
Chinese Economic History in Comparative Perspective

Economics 4534, Spring 2018

Tue Thurs 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Econ 117

For the past three decades, China has been the most rapidly growing economy in the world. Yet, despite its historical advances in commerce, science, and government administration, it was Britain and Europe that modernized first. Why was economic progress in China hindered for long? How can we understand the rise of China as a major power, the long-run implications of the historical period, and the challenges it still faces as it seeks to modernize its economy? This course selectively surveys key elements of the economy, state, and society of China starting from the 17th century to today. Topics of focus include education, kinship and lineage organization, demography, living standards, property rights, foreign trade, capital and commodity markets, local versus central governance, and public finance. The comparative approach is used in this course as a strategy for understanding how differences in the historical determinants of growth helps to explain why China and Europe developed along different growth trajectories. In addition, we will investigate the implications of China's historical legacy as well as institutional changes that have aided China's economic performance in the contemporary period.

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Prerequisites: Econ 3070 or 3080, Intermediate Micro or Intermediate Macro.

Textbooks

Chapters from the following texts will be assigned as background reading. The texts have been ordered at CU Bookstore; used copies can be also found at Amazon.com and other bookstores.

- *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, by Richard von Glahn, Cambridge, 2016. Historical survey of immense reach--covers 1045 BCE to 1900.
- *Modern China: Continuity and Change, 1644 to Present*, by Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Pearson, 2009). Provides a historical background of the Qing (1644-1911) with a political/military focus; contains useful tables, maps, and figures describing major events.
- *The Chinese Economy, Transitions and Growth*, by Barry Naughton (MIT Press, 2007). An excellent overview of the nature of economic reforms implemented by the CCP since 1978.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Classes will be a combination of lecture, student presentations, and in-class discussion and data exercises. The success of the class depends heavily on student participation, as I intend to run our meetings similar to a seminar or a study-group. The following will be used in determining course grades.

Presentation of readings on syllabus	15 %
Presentation of a comparative timeline	10 %
Data analysis written report	30 %
Final take-home exam	25 %
Participation, in-class exercises	20 %

Final Exam: The final is a take-home exam. The questions will be distributed on the last day of class (Thursday May 3). It is due Monday, May 7 on or before 12 noon in my office (206B).

Student presentations: **1)** Students will take turns presenting readings and articles on the syllabus. Each presentation should be about 25 minutes long, summarizing the content of the article. In addition, prepare 3 questions for class discussion. Slides for the presentation should be emailed to me at least one hour before the start of class. Those not presenting should be prepared to ask questions and participate in the discussion of the article. **2)** A Timeline comparison: a research project comparing major events in China and other global events, theme based. Themes will be assigned.

D2L: I will post everyone's presentations on D2L. At the end of the course we will have created a "course notebook" to which everyone has contributed, consisting in part of your notes and class presentations. This course notebook will be valuable for writing the final exam, and will also demonstrate the positive contributions of joint work.

Data analysis report: A significant number of the readings demonstrate how quantitative methods can shed light on history. For this requirement, you will be given access to historical data on China, drawn from various sources. The aim of your analysis is to examine patterns or trends in the data, present your findings in a coherent fashion, and discuss what your results imply about China's economy during the relevant period. The report should be 10 typed pages (double spaced) in length, including all references and Tables and Figures. Students should organize in groups of 3 and hand in a 1-paragraph statement of your topic by February 27. A preliminary draft is due on March 13. I will be scheduling meetings with groups over March 15-22 to discuss your preliminary draft. The report is due May 3, and each group will give a 5-8 minute summary of their project and findings during the final week.

Participation, In-class exercises: These will consist of short writing exercises about the reading assignment for that day, which you will then be able to share with the class. We will also have data exploration sessions. Grading is simple: check, check-plus, or zero.

Attendance: Come to class unless you are ill. Excessive absences (over 4) will affect your course grade.

Policies: For class policies on student disabilities, see: <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>. Policies on religious observance are at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>. Policies regarding discrimination and equity will be upheld: <http://www.colorado.edu/odh> and <http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/policies>. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. See <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> for information on the Honor Code.

Topic Outline

Please note: Readings are subject to change, depending on the speed at which we will progress through the semester. We will also be reading translations of historical documents, which will be made available in class or via D2L. Note: the reading list is intentionally long. It is as much a topic outline as a springboard for interested students to continue further learning on China even after the semester is over. To do well on the exams, target your readings to each topic, reading to achieve depth of understanding in a number of topics. Readings with a * will be placed on D2L. All other readings are accessible through CU's library website.

Part I. Overview

1—Economic History and the Problem of Development

- (1/18)*Angus Maddison, *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long-run*, 1998, pp. 13-30.
- (1/18)*R. Bin Wong, "Economic Change in Late Imperial China and Early Modern Europe", Ch. 1 in *China Transformed*, pp. 13-32.

2—Introduction to the social organization and intellectual traditions of China

- (1/23) von Glahn, Ch. 1 and 2; Elleman and Paine, Ch. 1 and 2.
- (1/23) *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 9, Ch. 9 "Social Stability and Social Change", pp. 473-562, by W. Rowe.

Part II. Determinants of Economic Development

3—Education and Human Capital Accumulation

- (1/25) Background reading: Elleman and Paine, Ch. 4.
 - Naughton, pp. 195-198;
 - NYTimes article: "Next Made-in-China Boom: College Graduates", Jan.16, 2013.
- (1/25) *Reading Historical texts: Confucius and Classical texts
- (2/1) *C.H.Shiue, "Human Capital and Fertility in Chinese Clans Before Modern Growth"

4—Lineage and Clan Organization

- (2/6) Background reading: Elleman and Paine, Ch. 3; von Glahn pp. 301-304, 336-347.
- **(2/6) Student Presentation:** David Faure: The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta", *Modern China*, Jan. 1989 15(1): pp. 4-36
- **(2/8) Student presentation:** "Merchant Lineage in Coastal Jinjiang, Quanzhou Prefecture during the Qing Dynasty" *Frontiers of History in China*, 2010 5(3): 425-452.

5—Law and Property Rights in Imperial China

- **(2/15) Student presentation:** Debin Ma, "Law and Economy in Traditional China", CEPR Working Paper, 2011. http://personal.lse.ac.uk/mad1/ma_pdf_files/DP8385.pdf

6—Political Institutions and Public Finance—from Tax Revenues to Public Goods Provision

- Phil Hoffman, "What do States Do? Politics and Economic History," *Journal of Economic History*, June 2015.
- (2/22) C.H. Shiue, "The Political Economy of Famine Relief in China, 1740-1820," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Summer 2005, 36(1), pp. 33-55.

7—Rebellion and Social Conflict

- **(3/1) Student presentation:** Ruixue Jia and Ying Bai, "Elite Recruitment and Political Stability" https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_IGNeKdKFQxbLRZNXd4YzINaEE/view

8—Foreign Imperialism and the Foreign Presence in the 19th Century

- (3/8) Wolfgang Keller, Ben Li and Carol H. Shiu, "China's Foreign Trade, Perspectives from the Last 150 Years", *The World Economy*, June 2011, 34(6), pp. 853-892.

Part III. Long-run Comparisons: Demographic Outcomes, Market Performance, Productivity, and Wages

9—Demographic Outcomes: Population Growth

- (3/13) *James Z. Lee and Wang Feng. Part II in *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000* (Harvard UP, 1999).
- **(3/15) Student presentation:** Zhongwei Zhao, "Demographic Conditions and Multi-generation Households in Chinese History, Results from Genealogical Research and Microsimulation," *Population Studies*, 48(3), Nov. 1994.
- **(4/3) Student Presentation:** Shang-Jin Wei, Xiaobo Zhang, "The Competitive Saving Motive: Evidence from Rising Sex Ratios and Savings Rates in China", *Journal of Political Economy*, 119(3), June 2011: pp. 511-564

10—Commerce and Commodity Market Integration

- (4/5) C.H. Shiu and Wolfgang Keller, "Markets in China and Europe on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution," *The American Economic Review*, September 2007, 97(4). pp. 1189-1216.
- **(4/10) Student presentation:** Ping-ti Ho, "The Salt Merchants of Yang-chou: A Study of Commercial Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1954, 17: 130-68.

11—Capital Market Integration and World Financial Markets

- (4/12) *Wolfgang Keller and C.H. Shiu, "A Comparison of Capital Markets in China and Britain"
- **(4/12) Student presentation:** William N. Goetzmann et al. "China and world financial markets 1870-1939: Modern lessons from historical globalization"

12—Agricultural Productivity and Rural Industry

- **(4/17) Student presentation:** Robert Allen, "Agricultural productivity and rural incomes in England and the Yangtze Delta, c.1620–c.1820", *The Economic History Review* 62 (3), 2009.

13—Comparisons of Living Standards

- **(4/19) Student presentation:** Robert Allen et al. "Wages, prices, and living standards in China, 1738-1925: in comparison with Europe, Japan, and India." *Economic history review*, 64 (s1), 2011.

IV. Explanations—The Great Divergence in Incomes of the 18-19th century

- (4/24) von Glahn, pp. 348-361.
- **(4/24) Student presentation:** Justin Yi-fu Lin, "The Needham Puzzle, the Weber Question, and China's Miracle: Long-Term Performance since the Sung Dynasty" *China Economic Journal* 1.1 (2008).
- (4/24) Kenneth Pomeranz, "Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization: Europe, China, and the Global Conjuncture," *American Historical Review*, April 2002.
- (4/24) Avner Greif and Guido Tabellini, "Cultural and Institutional Bifurcation, China and Europe Compared," *American Economic Review*, 100 (2), May 2010.