

Economic History of the Western Community (ECO 1326)  
Spring 2010 Semester  
Guidelines on Paper or Group Project

The idea here is to choose something to write on or present about which is relevant to economic history and something you are interested in.

There are two options,

- 1) An individual paper of 1,000 – 1,500 words.
- 2) A group presentation of 10 to 15 minutes in class. 2 to 5 people can do this together, the group should put together a one- or two-page outline of what they are presenting with the group members name on it and the references used in preparing the presentation. The group should send the outline to me and I'll have the Tobin school make copies for everyone for the day of the presentation. The group should email me or come to office hours at least one week before the due date to set-up a class time to present their topic.

Note: I am happy to review or give suggestions for anyone's paper or project during office hours or by appointment.

The papers and presentations should cover,

- a) Why do you think the topic relevant to the study of economic history?
- b) What is the narrative involved (e.g. describe "what happened", this is the history part of the paper or presentation) and explain how "what happened" effected the economy (this is the economics part of the assignment).
- c) You should use at least two scholarly (peer-reviewed journals and/or books on an academic press) references, one of course can be the Cameron & Neal book, or you can use this and/others of your choosing (Wikipedia is good, but won't count as a 'scholarly' reference).
- d) Any phrases or sentences used from any source should be fully referenced. To copy full ideas and sentences from the internet or any other reference without fully referencing is plagiarism.

- e) Use the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or another recognized scholarly format) for formatting the papers, <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>. Any presentation format is fine for the presentations, many use Powerpoint.

Here are some potential topic ideas, however you are able to choose something of your own as long as you meet the above requirements.

- Pick one person (e.g. Carlyle's 'Great man or woman') in economic history and describe their effect on the economic history of their time and place. An example is Sir Robert Peel who was instrumental in overturning the English Corn Laws in 1846 which then lead through cumulative causation to free trade in Europe, or, Mayer Rothchilds in Napoleonic France and how he influenced French – and thus European – banking. Or, of course, you can choice a person and consequence of your own.
- Pick an institutional or societal structure and describe its effect on the economic history of its time and place, and how a Sewell's 'Event' changed this institutional social structure. For example, how or why did industrialization in the USA lead to the creation of labor unions (the "structure") in early capitalism (1870-1914) and what "event" (the creation of the Welfare State?) then cause the decrease in private sector union membership in modern capitalism (1948 to present). Another example of this would be how the international Gold Standard (structure) was disrupted by World War I (event) and how 'dollarization' has replaced the Gold Standard in modern capitalism. Again you can choose your own structures and events.
- Give an example of when in history the necessary economic conditions we have discussed in class (rational monetary policy, fiscal policy and rule of law) have been violated and the economic and social repercussions this had. An example would be the unsustainable industrialization of the Soviet Union based on a depreciating (or untradeable) Ruble currency and how this lead to the collapse of the USSR in 1989-1991, or how the hyper-inflation in Germany after World War I came about and how this lead to an authoritarian government. Again, you may choose your own historical example.

- Choose a work of economic history, political economy, fiction or film from the syllabus (or one of your own choosing) and describe how the work can lead to be a better understanding of economic history relevant to time and place. For example, Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) is a treatise for free trade against the mercantilism which was used as a tool for early nation-state creation after the period of absolute monarchy from ca. 1500 - 1750. Why did Smith think mercantilism was misguided policy and what effect did his book have at the time? *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is about the industrial system and the social changes that happen under wage labor. Give examples of some of the characterizations and events in the movie that help to explain the way capitalism works.
- Lastly, you can write a book review (1,000- 1,500) words of any book from the syllabus or one of your own choosing (as long as you write in the review why you think it is relevant to the study of economic history. The Economic History Association website (eh.net) has some good examples of book reviews.

The papers are due in first draft April 15, 2010. The presentations are also due April 15. I will review the papers and give a preliminary grade and give back the papers April 22, then, if you wish to address the comments for a better grade, final papers are due April 29. You can, as stated, request input on the papers or presentations earlier than the due date, and, you may submit paper drafts earlier if you would like. [If you are going to write or present on the Great Depression, it is recommended that you read the Lawrence Reed "Great Myths" pamphlet listed in the syllabus first, and choose a limited subject (international monetary policy, US trade policy and foreign reaction, the industrial policy of the Roosevelt administration, etc.) to write on as opposed to cover the whole Great Depression as it is a vast subject that cannot be covered adequately in a short paper or presentation].