

UCLA Department of Economics

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN
ECONOMIC HISTORY

SPRING 2009

Instructions:

- You have 4 hours for the exam
- Answer 3 questions.
- Use a SEPARATE answer book for each question.

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Answer **three** of the following questions:

1. Development economists often argue that a country's political institutions affect its level of income or its rate of economic growth. Provide two historical examples of how the United States' unique political structure influenced key economic outcomes. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the country's federal structure, the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government, and the strong role of the courts.
2. Why did the American South consistently lag behind the North in manufacturing in the 19th and 20th centuries? Be sure to examine both the pre- and post-Civil War period and the implications for economic growth. Your answer should also discuss how blacks fared in the South relative to the North.
3. In the United States, the labor force participation of prime-aged women (25-44 years old) increased from 15 percent in 1890 to 75 percent in 2000. Is this pattern best explained as the outcome of long-run secular economic change or as the result of a few defining moments of revolutionary change? Defend your answer.
4. Acemoglu and Johnson's recent cross-country regressions suggest that improvements in life expectancy at birth have no effect on economic growth. Does the historical record contradict these findings?
5. The re-organization of the international economy after World War II was accompanied by a "Golden Age" of economic growth for Europe ended by the oil shocks of the 1970s. Were these international institutional arrangements responsible for rapid economic growth in Western Europe and Japan, or did these countries create new national economic institutions that led to their Golden Age?

For both international and national economic institutions, explain why the oil shocks were associated with the end of the Golden Age for Europe and then Japan, as well as the eventual resurgence of the US and UK economies.

6. The current economic crisis comes after two decades of economic globalization, which raises two issues for economic historians:
 - a. To what extent did globalization in the past lead to economic crises in one form or another? And,
 - b. Can an economic crisis lead to de-globalization in response?

In dealing with each issue, analyze the economic, demographic, and political forces at play that have led to these outcomes in the past.