

Quantitative Economic History

Module 07-202-3317 for M.Sc. Economics, Summer Term 2021

Instructor: Dr. Marco Sunder
Time and place: Friday 11:15, ZOOM online meeting
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Objectives: This course addresses historical roots of the inequality in today's world income distribution. A common denominator of the works we discuss consists in a quantitative approach that addresses hypotheses about historical development from a data-driven perspective or with the help of simulation studies. We will try to replicate some of these analyses in class. The course will focus 1) on conditions conducive to the onset of modern economic growth ("industrial revolution") and the escape from the Malthusian population regime in parts of the world, and 2) on the "long shadow of history", i.e. the dependence of current technology and institutions on events and decisions of the distant past. Requirements for participation are the willingness to read several articles during the semester and a solid command of basic econometric techniques.

Course content: Significance of historical events, path dependence; the Malthusian population paradigm; nature and economic growth; institutions and economic growth; paths of technological development; health and human capital; biological indicators of living standards.

Assessment: exam (90 minutes) at the end of the semester; 5 LP in "Applied Econometrics" specialization for M.Sc. Economics students.

Background literature:

Clark, Gregory (2007). A farewell to alms: a brief economic history of the world. Princeton University Press.

Pritchett, Lant (1997). Divergence, big time. Journal of Economic Perspectives 11 (3), 3-17.

Allen, Robert C. (2011). Global economic history: a very short introduction. Oxford University Press.

Cameron, Rondo; Neal, Larry (2003). A concise economic history of the world: from paleolithic times to the present. Oxford University Press.

Diamond, Jared (1999). Guns, germs, and steel: the fates of human societies. W.W. Norton and Company.

Baten, Joerg (2016). A history of the global economy: 1500 to the present. Cambridge University Press.

(Further readings on individual topics will be assigned in class)