

# Economics 274 - Honors 327

## American Economic History

Fall 2006

**Instructor:** Larry Wimmer

**Time:** TuTh 9:30-10:45 am 202 MSRB

**Office:** 145 Faculty Office Building; Phone 422-3354

**Office Hours:** TuTh 8-9 am, Th 10:45-11:15 am

**Teaching Assistants:** Jake Carter [j.jakecarter@gmail.com](mailto:j.jakecarter@gmail.com)

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Review Sessions -- TBA

### Texts:

1. Stanley Lebergott, The Americans: An Economic Record, Norton, 1984. [Lebergott] (21 of 40 chapters)
2. Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, A New Economic View of American History, Norton (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), 1994. [New View] (14 of 23 chapters)
3. L. Wimmer, Student Handbook [SH], 2006  
(Available at Cougar Copy Center: 725 E. 820 N., 374-9992)

**Prerequisite:** Economics 110

<b><u>Grading:</u></b>	Exercises (6) typed	70
	Short Exams (5 @ 25 pts. each)	125
	Three Term Papers (3@ 50, 50 & 30 pts)	130
	Final Exam (Dec.18, 7-10 am)	<u>150</u>
	Total	475

**Papers and exercises** are due at the start of class. All papers should be turned in as hard copy, not email. **Late Papers:** late for class with late paper -2 points; papers turned in the same day, but after class -5 points; papers turned in the following class period -10 points; completion of all term papers is required to receive a grade for the course, but if turned in after the second class period, papers receive no more than 10 points.

**Late exercises:** -1 late for class; -3 turned in after class, same day; -5 turned in the following class period.

**Attendance** will be considered in determining your final grade.

**Short Exams** are taken in the Testing Center.

## SECTION I: SOURCES OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Lec	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	9/5 Tu	INTRODUCTION: Course Requirements; Why Study Economic History? Can the Study of History be Scientific?	Lebergott: Introduction; New View: Introduction.	
2	9/7 Th	CAN WE MEASURE WELFARE?	New View: Chapter 1 (pp. 1-14); SH Appendix D: Measuring Welfare.	Exercise 1 due
3	9/12 Tu	OVERVIEW: Measuring Changes in the Average Living Standard of the American Family	Lebergott: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4; SH Appendix A and B.	
4	9/14 Th	MEASURING INCOME AND WEALTH DISTRIBUTIONS: Seeking the Origins of Inequality	Lebergott: Chapters 7; New View: Table 2.7 (p. 51).	Exercise 2 due
5	9/19 Tu	A SEARCH FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY: The American Dream or a Static Society?	SH Appendix B: Douglas North, "Economic Performance Through Time," Nobel Lecture, 1993; New View: Chapter 1 (pp. 14-20); Lebergott: Table 40.4 (pg. 511).	Exercise 3 due
6	9/21 Th	EXPLANATIONS OF LONG-TERM TRENDS IN AMERICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH: A) Discontinuous: Single Cause; B) Continuous: Growth Theorists (L, NR, K, T)	Lebergott: Chapters 15, 26.	Exam 1 (9/22)
7	9/26 Tu	POPULATION SOURCES: The Historical Debate: The Gloom of Reverend Malthus! Native Populace, Immigration, Indentured Servitude and Natural Increase	New View: Chapter 8 (221-245).	
8	9/28 Th	The Demographic Transition: THE ECONOMICS OF MORTALITY	SH Appendix B: Robert Fogel, "Economic Growth, Population Theory, and Physiology," Nobel Lecture, 1993.	Exercise 4 due
9	10/3 Tu	MORBIDITY: Health and the Epidemiological Transition	New View: Chapter 8 (pp. 212-221).	
10	10/5 Th	The Demographic Transition: The Economics of FERTILITY and Family Size	Lebergott: Chapters 8, 9; SH Appendix B, Table B3.	Exercise 5 due
11	10/10 Tu	HUMAN CAPITAL: Education; Labor Force Participation of Males, Females, Children, and Older Workers	Lebergott: Chapters 12, 29 (pp. 366-370), Tables 16.3 (p. 195); SH Appendix B, Table B5.	
12	10/12 Th	LAND POLICY and PHYSICAL CAPITAL	Lebergott: Chapter 14.	Exam 2 (10/13)
13	10/17 Tu	INNOVATION and TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE	New View: Chapter 3.	

## SECTION II: TOPICS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Lec	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
14	10/19 Th	FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH: Colonial and Antebellum Development	New View: Chapter 6; Lebergott: Chapter 10 (pp. 91-98, 107-112).	Paper I due
15	10/24 Tu	ANTEBELLUM: Advances in TRANSPORTATION, TEXTILES, and IRON	New View: Chapter 7 (pp. 180-190); Lebergott: Chapter 17, Tables 7.34, 12.3.	
16	10/26 Th	ANTEBELLUM MONETARY STANDARDS and the Money Supply	New View: Chapter 4.	
17	10/31 Tu	ANTEBELLUM BANKING, Inflation, and the Business Cycle	Lebergott: Chapter 20; New View: Chapter 11.	Exam 3 (11/1)
18	11/2 Th	SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR: Can "Evil" Systems be Profitable and Efficient?	New View: Chapter 12 (326-333), 13 (355-363).	
19	11/7 Tu	THE SLAVE SOCIETY: Social Conditions Under Slavery	New View: Chapters 12 (333-352), 15, Table 11.2 (p. 311), 12.2 (p. 329).	
20	11/9 Th	THE POST CIVIL WAR PERIOD: INDUSTRIALIZATION becomes reality: Agrarian Unrest vs. the Robber Barons	Lebergott: Chapters 24, 28, 29 (pp. 377-386); Table 7.4 New View: Table 19.1 (p.523), Table 19.2 (p. 527).	
21	11/14 Tu	POST-CIVIL WAR MONETARY SYSTEMS: Money, Banking, Inflation, and the Business Cycle	New View: Chapter 18 (pp. 493-504, 514-520); Lebergott: Chapter 30.	Paper 2 due
22	11/16 Th	THE GREAT DEPRESSION: Inherent Market Instability or Government Mismanagement	New View: Chapter 21.	
23	11/28 Tu	THE NEW DEAL	Lebergott: Chapter 35 (pp. 453-463); New View (pp.665-677)	Exam 4 (11/29)
24	11/30 Th	POST WWII: Employment Act of 1946 and the Growth of Government	New View: Chapter 23 (pp. 648-665).	
25	12/5 Tu	POST WWII: Money, Banking, Inflation, and the Business Cycle	Lebergott: Chapters 36, 37.	
26	12/7 Th	The TWENTIETH CENTURY in Retrospect: Trends in Inequality and Poverty	Lebergott: Chapters 38, 40.	Paper 3 & Exercise 6 due
27	12/12 Tu	LESSONS: (1) From Our Past (2) For Third World Nations, (3) For the Future?	SH, Clayne Pope, "Lessons from the Past," pp. 59-63.	Exam 5 (12/13)
28	12/14 Th	Conclusions		

**FINAL EXAM IN CLASS Dec. 18, 7-10 am**

# EXERCISES

- Exercise 1 -- Measuring Welfare** - (1) Distinguish possible differences between Real GDP and “welfare” or “standard of living.” (2) From the National Income Accounting chapter of Econ 110 or another Macro text: a) define GDP; b) what are the three methods of measuring aggregate output or income; and c) illustrate the difference between Nominal (current) GDP vs Real GDP. (3) Suggest two weaknesses of Real GDP as a measure of welfare. (10 points - due Sept. 7)
- Exercise 2 -- Price Indices/Real and Nominal Values** - Use the handout given to you in class to construct a single price index. Use this price index to deflate “nominal” historic values into current “REAL” values. (10 points - due Sept. 14)
- Exercise 3 -- Family Pedigree Chart** - Starting with yourself, list as many names and birth/marriage/death dates as you can find back to and including your great-great grandparents (5 generations). (10 points – due Sept. 19)
- Exercise 4 -- National Origins of your Family** - In outline or list form, identify as many members of your family as you can find who themselves were immigrants to this country (not those who were children of immigrant parents). List names, countries of origin, approximate dates of immigrations, place of settlement, and occupations if known. Conclude with a half page considering both push and pull factors that may have influenced their decision. (10 points - due Sept. 28)
- Exercise 5 -- Your family in the Census Manuscripts** – Conduct a Census search for two members of your family: one from any census year of 1850, 1860, or 1870; and the other from any of the 1900, 1910, 1920, or 1930 censuses. Use the census manuscripts in the HBLI, other family history centers, or one of several Family History websites (ex. ancestry.com). Write a 1-2 page report identifying the information found and difficulties encountered. If wealth was found in the 1850-70 censuses, convert those values into year 2000 values. If wealth was not found, assume \$100 real wealth and \$75 of personal wealth, and convert these values into year 2000 dollars. Show your work. (20 points - due Oct. 5)
- Exercise 6 --** List and defend one important conclusion from EACH of the following three topics:
- (1) One important lesson you have learned from this course (positive or negative) regarding America’s past.
  - (2) As a result of your study of America’s past, what primary recommendation would you make to those in underdeveloped countries wishing to escape poverty and poor economic performance?
  - (3) From this course, why are you more or less optimistic regarding America’s future?
- (10 points - due Dec. 7)

Family History Websites: **ancestry.com** [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com); **Cyndi’s List** [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com); **Ellis Island Passenger Records** [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org); **Family Search** [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org); **Rootsweb.com** [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com); **Vital Records Information US** [www.vitalrec.com](http://www.vitalrec.com).

# AMERICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY -- TERM PAPERS

From each section choose one topic to write a 6-8 page, double-spaced paper as it relates to your direct family lines. Your paper must include (1) a comprehensive introduction of the importance of the topic; (2) national data and trends; (3) data pertaining to your family's experiences; (4) comparisons with national trends; (5) a conclusion of your significant findings; and (6) a bibliography.

The primary purpose is to explain national levels and trends and compare these to your family's experience. These papers should emphasize data, data sources, and data problems. Lebergott, Atack and Passell, class lectures, and the *Student Handbook* are resources for finding trends in the national data. It is suggested that you make use of the writing lab before submitting your final paper.

## PAPER I. (Choose from topic #A or #B) - (due Oct. 19)

- A. Examine the **MORTALITY** experiences of one family line (plus siblings) since 1850. Examine age at death, infant and childhood deaths, mortality of mothers in childbirth, and disease-morbidity experiences. Include comparisons to national life-expectancy (direct line at age 20, sibling at birth).
- B. Female **FERTILITY** for two family lines from 1850 through your mother's generation. Examine family size, age at marriage, child spacing, and age at first and last birth. Include national comparison and possible explanations for trends.

## PAPER II. (Due Nov. 14)

- A. **GEOGRAPHIC AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY.** Examine national trends in migration and occupational choices, and compare these to two direct lines of your family since 1850-70 up to the present (including your parents). Look for families with variation. Include causes and consequences of migration; urban/rural; role of education, etc. Where possible, examine consequences of occupational choices, including farm/non-farm, blue/white collar, education by age and gender, and if available, changes in the work environment, hours, safety, etc. Be sure to include a discussion of the role of women. Emphasize the period since 1870 (earlier period in outline or summary form if relevant). For source material, see Lebergott Ch. 28 and 29 and Atack & Passell Ch. 15.

## PAPER III. (Choose #A or #B) Oral History (preferably from your family, but an acquaintance will suffice) (due Dec. 7)

- A. Socio-economic impact of the **GREAT DEPRESSION** – Write a report based on an oral history of two couples or individuals who experienced the Depression, preferably someone born before 1930. You may need to find great-grandparents, grand uncles or aunts, or possibly a neighbor or family acquaintance. I am interested in the seriousness of the impact of the Depression upon their lives, and also in coping strategies they might have used to compensate for market conditions.
- B. The socio-economic factors involving **IMMIGRATION** – Write a report based upon information from our texts and your oral interviews with two families who have immigrated (legally or illegally) to the United States within the past 20 years; look for variation. Carefully examine both “push” and “pull” factors involved in their decision. What have been the primary problems and successes resulting from that move? Have their hopes been realized? What is the likelihood of them returning to their home country?