**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**Fall 2017**

**HIST 670. Ten Ways (More or Less) of Doing Economic History**

**[aka "Debates and Methods in Economic History"]**

Marc Flandreau, <no email yet>

Office Hours: TBC, (CH215A)

**Context**

A few years after the subprime crisis erupted, interest for economic history made a sudden come back on the public scene. In this fraught context, however, there has been a vast diversity of debates about how to approach the economic past. This graduate seminar enters those debates by asking a set of simple questions: What is economic history? How has it been done? How is it done? And more importantly how could it be done? Despite renewed interest in the field, however, the seminar intends to convey the sense that the current disputes have much longer antecedents. Furthermore, the seminar seeks to explore, discuss, and experiment with original routes. To those ends, the seminar offers a panorama on the diversity of experiences in reading and writing economic history. It seeks to identify the contours of epistemologically or methodologically diverse approaches to the study of economic history and finds ten distinct modalities. Ten: not one more, not one less. Or maybe a couple more or less. We’ll see. We’ll argue.

**Course Design:**

This graduate seminar meets on Thursdays (1:30 to 4:30PM). During each meeting, we focus on one modality of doing economic history.

In the first part of the session (the seminar room), we’ll discuss the assigned readings, which revolve each time around the said modality, organizing the discussion in a contradictory way, under the authority of a “moderator” who runs this part of the session. The second half of the session (the workshop) is devoted to the presentation by one student of her or his research (past or present; achieved or considered; real or imagined) in the light of the modality under discussion. The student makes a half hour presentation: the topic, the evidence, and how to go about it in the light of the modality of the day.

**Requirements and Grading**

The formal requirements of the course are:

1. One moderation of the seminar room.
2. Presentation of two articles for the seminar room.
3. One workshop presentation (personal research in the light of a chosen modality).
4. One essay, turned in at the end of the semester, which elaborates on the said modality.
5. As always, participation is essential.

The workshop presentation and essay represent the bulk of the grade.

**Context: The Media Flare Up**

Jennifer Schuessler, “In History Departments, It’s Up With Capitalism,” *New York Times*, April 6, 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/education/in-history-departments-its-up-with-capitalism.html>

Jeremy Adelman and Jonathan Levy, “The Fall and Rise of Economic History,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 1, 2014.

<http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-FallRise-of-Economic/150247>

Anonymous [C.R.], “Economic history is dead; long live economic history?” *The Economist*, April 7, 2015.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2015/04/economics-and-history>

**The 10 Ways**

***The Historian***

Fernand Braudel, “The instruments of exchange,” In *The Wheels of Commerce* (*Civilization and Capitalism: 15Th-18th Century* –Vol. 2, p. 25-137, London: Fontana Press, 1985 (*Les jeux de l’échange*, Volume 2 of *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe-XVIIIe,* Paris: Armand Colin, 1979 French version)

Sven Beckert, “The rise of a global commodity,” Chapter 1 of *Empire of Cotton, a Global History*, New York: Knopf, 2014

***The Economist***

Robert L. Basmann, "The Role of the Economic Historian in the Predictive Testing of 'Economic Laws,"' *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, 2d. ser., Vol. II (Spring/Summer, 1965), pp. 159-86.

Donald McCloskey, “Does the past have useful economics?” *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Jun., 1976), pp. 434-461

***Muchness***

Lucien Febvre, “Histoire, Economie et Statistiques,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 1930, 2, No 8, p. 581-90

<http://www.persee.fr/doc/ahess_0003-441x_1930_num_2_8_1279>

Deirdre McCloskey, “The Trouble with Mathematics and Statistics in Economics,” *History of Economic Ideas*, XIII, 3: 85-102, 2005.

<http://www.deirdremccloskey.com/articles/stats/stats.php>

***Bilingual?***

Carlo M. Cipolla, *Between Two Cultures: An Introduction to Economic History*, New York: Norton, 1991. Chapters 1 & 2 (“What is economic history,” and “Identifying the issues.”)

Naomi Lamoreaux, “The Future of Economic History Must Be Interdisciplinary,” *Journal of Economic History*, Volume 75, Issue 4, pp. 1251-1257, 2015.

***Counterfactual***

William Petty, *Political Arithmetic*, 1662.

https://archive.org/details/essaysonmankindp00pett

D. N. McCloskey, “Did Victorian Britain Fail?”, *The Economic History Review* Vol. 23, No. 3 (Dec., 1970), pp. 446-459

***Whig***

Herbert Butterfield, “The historical process,” chapter 3 of *The Whig Interpretation of History*, London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931, 34-63.

Douglass C. North, Barry R. Weingast, “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Dec., 1989), pp. 803-832.

***Ecology***

Ronald H. Coase, "The Lighthouse in Economics", *Journal of Law and Economics*, 17 (2): 357–376, 1974.

Richard White, “Salmon,” in *The Organic Machine*, New York: Will and Wang.

***Forensic***

Ginzburg, Carlo, “Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method,” *History Workshop Journal*, (1980) 9 (1): 5-36.

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Purloined Letter*, 1844.

***Linguistics***

John E. Joseph, “Saussure's value(s)” *Recherches sémiotiques*/*Semiotic Inquiry*, vol. 34, no. 1-2-3, pp. 191- 208, 2016.

Marc Flandreau, “The vanishing banker,” *Journal of Financial History*, April 2012, pp. 1-19.

***Metaphor***

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 1732.

Emile Zola, *L’argent*, 1891.

**Further readings, jotted down.**

Vincent Bignon and Marc Flandreau, “The Price of Media Capture and the Debasement of the French Newspaper Industry During the Interwar,” *Journal of Economic History*, Volume 74, Issue 3, September 2014, pp. 799-830.

Carolyn Biltoft, “On a certain blindness in Economic Theory: Keynes’ Giraffes and the Ordinary Textuality of Economic Ideas” draft, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, 2017.

Francesco Boldizzoni, “Truth on the cross,” *The Poverty of Clio: Resurrecting Economic History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, p. 1-18.

Francesco Boldizzoni, “Building on the Past The Creative Power of History,” Chapter 6 of the *Poverty of Clio*.

Carlo M. Cipolla, *Between Two Cultures*,Chapters 3 & 4 (“The sources” and “Source criticism”).

Barry J. Eichengreen, “Economic History and Economic Policy,” *Journal of Economic History*, Volume 72, Issue 2, pp. 289-307, 2012.

Jon Elster, "Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition." *American Political Science Review* 94 (September): 685-95, 2000.

Robert William Fogel, “The Specification Problem in Economic History,” *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Sep., 1967), pp. 283-308.

Marc Flandreau, “Central Bank Co-operation in Historical Perspective: a Sceptical View” *Economic History Review*, Vol. 50, N° 4, p. 735-763, 1997.

Flandreau, *Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange, A Financial History of Victorian Science*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, pp. 17-34

Claudia Goldin, “Cliometrics and the Nobel,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 191-208.

Michael Haupert, “The Impact of Cliometrics on Economics and History,” working paper.

Réka Juhász, “Temporary Protection and Technology Adoption: Evidence from the Napoleonic Blockade” Working Paper Columbia/Princeton.

<http://www.rjuhasz.com/research/juhasz_blockade.pdf>

Deirdre McCloskey and Lars G. Sandberg, “From Damnation to Redemtion: Judgments on the Late Victorian Entrepreneur,” *Explorations in Economic History*, 1971, vol. 9, issue 1, pages 89-108

Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, “Cotton, Slavery, and the New History of Capitalism,” Working Paper, October 2016.

<http://www.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/law-economics-studies/olmstead_-_cotton_slavery_and_history_of_new_capitalism_131_nhc_28_sept_2016.pdf>

Prasannan Parthasarathi “Comparison in Global History,” in M. Berg ed., *Writing the History of the Global*, Oxford: OUP 2013.

Fritz Redlich, “"New" and Traditional Approaches to Economic History and Their Interdependence,” *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Dec., 1965), pp. 480-495.

Abbott Payson Usher, “The Significance of Modern Empiricism for History and Economics,” *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Nov., 1949), pp. 137-155.