

**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**  
**ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT**

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Econ 1740-090  
3 credit hours  
Spring 2019

**U.S. Economic History**  
**Online session**

### **About the Course**

When I was about 27 years old, I had a plan to end poverty in Kenya (where I was working as an international aid practitioner); when I was about 28 years old, I learned that my plan had already been tried ... lots of times ... by lots of people ... throughout the world. This, students, is why you are required to take a U.S. Economic History class - to inform your ideas and plans for the world with what has already been proven not to work ... but also what *does* work.

In this history class we start with reviewing the general history of the U.S. in one module, then each week add a new economic "angle" from which to reconsider that history, with an emphasis on sub-populations in the U.S. These histories will inform three student case studies throughout the semester - every five weeks students are assigned to a new group that jointly prepares a 20-minute podcast about the economic history surrounding important economic eras, and a map of informational resources that informed their podcast. The first two projects are on (1) the Cold War and (2) a comparison between the Great Recession and Great Depression. Students will choose a current issue to research for their third project - as we add complexity to the history we know each week, students will look for historical events that caused, shaped or influenced the current policy they find interesting.

The overarching goal of the course is to practice identifying historical antecedents to current issues that inform us about how economic events can shape history, so we can learn and progress (not regress) in strengthening human society and well-being. The history we cover is primarily economic – related to how people in the U.S. have gotten their daily bread and shelter, how firms and industries have developed and grown, and how the role of the local, state, and federal governments have evolved. We will review examples of real-world events that substantiate theoretical claims in economics. And we will discuss (and hopefully respectfully argue about) all of this together.

Welcome to class – I'm thrilled to have you join us!

## **Official course description**

Historical foundations of American economic growth and development from the colonial period to the present. Institutional and structural change and processes of growth.

## **Pre- or co-requisites**

There are no enforced pre- or co-requisites for this course. Students from all departments are happily welcomed in this course, as it creates a more interdisciplinary discussion.

## **Course objectives:**

By the end of the semester, a student who is successful in this course will be able to

1. Identify everyday issues that are economic in nature, and explain why they are economic,
2. Trace out the historical development of various current economic issues, including discrimination, climate change, automation, immigration, and rural-urban tensions
3. Describe historical periods in terms of various economic undercurrents, such as labor, natural resources, and technological advancement, including how they are experienced by different sub-populations
4. Use historical economic situations as examples of different economic theoretical arguments/assumptions
5. Demonstrate self-directed academic exploration using basic research, writing, cooperation, participation, and argumentation skills
6. Practice the social process (and etiquette) of scientific exploration, including discussion, debate, critique and open-minded inclusivity

## **Texts and Other Materials**

There is no required text for this course – all materials will be provided in Canvas or linked to on the internet.

## **Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Policy**

The University of Utah does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, status as a disabled individual, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information or protected veteran's status, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services.

Additionally, the University endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations and to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. Inquiries concerning perceived discrimination or requests for disability accommodations may be referred to the University's Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action  
201 South Presidents Circle, Rm.135  
Salt Lake City, UT, 84112  
801-581-8365 (voice/tdd)  
801-585-5746 (fax)  
[www.oeo.utah.edu](http://www.oeo.utah.edu) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#).

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) and Sections 504 and 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972 (Sections 503 & 504)**

University policy, the ADA, and Sections 504 & 503, prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's status as a person with a disability, require equal opportunity and access, a process for a person with a disability to request a reasonable accommodation, and a grievance process for an individual to complain of discrimination. The University endeavors to ensure that its campus and programs are accessible and in compliance with state and federal disability standards and to provide reasonable accommodations so as to remove a barrier that may prevent an individual with a disability from equally participating in academics, employment, or other University program. Reasonable accommodations may include specialized equipment, auxiliary aids, policy modifications, academic adjustments or other accommodation that is effective. University policy, as well as state and federal law, strictly prohibit retaliation against an individual for requesting a disability accommodation, for participating in a disability discrimination complaint process.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

"All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee."

Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated in this course. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the university. The first instance will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, exam, etc. The second will result in a further action, and at the instructor's discretion a failing grade in the class may be given and potential disciplinary action by the university may be taken.

## **Requirements and Grading**

### **Weekly quizzes** (140 points)

Each week a quiz is posted in Canvas that will test your understanding of the required readings and videos. Your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped. Quizzes are generally due at 11:59 pm on Wednesdays.

### **Weekly activities** (70 points)

Each week you will be given an activity to do that isn't too mentally strenuous. The purpose of these activities is to force me to keep the classroom creative for you, and give you something to do other than just reading then writing. Your lowest two activities scores will be dropped. Activities will generally be due 11:59 pm on Wednesdays. (Due dates are set in Canvas to remind you!)

### **Short assignments** (140 points)

There are four short assignments due in weeks 3, 8, 13, and 16. The purpose of these assignments is for you and me to have some one-on-one opportunities for me to provide you feedback and support.

### **Peer reviews** (50 points)

Two of your short assignments will be peer reviewed by others, and you will review the work of other students on those assignments. There is *\*so much\** we can learn by seeing how others approached the work differently from how you did – so this is about you learning from your peers, as well as giving them an opportunity to learn from you.

### **Case studies** (300 points)

There are three group case study projects throughout the semester, each lasting 5 weeks. You will be assigned a new group for each case study. There are several reasons I have decided to do group projects, but one of the big ones is that you can get to know each other a little, and community is a *\*huge\** driver of learning. There are several ways to earn points by contributing to your group, so see the assignment descriptions for details.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

Because I drop your lowest two quiz and activities scores, there are 30 points of extra credit already built into the course – you don't have to do anything to get it!

## **LATE WORK**

I will deduct two points from an assignment's grade per 24 hours it is submitted late; however, if you would like to arrange a different deadline with me at least 48 hours prior to the original deadline, I am happy to make accommodations to meet your needs.

**Grading of assignments:**

**Grade Scale**

|                               |            |               |               |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| Case studies (100 pts ea)     | 300 points | A: 94+        | C: 73 – 76.9  |
| Weekly quizzes (10 pts ea)    | 140 points | A-: 90 - 93.9 | C-: 70 – 72.9 |
| Weekly activities (10 pts ea) | 140 points | B+: 87 - 89.9 | D+: 67 – 69.9 |
| Short assignments (35 pts ea) | 70 points  | B: 83 - 86.9  | D: 63 – 66.9  |
| Peer reviews (25 pts ea)      | 50 points  | B-: 80 - 82.9 | D-: 61 – 62.9 |
| -----                         |            | C+: 77 - 79.9 | E: < 61       |
| Total                         | 700 points |               |               |

Note that I do not round grades, and I do not curve.

**Other things to keep in mind:**

- 1) While this class is online, you are expected to stay on top of all material. The material is only available for the week that it is covered. I will be available almost any time of day or night to answer questions. As this is an online class, Canvas message is the best way to get a hold of me. I will respond to emails within 48 hours Monday-Friday unless I state otherwise. I am also perfectly happy to receive text messages, but again, it make take me a day or two to get back to you.
- 2) Canvas will be utilized for submitting all of the assignments as well as for posting grades. You may not email me any assignments, unless I say otherwise. You are responsible for monitoring your grades on Canvas that are posted throughout the semester and making me aware of any discrepancies or concerns on or before the last day of class. No changes will be made after the Friday of finals week, to any grades on assignments, exams, etc., posted to or recorded on Canvas prior to that date.
- 3) Make-up assignments will be given at the discretion of the instructor, only for very serious medical reasons, and **only if cleared in advance.**
- 4) You are expected to post and respond to discussions each week. While you are not required to attend an actual classroom, you must plan to spend time in the “virtual classroom” (i.e. Canvas) on a regular basis. I will be posting announcements, assignments, and grades all online, and you are responsible for staying on top of the information I post.

5) Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Any indication of cheating will be handled in accordance with the university's academic integrity policy.

| <b>Date</b>                      | <b>Topics</b>  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Week 1</b><br>Jan 7 – Jan 16  | Introductions; Why study economic history?                               |
| <b>Week 2</b><br>Jan 17 – Jan 22 | The general U.S. historical timeline<br>Case study: Cold War             |
| <b>Week 3</b><br>Jan 23 – Jan 29 | Economic angles to history<br>Case study: Cold War<br>Assignment 1 due   |
| <b>Week 4</b><br>Jan 30 – Feb 5  | Economic growth in the U.S.<br>Case study: Cold War                      |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>Feb 6 – Feb 12  | Technology in the U.S.<br>Case study: Cold War                           |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>Feb 13 – Feb 19 | The role of government<br>Case study: Great Depre-/Rece-ssions           |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>Feb 20 – Feb 26 | Finance<br>Case study: Great Depre-/Rece-ssions                          |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>Feb 27 – Mar 5  | Labor issues<br>Case study: Great Depre-/Rece-ssions<br>Assignment 2 due |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>Mar 6 – Mar 12  | Labor movements<br>Case study: Great Depre-/Rece-ssions                  |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 10</b><br>Mar 13 – Mar 19    | Spring Break (March 10-17)                                    |
| <b>Week 11</b><br>Mar 20 – Mar 26    | Energy<br>Case study: student choice<br>Peer review 1 due     |
| <b>Week 12</b><br>Mar 27 – Apr 2     | Environment<br>Case study: student choice                     |
| <b>Week 13</b><br>Apr 3 – Apr 9      | Agriculture<br>Case study: student choice<br>Assignment 3 due |
| <b>Week 14</b><br>Apr 10 – Apr 16    | Poverty<br>Case study: student choice                         |
| <b>Week 15</b><br>Apr 17 – Apr 23    | Looking forward<br>Case study: student choice                 |
| <b>Finals week</b><br>Apr 25 – May 1 | Assignment 4 due<br>Peer Review 2 due                         |

*Everything in this syllabus is subject to change – I will provide notifications to you in Canvas throughout the semester should something change, with at least 48 hours' notice.*