

# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

1019 Milstein Learning Center

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## Mission

The Economic and Social History major is an interdisciplinary major that combines economic reasoning with different historiographic approaches and quantitative analysis. The major encourages students to develop an understanding of the human experience through the record of the past and acquire intellectual tools to analyze historical changes from an economic and social perspective. Students are exposed to different ways of thinking about the origins of capitalism, the structural features of modern economies, regional differences or global diversity in long-run economic performance and socioeconomic well-being, and the challenges and opportunities facing the global economy today. By looking at both the social and the economic dimensions of the histories of one or more geographical regions, students gain a valuable interdisciplinary perspective that enables them to appreciate and think systematically and critically about the complexities of human interaction.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the major in Economic and Social History will be able to attain the following:

- Show fluency in basic concepts, models and tools of economic theory and economic history.
- Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, and use and evaluate these materials through critical reading and interpretation.
- Demonstrate understanding of institutions, organizations and markets in their roles of coordinating economic and social activity.
- Use concepts or methods from multiple disciplines including economics to analyze the past.
- Articulate a well-defined research question and conduct independent research using economic reasoning and historical evidence.
- Communicate economic ideas and historical concepts effectively in written or oral form.
- Demonstrate knowledge and capacity to do in-depth research on a particular geographic area, time period, or central theme in economic and social history.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of economic thought, its relation to historical developments, and influence on past and present economic theory and ideas.
- Show an appreciation for different historiographic approaches to the study of economic and social history.
- Show familiarity with varied perspectives on the origins of capitalism and the diversity of economic development across regions.

Students who graduate with a major in Economic and Social History will be prepared to enter graduate programs in history, business, public

policy/administration, or to pursue careers such as in public policy or business that call for diverse perspectives and skills.

This program is supervised by the Committee on Economic and Social History:

**Program Committee:** Alan Dye (Economics), Gergely Baics (History), David Weiman (Economics), and Carl Wennerlind (History).

## Requirements for the Major

The Economic and Social History track requires a minimum of 12 courses (39 minimum credits).

### Economics

Theoretical Perspectives:		
ECON BC1003	Introduction to Economic Reasoning	3
ECON BC3041	THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS-POLIT ECON	3
ECON BC3033	INTERMEDIATE MACROECONOMIC THEORY *	4

### Economic History

Select two of the following, including at least one course (at the 3000 level or higher):		
ECON BC2012	Economic History of Western Europe	
ECHS BC2590	MEASURING HISTORY	
ECON BC3013	Economic History of the United States (another upper-level economic history course may be substituted, subject to economics adviser's approval)	
ECON BC3022	Economic History of Europe	
ECON BC3023	Topics in Economic History	

### History

Introductory Course in field of historical specialization:		
Select one of the following: 3		
HIST BC1062	Introduction to the Global Middle Ages	
HIST BC1101	EUROPEAN HISTORY 1500-1789	
HIST BC1302	EUROPEAN HISTORY SINCE 1789	
HIST BC1401	INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865	
HIST BC1402	INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN HISTORY SINCE 1865	
HIST BC1760	INTRO AFRICAN HIST:1700-PRESNT	
HIST BC1801	Colonialism and Nationalism in South Asia	

### Lecture Courses:

Select two of the following: 6		
HIST BC2116	The History of Money	3
HIST BC2180	Merchants, Pirates, and Slaves in the Making of Atlantic Capitalism	3
HIST BC2321	COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS	3
HIST W3411	The Rise of American Capitalism	
HIST W3503	Workers in Industrial and Post-Industrial America	
HSEA GU4884	Merchants, Markets, Modernity - China	

### Seminars:

Select two of the following: 8		
HIST W4434	The Atlantic Slave Trade	
HIST W4518	Research Seminar: Columbia and Slavery	

Other appropriate courses may be substituted subject to the history adviser's approval

HIST GU4569	American Nuclear History, 1940s-1960s	4.00
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**Senior Thesis Requirement**

ECHS BC3066 & ECHS BC3067	RESEARCH SEM ECONOMIC HISTORY I and RESEARCH SEM ECONOMIC HIST II	8
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\* ECON BC3035 INTERMEDIATE MICROECONOMICS, ECON UN3213 INTERMEDIATE MACROECONOMICS, or ECON UN3211 INTERMEDIATE MICROECONOMICS may be substituted for ECON BC3033 INTERMEDIATE MACROECONOMICS THEORY

**ECHS BC2590 MEASURING HISTORY. 4.00 points.**

This course examines big themes in economic and social history—population history and human well-being, inequality and poverty, and gender differences. Using these themes, it adopts a hands-on data-driven approach to introduce tools and concepts of empirical reasoning. Datasets related to each theme create opportunities for learning by doing

**ECHS BC3056 HISTORY OF WOMEN'S WORK. 3.00 points.****ECHS BC3066 RESEARCH SEM ECONOMIC HISTORY I. 4.00 points.**

Must be supervised by a faculty member approved by the program adviser. This is the 1st semester of a two-semester course sequence

Fall 2026: ECHS BC3066

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECHS 3066	001/00691	W 4:10pm - 6:00pm Room TBA	Alan Dye	4.00	0/13

**ECHS BC3067 RESEARCH SEM ECONOMIC HISTORY II. 4.00 points.**

Must be supervised by a faculty member approved by the program adviser. This is the 2nd semester of a two-semester course sequence

Spring 2026: ECHS BC3067

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECHS 3067	001/00855	W 4:10pm - 6:00pm 613 Milstein Center	David Weiman	4.00	7/9

## Cross-Listed Courses

### Economics (Barnard)

**ECON BC1003 Introduction to Economic Reasoning. 4 points.**

Covers basic elements of microeconomic and macroeconomic reasoning at an introductory level. Topics include Individual Constraints and Preferences, Production by Firms, Market Transactions, Competition, The Distribution of Income, Technological Progress and Growth, Unemployment and Inflation, the Role of Government in the Economy.

*Note: Students cannot get credit for ECON BC1003 if they have taken the Columbia introductory course ECON W1105 Principles of Economics.*

Spring 2026: ECON BC1003

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 1003	001/00839	T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm 263 Macy Hall	Alan Dye	4	41/100
ECON 1003	002/00888	T Th 4:10pm - 5:25pm 323 Milbank Hall	John Park	4	54/55

Fall 2026: ECON BC1003

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 1003	001/00677	T Th 1:10pm - 2:25pm Room TBA	Mulu Gebreyohannes	4	0/30
ECON 1003	003/00688	T Th 10:10am - 11:25am Room TBA	Rajiv Sethi	4	0/30
ECON 1003	004/00907	M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm Room TBA	John Park	4	0/30
ECON 1003	005/00908	M W 2:40pm - 3:55pm Room TBA	John Park	4	0/30

**ECON BC2012 Economic History of Western Europe. 3 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

The course is an introduction to the transformative economic developments that began in Western Europe and spread globally. It applies economic and empirical reasoning to analyze the underlying forces of modern economic development from pre-modern Europe to the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of a global economy.

**ECON BC3013 Economic History of the United States. 3 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

Prerequisites: ECON BC3035 or ECON BC3033, or permission of the instructor.

Economic transformation of the United States from a small, open agrarian society in the late colonial era to the leading industrial economy of the 20th century. Emphasis is given to the quantitative, institutional, and spatial dimensions of economic growth, and the relationship between the changing structures of the economy and state.

**ECON BC3023 Topics in Economic History. 3 points.**

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

Prerequisites: ECON BC3035 or ECON BC3033, or permission of the instructor

Topics vary in content. Fall 2011 topic: *The American Century*.

**ECON BC3033 INTERMEDIATE MACROECONOMICS THEORY. 4.00 points.**

Prerequisites: An introductory course in economics and a functioning knowledge of high school algebra and analytical geometry or permission of the instructor. Systematic exposition of current macroeconomic theories of unemployment, inflation, and international financial adjustments

Spring 2026: ECON BC3033

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3033	001/00857	M W 8:40am - 9:55am 504 Diana Center	Sarah Gertler	4.00	45/60
ECON 3033	002/00858	M W 10:10am - 11:25am 504 Diana Center	Sarah Gertler	4.00	52/60

Fall 2026: ECON BC3033

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3033	001/00674	M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm 152 Horace Mann Hall	Martina Jasova	4.00	0/60
ECON 3033	002/00696	M W 11:40am - 12:55pm 328 Milbank Hall	Sarah Gertler	4.00	0/60

**ECON BC3035 INTERMEDIATE MICROECONOMICS. 4.00 points.**

Prerequisites: An introductory course in microeconomics or a combined macro/micro principles course (ECON BC1003 or ECON W1105, or the equivalent) and one semester of calculus or ECON BC1007, or permission of the instructor. Preferences and demand; production, cost, and supply; behavior of markets in partial equilibrium; resource allocation in general equilibrium; pricing of goods and services under alternative market structures; implications of individual decision-making for labor supply; income distribution, welfare, and public policy. Emphasis on problem solving

**Spring 2026: ECON BC3035**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3035	001/00889	T Th 1:10pm - 2:25pm 504 Diana Center	John Park	4.00	58/56

**Fall 2026: ECON BC3035**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3035	001/00680	M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm 152 Horace Mann Hall	Elizabeth Ananat	4.00	0/50
ECON 3035	004/00967	T Th 4:10pm - 5:25pm Room TBA	Lalith Munasinghe	4.00	0/40

**ECON BC3041 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS-POLIT ECON. 3.00 points.**

Prerequisites: An introductory course in economics or permission of the instructor. Intellectual origins of the main schools of thought in political economy. Study of the founding texts in classical political economy, Marxian economics, neoclassicism, and Keynesianism

**Spring 2026: ECON BC3041**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3041	001/00856	T Th 5:40pm - 6:55pm 304 Barnard Hall	Kurt Semm	3.00	74/70
ECON 3041	002/00986	T Th 2:40pm - 3:55pm 504 Diana Center	David Weiman	3.00	30/45

**Fall 2026: ECON BC3041**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
ECON 3041	001/00692	T Th 4:10pm - 5:25pm Room TBA	David Weiman	3.00	0/35
ECON 3041	002/00693	M W 11:40am - 12:55pm Room TBA	0. FACULTY	3.00	0/35

## History

**HIST BC1062 Introduction to the Global Middle Ages. 4.00 points.**

This course introduces students to medieval history and the methods historians use to study and communicate about the past. Medieval history has traditionally centered on Western Europe, but this course also integrates new approaches to the Global Middle Ages, including attention to connectivity, comparative studies across contexts, and a survey of world literatures. Topics include Late Antique transformations to the Roman world, the Germanic migrations, and the rise of Christianity; the Islamic Conquests, the Carolingian Renaissance, and the Viking expansion; the Crusades, the Black Death, and the rise of early modern empires. Students will learn to read primary sources, assess scholarly arguments, and incorporate interdisciplinary approaches. This course will require visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Met Cloisters

**Fall 2026: HIST BC1062**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 1062	001/00499	T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm Room TBA	Matthew Delvaux	4.00	0/56

**HIST BC1101 EUROPEAN HISTORY 1500-1789. 4.00 points.**

Political, economic, social, religious, and intellectual history of early modern Europe, including the Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation, absolutism, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment

**HIST BC1302 EUROPEAN HISTORY SINCE 1789. 4.00 points.**

Emergence of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary mass political movements; European industrialization, nationalism, and imperialism; 20th-century world wars, the Great Depression, and Fascism

**HIST BC1401 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865. 4.00 points.**

Themes include Native and colonial cultures and politics, the evolution of American political and economic institutions, relationships between religious and social movements, and connecting ideologies of race and gender with larger processes such as enslavement, dispossession, and industrialization

**HIST BC1402 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN HISTORY SINCE 1865. 4.00 points.**

Examines the major social, political, economic, and intellectual transformations from the 1860s until the present, including industrialization and urbanization, federal and state power, immigration, the welfare state, global relations, and social movements

**Spring 2026: HIST BC1402**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 1402	001/00575	T Th 8:40am - 9:55am 152 Horace Mann Hall	Matthew Vaz	4.00	48/60

**Fall 2026: HIST BC1402**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 1402	001/00504	T Th 8:40am - 9:55am Room TBA	Matthew Vaz	4.00	0/48

**HIST BC1760 INTRO AFRICAN HIST:1700-PRESNT. 4.00 points.**

Survey of African history from the 18th century to the contemporary period. We will explore six major themes in African History: Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World, Colonialism in Africa, the 1940s, Nationalism and Independence Movements, Post-Colonialism in Africa, and Issues in the Making of Contemporary Africa

**Spring 2026: HIST BC1760**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 1760	001/00319	M W 11:40am - 12:55pm LI003 Barnard Hall	Abosede George	4.00	56/70

**HIST BC1801 Colonialism and Nationalism in South Asia. 3 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS)., BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Cultures in Comparison (CUL).

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

Introduction to South Asian history (17-20 c.) that explores the colonial economy and state formation; constitution of religious and cultural identities; ideologies of nationalism and communalism, caste and gender politics; visual culture; and the South Asian diaspora.

**HIST BC2116 The History of Money. 3 points.**

Examining the history of money and the history of ways of thinking about money. We investigate how different monetary forms developed and how they have shaped and been shaped by culture, society, and politics. Tracing money from gift-giving societies to the European Monetary Union, the focus is on early modern Europe.

**HIST BC2180 Merchants, Pirates, and Slaves in the Making of Atlantic Capitalism. 3 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS)., BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Cultures in Comparison (CUL).

Examines how the Atlantic Ocean and its boundaries were tied together through the flow of people, goods, and ideas. Studies the cultures of the communities formed by merchants, pirates, and slaves; investigates how their interactions and frictions combined to shape the unique combination of liberty and oppression that characterizes early modern capitalism.

**HIST BC2321 COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS. 3.00 points.**

Examines the shaping of European cultural identity through encounters with non-European cultures from 1500 to the post-colonial era. Novels, paintings, and films will be among the sources used to examine such topics as exoticism in the Enlightenment, slavery and European capitalism, Orientalism in art, ethnographic writings on the primitive, and tourism

Fall 2026: HIST BC2321

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 2321	001/00650	M W 10:10am - 11:25am Room TBA	Lisa Tiersten	3.00	0/58

**HIST BC3062 Medieval Economic Life and Thought ca 1000 to 1500. 4 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. Preregistration required.

Traces the development of economic enterprises and techniques in their cultural context: agricultural markets, industry, commercial partnerships, credit, large-scale banking, insurance, and merchant culture. Examines usury and just price theory, the scholastic analysis of price and value, and the recognition of the market as a self-regulating system, centuries before Adam Smith.

**HIST BC3119 Capitalism and Enlightenment. 4 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. Preregistration required.

Traces the lively debates amongst the major European Enlightenment figures about the formation of capitalism. Was the new market society ushering in an era of wealth and civilization or was it promoting corruption and exploitation? Particular emphasis on debates about commerce, luxury, greed, poverty, empire, slavery, and liberty.

**HIST BC3332 The Politics of Leisure in Modern Europe. 4 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. Preregistration required.

Transformations in the culture of leisure from the onset of industrialization to the present day. Relations between elite and popular culture and the changing relationship between the work world and the world of leisure will be among the topics considered in such settings as the department store, the pub, the cinema, and the tourist resort.

**HIST W3411 The Rise of American Capitalism. 3 points.**

E-Commerce & Internet Technologies Track, Managing Emerging Technologies Track, Project Management Track, Discussion Section Required, Lab Required

Examines the social conflicts that accompanied the transformation of the United States from an agrarian republic and slave society to one of the most powerful industrial nations in the world. Particular attention will be paid to the building of new social and economic institutions and to cultural and visual representations of the nation and its people. Readings include major secondary works and primary documents. Formerly: American Society in the age of Capital, 1819-1897. *Field(s): US*

**HIST W3503 Workers in Industrial and Post-Industrial America. 3 points. Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

The history of work, workers, and unions during the 20th century. Topics include scientific management, automation, immigrant workers, the rise of industrial unionism, labor politics, occupational discrimination, and working-class community life. *Field(s): US*

**HIST BC3886 Fashion. 4 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS)., BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Cultures in Comparison (CUL).

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

Prerequisites: At least one course in a Non-U.S. Area in History, Literature, Anthropology, Film Studies or Art History. Permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. Preregistration required.

Investigates the cultural, material and technological conditions that facilitated the development of "fashion systems" in early modern Europe, Japan and contemporary Asian diasporic communities. In the global framework, "fashion" serves as a window into the politics of self-presentation, community formation, structure of desires, and struggles over representation.

**HIST BC3905 Capitalism, Colonialism, and Culture: A Global History. 4 points.**

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Historical Studies (HIS).

**Not offered during 2024-2025 academic year.**

Prerequisites: Permission of Instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. Preregistration required.

From Indian Ocean worlds of the seventeenth century, to Atlantic world slavery, to the establishment of colonies in Asia and Africa during the nineteenth century, colonization was critical to the development of metropolitan ideas regarding politics and personhood. This seminar will examine these histories, along with emerging constructions of race and gender, as precursors to debates about human rights and humanitarianism in the twentieth century.

**HSEA W4884 Merchants, Markets, Modernity - China. 4 points.**

From Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production to contemporary notions of Confucian capitalism, theories abound to explain China's divergence from Western patterns of political and economic development. This course critiques these theories and looks at the Chinese economy starting with its own internal logic to explore the social, cultural, institutional and political forces that underlay Chinese economic practice, the role of markets, merchants, labor, and the state in the making of modern China. No prerequisite.

**HIST W4434 The Atlantic Slave Trade. 4 points.**

This seminar provides an intensive introduction to the history of the Atlantic slave trade. The course will consider the impact of the traffic on Western Europe and the Americas, as well as on Africa, and will give special attention to the experiences of both captives and captors. Assignments include three short papers and a longer research paper of 20 to 25 pages. *Field(s): INTL*

**HIST W4518 Research Seminar: Columbia and Slavery. 4 points.**

In this course, students will write original, independent papers of around 25 pages, based on research in both primary and secondary sources, on an aspect of the relationship between Columbia College and its colonial predecessor King's College, with the institution of slavery

**HIST W4569 American Consumer Capitalism: 1800-Present. 4 points.**

This seminar studies the history of consumer capitalism in America from the early 19th century to the present. It will establish when capitalism emerged, what it meant, and how it challenged and transformed American Civilization