

Varieties of economic history

FS 2024 | MA Seminar Methoden und Theorie | Wednesday 10:15 -12 | KOL-F-203

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Course Description:

This seminar aims to discuss the methodological, theoretical, and empirical variety of economic history. In contrast to other source and archival based research seminars, the final goal of the seminar is to help students write an in-depth analytical paper based on secondary literature.

This seminar will not provide a survey of classical authors, themes, and approaches but rather, through a selected list of important monographs and papers, will explore the multiple ways of doing economic history. We will focus on the differences, boundaries, and overlaps between qualitative and quantitative approaches as well as between economic history and other fields of historical inquiry like history of science, gender, law and global history.

Discussions will be held in English and German and you may write your short contributions and final research paper in either German or English.

Requirements:

- Regular attendance, preparation and active participation are expected. Please send us a short email in advance to announce your absence.

- Your final grade will be made of two components (Portfolio format)

25% of the final grade: Critical Appraisal of a monograph which will include a thesis and set of questions for discussion

75% of the final grade: Preparation and writing of a field review paper (20-25 pages, 50'000-62'000 characters, bibliography not included)

1 21. Februar

Studying Economic Life

William H. Sewell. "A strange career. The historical study of economic life," in: *History and Theory*, Vol. 49, no. 4 (December 2010): 146-66.

2 28. Februar

History of Economic Knowledge

We will split into 4 groups of 2 to 3 students each. We will discuss together the first and the last issue of the *Economic History Review* (founded 1926) and *Capitalism. A Journal of Economics and History* (founded 2020). Each small group will be in charge of one issue (paying close attention to the editorial introduction, looking through the issue to glean what the major debates are in that particular issue).

3 6. März

Economic History and History of Capitalism

Hesse, Jan-Otmar, The legacy of German economic history: archetypes and global diffusion, In *Routledge Handbook of Global Economic History*, ed. by Francesco Boldizzoni and Pat Hudson, 97-112. London: Routledge, 2015.

Kocka, Jürgen, Kapitel IV: Der Kapitalismus in seiner Epoche, in: *Geschichte des Kapitalismus*, München: C.H. Beck, 2013, S. 77–123.

4 13. März

Slavery and Capitalism I

Williams, Eric, “British Commerce and Triangular Trade,” In *Capitalism and Slavery*, 51–84. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469619491_williams.7.

With an input from Prof. Dr. Joachim Voth, UZH

Optional Reading: [Slavery and the British Industrial Revolution](#) [with Stephan Hebllich, Steve Redding], August 2022, revision requested, *Review of Economic Studies*. Or podcast: <https://cepr.org/multimedia/slavery-and-industrial-revolution>

5 20. März

Slavery and Capitalism II

Berg, Maxine and Hudson, Pat, Chapter 9: Slavery after slavery: legacies of race and inequality and Chapter 10: Slavery, capitalism and the economic history of Britain, In *Slavery, Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023, 187–228.

6 27. März

Commerce and Information

Francesca Trivellato, “The Setting: Marine Insurance and Bills of Exchange,” “The Making of a Legend,” and the “The Riddle of Usury,” In *The Promise and Peril of Credit: What a Forgotten Legend about Jews and Finance Tells Us about the Making of European Commercial Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, 19-66.

7 10. April

Law and Economy

Katharina Pistor, “Empire of Law” and “Coding Land” and “Enclosing Nature’s Code,” in *Code for Capital: How Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, 1–46 and 108–131.

8 17. April

New Institutional Economy

North, Douglass C. "Institutions." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 97-112.

9 24. April

The political economy of patents

Machlup, Fritz and Edith Penrose. "The Patent Controversy in the Nineteenth Century." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (1950): 1–29.

Kevles, Daniel J. "Of Mice & Money: The Story of the World's First Animal Patent." *Daedalus*, Vol. 131, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 78–88.

10 8. Mai

Market Society and its interpretations

Hirschman, Albert O., Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?, *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 20, no. 4 (Dec. 1982), 1463–1484.

Adelman, Jeremy, Chapter Chapter 10: Columbia Years, In *Worldly Philosopher. The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschmann*, Princeton, Princeton: University Press 2013, 295–324.

11 15. Mai

Value, Economics and Science

Mirowski, Philip, "Science and substance theories of value in political economy to 1870", In *More Heat Than Light: Economics As Social Physics, Physics As Nature's Economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 139-192.

12 22. Mai

Guest: Prof. Dr. Laura Rischbieter (University of Konstanz)

Mitchell, Timothy, "Fixing the Economy," *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (1998): 82-101.

Market, Culture and Gender

Birla, Ritu, "Hedging Bets: Speculation, Gambling, and Market Ethics, 1890-1930," and "Economic Agents, Cultural Subjects: Gender, the Joint Family, and the Making of Capitalist Subjects, 1900-1940" *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture and Market Governance in Late Colonial India*, Durham NC: Duke University Press 2009, 143–199.

MacKenzie, Donald, "Chapter 3: Is Economics Performative? Option Theory and the Construction of Derivatives Markets". In *Do Economists Make Markets?: On the Performativity of Economics*, edited by Donald MacKenzie, Fabian Muniesa and Lucia Siu, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 54-86.