



School of Business and Economics
Institute of Economic History
Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Wolf

701072 - Methods in Economic History

WS 2010/11

Wednesday 8:30-10 at SPA1, 22

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Course Description

This seminar covers a broad range of topics from world economic history, such as growth, globalization, welfare and the role of institutions, which feature prominently in the contemporary academic debate. Students will read, discuss and critique key papers from the literature and gain an overview of a variety of methods used in the analysis of historical economic developments.

The focus of our enquiries will be on the time span stretching from the High Middle Ages to the First World War. This era is marked by a number of developments, including rapid population growth, the extension of financial markets and trading networks, industrialization, the overseas expansion of Europe, as well as the advent of democratic governance, which are vital to explaining the world we live in today.

But remember that this is NOT a history course. You will not primarily be required to recite historical dates and events. The most important learning objective is to understand how economic theory and methodology can be applied to tackle a research problem. In doing so, you will also develop your research, presentation and academic writing skills.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by your presentation (30%), your seminar paper (60%) and your participation in class (10%).

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Presentation

Please choose one topic from the list (or a related topic) for your presentation (at the end of the session). At that point you will be asked to present your topic you have chosen. Each theme is worth 10 points. In your presentation you will discuss

The other readings are supplementary to the main ideas of the main papers. Of course, you should do your own research to the literature on the reaction.

The presentation should be supported by a handout containing all the literature you have read before your presentation and should be 10 minutes long.

Paper

You will write a seminar paper based on the topics of the class discussion. The paper should be 10-12 pages long.

The paper should be between 15 and 20 pages long, depending on the standard. This implies: reading widely, writing concisely, evaluating objectively and critically.

Participation

Seminars like this one are based on discussion. It is important in order to facilitate a learning process. You are encouraged to comment frequently and to ask questions. Remember that your participation is an important part of the grade. Ask and comment critically.

Rules of the Game

- Please note that once you have signed up for the course, you are committed to the course. Not giving up your paper before the deadline will result in a grade of 0.
- Also bear in mind that attendance is mandatory. You must attend at least 80% of all sessions in order to pass the course.
- Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the use of material inaccurately.
- You should always read the literature before each session and be prepared to discuss it.
- Since the seminar is held in English, your presentation and the paper, should be written in English.