this professor, are committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Northwestern COVID-19 Classroom Expectations and Policies

Students, faculty, and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the COVID-19 Code of Conduct. With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

- Policies regarding masking and social distancing evolve as the public health situation changes. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with current masking, testing, Symptom Tracking, and social distancing requirements.
- In some classes, masking and/or social distancing may be required as a result of an Americans with Disabilities Act accommodation for the instructor or a student in the class even when not generally required on campus. In such cases, the instructor will notify the class.
- No food is allowed inside classrooms. Drinks are permitted, but please keep your face covering on and use a straw.
- Faculty may assign seats in some classes to help facilitate contact tracing in the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats.

If a student fails to comply with the COVID-19 Code of Conduct or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

Northwestern COVID-19 Testing Compliance Policies

To protect the health of our community, Northwestern University requires unvaccinated students who are in on-campus programs to be tested for COVID-19 twice per week. Students who fail to comply with current or future COVID-19 testing protocols will be referred to the Office of Community standards to face disciplinary action, including escalation up to restriction from campus and suspension.

Exceptions to Class Modality

Class sessions for this course will occur in person. Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU. Maintaining the health of the community remains our priority. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID do not attend class and update your Symptom Tracker application right away to connect with Northwestern's Case Management Team for guidance on next steps. Also contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework. Students who experience a

personal emergency should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework. Should public health recommendations prevent in person class from being held on a given day, the instructor or the university will notify students.

Class Recordings

Portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purpose and available to the class during the quarter. You will be able to access the recordings through Canvas. Portions of the course that contain images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

Northwestern Policy Regarding Recording of Class Sessions

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact AccessibleNU. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings - including distributing or posting them - is also prohibited. Under the University's Copyright Policy, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials - including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Mobile phones

Mobile Communications Policy: Mobile phones should have the ringer turned off and be placed in pockets or backpacks. Students may not make or receive phone calls, surf the web, or send or receive text messages during class.

Academic and other support

NUHelp: Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being at the NUhelp website and app: <https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/>

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

- <https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

Absences

Students who are absent due to sickness or a positive Covid-19 test should do their best to continue to follow the course through the available course recordings and posted lecture slides. Absences due to illness should be documented. Students will be excused from in-class participation but should do their best to still send in comments about the readings. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time because of an illness, you should discuss with the instructor whether it is possible to get a short extension or whether you can be excused from the assignment with the grade weight distributed to other class elements.

It is not feasible for me to offer make-up exams if you have to miss an exam due to a documented health condition. If you have to miss the midterm due to a documented illness, then you will be excused from that exam and the midterm grade weight will be redistributed to the final. If you have to miss the final, you will need to take an incomplete and take the final during a later term.

Readings

Each week I will assign a couple of readings related to the lectures (typically one reading per lecture). These will be available on the course webpage. Readings will typically be academic papers or review articles. **There is a reading guide, available on Canvas, which can be a useful resource for helping you structure your reading time.**

An important note about the readings: we are going to read some academic papers, which can be complex and may include theoretical or econometric tools that you are not familiar with. Your goal in the readings should be to gain an understanding of what question the papers is trying to answer, why that question is important, the approach that the authors use, some intuitive understanding of why that approach makes sense, and the conclusions that we can ultimately draw from the results. You should also keep an eye out for key assumptions or limitations that need to be kept in mind when evaluating the results. You are not required to try to understand the more technical aspects of the theories or econometrics in the papers. As we go through the first few readings, exactly what level of insight you should gain from the readings should become clearer.

Key dates

Jan. 4	First class
Jan. 20	First written assignment due
Feb. 3	Second written assignment due
Feb. 8	Midterm
March 3	Last written assignment due
March 7-11	Reading week - no class
March 14-18	Finals week - exact exam date TBA

List of topics, dates, and readings (subject to adjustment)

Jan. 4 Introduction: Why study economic history?

Jan. 6 Malthusian epoch: theory and empirics

Jan. 11 Neolithic Revolution

- Reading: Ashraf & Galor (2011) “Dynamics and Stagnation in the Malthusian Epoch”

Jan. 13 Why Europe? States, Geography, and Resources

- Reading: Fernandez-Villaverde et al (2020) “The Fractured-Land Hypothesis”

Jan. 18 Early Modern Europe and the Commercial Revolution

- Reading: Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson (2005) “The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth”

Jan. 20 Institutions

- **Assignment 1 Due**
- Reading: North (1991) “Institutions”

Jan. 25 Culture and Religion: Enlightenment and Reformation

- Reading: Becker & Woessman (2009) “Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History”

Jan. 27 Introduction to the Industrial Revolution

- Reading: Hanlon (2021) “The Rise of the Engineer”

Feb. 1 The Industrious Revolution

- Reading: DeVries (1994) “The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution; and Voth (1998) “Time and Work in London”

Feb. 3 Education and the Second Industrial Revolution

- **Assignment 2 Due**
- Reading: Kelly, Mokyr, O’Grada (2014), “Precocious Albion”

Feb. 8 Midterm

Feb. 10 Urbanization and Health

- Kesztenbaum and Rosenthal (2011) “The Health Costs of Living in a City”

Feb. 15 Pollution and the environment

- Reading: Heblich, Trew and Zylberberg (2021) “East-Side Story” (Sections IV and V are optional)

Feb. 17 The Demographic Transition Part I

- Reading: Guinnane(2011), “The Historical Fertility Transition: A Guide for Economists”

Feb. 22 The Demographic Transition Part II

- Reading: Beach and Hanlon (2021), “Culture and the Historical Fertility Transition”

Feb. 24 Government and nation-states

- Reading: Aidt & Franck (2015), “Democratization Under the Threat of Revolution”

March 1 Trade and Globalization

- Reading: Pascali (2017) “The Winds of Change”

March 3 Inequality Between and Within countries

- **Assignment 3 Due**
- Reading: Berger et al. (2021), “Social Mobility in Sweden”

March 8 No class (reading week) – office hours instead

March 10 No class (reading week) – office hours instead