

EconLab Opportunity for 2024-25: RA for Davis Kedrosky

Title: Research Assistant

Openings: One

Project Description:

I am working on a set of projects in economic history and political economy, specifically focusing on early modern Britain. My overarching goal is to better understand the causes of Britain's precocious institutional evolution and, in turn, the effects of those institutions—Parliamentary democracy, a bureaucratic fiscal-military state, scientific societies, etc.—on the country's transition to modern economic growth. Within that broad context, I'm looking for research assistants to help me with papers on:

- 1) the effects of land reform on the composition of the English political elite, the development of Parliamentary institutions, and the origins of the English Civil War
- 2) the effects of different arrangements of historical property rights on innovation, investment, and productivity in British agriculture
- 3) the development of a modern tax bureaucracy in Britain during the Industrial Revolution and the transition away from premodern systems of revenue collection
- 4) the causes of the Scientific Revolution and its spillover effects on British economic development during the Industrial Revolution

Position Description:

Most tasks will be concerned with the collection and transcription of novel historical data, primarily through OCR and web scraping. In that light, some knowledge of related tools (e.g. Python) would be useful. I'd also be happy to consider other assignments tailored to the RA's interests, e.g. text analysis/NLP or searching databases for historical records.

Application Requirements:

Ideally, applicants will have some technical background and familiarity with Python, R, or STATA, but none is explicitly required. A strong interest in history (especially, though not at all necessarily, that of Britain/Europe) is desirable and will almost certainly come in handy (for both of us!). If you'd like to work with me, please send your CV and a transcript (doesn't have to be official) to dkedrosky@u.northwestern.edu, along with a short paragraph explaining why you're interested in this research agenda and (if applicable) what skills/experience you have that might be relevant to advancing it.