### 1. General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Subject</th>
<th>ECON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Number</td>
<td>2273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Economic History of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Years</td>
<td>2024-2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading Method</td>
<td>Letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Instructors

Professor MA, Chicheng  
Office: Room 932 9/F K.K. Leung Building  
Email: macc@hku.hk  
Office: 2859 1059  
Subclasses: 1A

### 4. Course Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>The course examines Chinese economic development from a comparative historical perspective. Particular attention will be paid to the deep roots of China's missing industrialisation in the Ming-Qing period and the economic rise thereafter. To this end, the course will compare China to the West in culture, institutions, human capital, and other fundamental forces of development, and will employ historical data and econometrics to examine the economic impacts of these forces. In addition to broadening students' intellectual horizons in comparative economic history, the course also cultivates students' senses and skills of quantitative history studies and the pertaining effective communications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>ECON1210: Introductory Microeconomics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Elective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. Faculty Learning Goals

Goal 1: Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of the programme discipline  
Goal 2: Application and integration of knowledge  
Goal 3: Inculcating professionalism  
Goal 4: Developing global outlook  
Goal 5: Mastering communication skills  
Goal 6: Cultivating leadership

### 7. Course Learning Outcomes
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Teaching and Learning Activities</th>
<th>Aligned Faculty Learning Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO1. Knowledge of China’s economic history in a comparative perspective</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO2. Application of economic approach to understand the important issues in China’s long-term development</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO3. Ability to complete independent studies and communicate through written texts in a coherent fashion</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO4. Skills of effective communication and discussion in class</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO5. Skills of presenting academic works and responding to questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Course Teaching and Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Teaching and Learning Activities #</th>
<th>Expected Study Hours</th>
<th>Study Load (% of study)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L1. Lecture and class discussion</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L2. Pre-class reading and self-study</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L3. Assignments, term paper and presentation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L4. Consultation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 120</td>
<td>Total: 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9. Assessment Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weight %</th>
<th>Aligned Course Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Class Participation</td>
<td>Attendance and in-class discussion led by the instructor</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Assignments</td>
<td>Submission of two study notes.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Presentation of review reports</td>
<td>Present an assigned article and lead discussion in class (group work)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Term project and presentation</td>
<td>Group research project; submission of a short essay and present it in class.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10. Course Grade Descriptors

- **A+, A, A-**: Excellent. Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, synthesis, presentation and communication.
- **B+, B, B-**: Good. Strong evidence of the ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, synthesis, presentation and communication.
- **C+, C, C-**: Pass. Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at
10. Course Grade Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D+, D</td>
<td>Poorly Pass. Evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fail. Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Course Content and Tentative Teaching Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1             | The Needham Puzzle  
1.1 The Great Divergence between China and the West  
1.2 Deep reasons behind the Divergence  
1.3 Overview of the topics in this course |
| 2             | Confucianism  
2.1 Culture, religion, and development  
2.2 Protestantism and the rise of Europe  
2.3 Economics of Confucianism in China |
| 3             | The Imperial Examinations  
3.1 The intellectual origin of European growth  
3.2 The ‘ladder of success’ in imperial China  
3.3 Literati and the allocation of talent |
| 4             | Autarky  
4.1 Atlantic trade and the rise of Europe  
4.2 The autarkic principle in late imperial China  
4.3 Columbian Exchange and China |
| 5             | Guest Lecture: Big data and its application in economic history studies |
| 6             | Modernisation  
5.1 The economic impacts of the Treaty Ports  
5.2 Western influence: Christianity, knowledge, and institutions  
5.3 Self-strengthening: Chinese responses to the West |
| 7             | The Long Shadow of History  
6.1 The paradox of the long-term persistence  
6.2 The economic legacy of Confucianism  
6.3 Long live Keju: the persistence of human capital |
|              | Student Presentations of Term Projects |
12. Required/Recommended Readings & Online Materials

Reading

There is no assigned textbook. Reading materials are based entirely on journal articles and book chapters. Materials marked with an asterisk (*) are compulsory, and preferably to be read before attending class. The specific pages and chapters of the readings are clearly indicated in the syllabus. Skip the technical (econometric) details with which you are not familiar; focus on the story and economic rationale.

Lecture 1. The Needham Puzzle

Lecture 2. Confucianism

Lecture 3. The Imperial Examination

Lecture 4. Trade and Autarky
12. Required/Recommended Readings & Online Materials


Lecture 5. Modernization


Lecture 6. The Long Shadow of History


13. Means / Processes for Student feedback on Course

- Conducting mid-term survey in additional to SETL around the end of the semester
- Online response via Moodle site
- Others
  - email communications
14. Course Policy

The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/

Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following type of case:

Plagiarism - The representation of someone else’s ideas as if they are one’s own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one’s own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged.

Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects - The representation of work as solely one’s own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort. Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement:
  – The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;
  – The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is prima facie evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (1) might be invoked.