



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

EHA126 The Great Divergence: Historical patterns of modern economic growth, 7.5 credits

The Great Divergence: Historiska mönster av modern ekonomisk tillväxt, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Economy and Society on 2019-05-14 to be valid from 2020-01-19, spring semester of 2020.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Department of Economy and Society

Position in the educational system

Main field of studies

Economic History

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

A Bachelor's degree (180 hec) from an internationally recognized university, including a thesis of minimum 15 hec. Applicants must prove their knowledge of English: English 6/English B from Swedish Upper Secondary School or the equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL, IELTS.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Summarize the general trends of relative long-run economic growth of different world regions

- Explain the most important theories of causes and consequences of economic growth and stagnation used in economic history
- Compare patterns of socio-economic and demographic developments in Europe with those of East Asia and South Asia

Competence and skills

- Demonstrate the possibilities and limitations in using real wages and historical national accounts to compare standards of living
- Assess the contribution of new research dealing with long-term economic growth by discussing the quality of historical sources

Judgement and approach

- Develop independent standpoints on the ethical and normative issues raised by economic growth, economic distribution and welfare definitions.

The course is sustainability-related, which means that at least one of the learning outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria.

Course content

This course deals with the recent attempts made to explain the diverging global patterns of economic growth since the mid-eighteenth century – the time of the industrial revolution. By then, GDP per capita levels were rather equally distributed across Europe and East Asia. In the third quarter of the twentieth century, about 1970, the GDP per capita gaps between Western Europe and Asia were abysmal. A growing literature in economic history calls this process “The Great Divergence”.

Since the 1980s, East Asia and South East Asia have begun to close in on West Europe in real GDP per capita terms. The aim of this course is to examine the diverging patterns of economic and demographic developments in historical perspective, with particular focus on Western Europe and East and South East Asia.

The course focuses on the debate between different views in the literature on the “The Great Divergence”, and asks questions such as: why did Britain, and not China, host the Industrial Revolution; how large was the British advantage in standard of living relative to China in the mid-eighteenth century; and why did it take so long for East Asia to have industrializations? To answer these questions the course will confront a range of theoretical perspectives on the causes and consequences of economic growth. Factors such as domestic and global institutions, resource endowments, historical preconditions, welfare conditions, demography and geography will be considered

Form of teaching

The course structure is made up of seminars and lectures. During the course, students work with hand-in assignments that are presented and discussed at mandatory seminars.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

The learning outcomes of the course will be assessed through written assignments, case studies and seminars. Active participation in the seminars is a requirement in the course.

If a student, who has failed the same examined element on two occasions, wishes to change examiner before the next examination session, such a request is to be submitted to the department in writing and granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, though at most two years after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to work experience and VFU, although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F).

For a passing grade of the course (A-E), pass is required at all the examinations. The grade on the course is based on the results on all the examinations in the course.

Course evaluation

The course will be evaluated after completion. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.