

SOSC 5740 Empirical Analysis in China Studies*
Division of Social Science
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Class time: Tuesdays 3:00 - 5:50 p.m., Room 3588, Lift 27-28.

Office Hours: By appointment

Web access to readings: imes@ust.hk

* Pre-requisite SOSC 5340 or instructor's approval

Course Description

This course is designed for students with a strong motivation to develop intelligent research ideas and to acquire the set of experiences and skills required to draw causal inferences from empirical (quantitative) analysis. To achieve this goal, the course will first expose students to a literature that employs cutting-edge techniques in solving a variety of estimation issues in empirical analysis (thereby allowing causal inferences to be drawn), before it takes them through a number of China-related research pieces that are directly linked to the general literature. Students taking this course are expected to have possessed a good understanding of the econometric techniques commonly employed by practitioners in the empirical literature (examples include instrumental variables approach and difference-in-differences analysis). It is hoped that students will, at the end of the course be able to acquire the capabilities required for conducting meaningful empirical research.

Class Format

Classes will be conducted in a mixture of lectures and seminars: students are expected to read the assigned materials before attending class and to participate actively in class discussions. Depending on the size of enrolment, the last 2 weeks are reserved for students' presentations of their own research.

Assessments

The assessments consist of three parts. First, you are required to submit to me (copying the TAs), via e-mail a *study note* of no more than 2 double-line spaced pages (font size 12, Times New Roman) summarizing the pertinent issues, findings and problems of the 6 topics scheduled between Week 4 and Week 9. Your assignment should reach us no later than 12:00 p.m. on Monday afternoon to allow us time to read them before class. Each assignment accounts for 5 marks, which altogether makes up 30% of overall assessments.

Another 10% (maximum) will be awarded based on your evaluation of a paper or sets of papers chosen from one of the topics listed under Week 10 (or a topic of your choice but which prior approval is required).

We will reserve the last 2 weeks for you to present and discuss your own research in class (60%). Your final project, which should be an empirical piece formulated and designed to test the causal relationship on a hypothesis of your choice, should be no more than 15 double-spaced pages (font size 12, TNR) in length not including tables, figures, and references, and is due approximately 15 days after the last class meeting.

Alternatively, you may choose to critique, replicate and extend a particular topic in the existing literature; examples include *Colonial Origins* and *Conflicts*. Whatever you choose, it is always prudent to consult with me or the teaching assistants before you start.

Topics and Readings:

Week 1 Introduction (September 2)

Angrist, Joshua D., and Alan B. Krueger. 1991. "Does Compulsory School Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 106 (4): 979-1104.

You may also wish to refresh your memory of omitted variable bias by consulting:

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jorn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, chapter 4 (especially pp. 83-94).

Weeks 2 and 3 Classic papers on Economic Development (September 9 and 16)

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *The American Economic Review* 91 (5): 1369-1401.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117 (4): 1231-1294.

Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. 2004. "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 112 (4): 725-753.

Nunn, Nathan. 2008. "The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123 (1): 139-176.

Nunn, Nathan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." *The American Economic Review* 101 (7): 3221-3252.

Week 4 Conflicts in Historical Perspectives (September 23)

Bai, Ying, and James K. Kung. 2011. "Climate Shocks and Sino-nomadic Conflicts." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 93 (3): 970-981.

Kung, James, and Chicheng, Ma. 2014. "Autarky and the Rise and Fall of Piracy in Ming China." *The Journal of Economic History* 74 (2): 510-535.

Kung, James, and Chicheng, Ma. Forthcoming. "Can Cultural Norms Reduce Conflicts? Confucianism and Peasant Rebellions in Qing China." *Journal of Development Economics*.

Week 5 Testing Weber: Protestantism and Economic Growth (September 30)

Bai, Ying, and James Kung. 2014. "Diffusing Knowledge While Spreading God's Message: Protestantism and Economic Prosperity in China, 1840-1920." *Journal of the European Economic Association*.

Becker, Sascha O., and Ludger Woessmann. 2009. "Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (2): 531-596.

Week 6 Testing Malthus: New World Crops and Population Growth (October 14)

Nunn Nathan, and Nancy Qian. 2011. "The Potato's Contribution to Population and Urbanization: Evidence from a Historical Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126 (2): 593-650.

Chen, Shuo, and James Kung. 2014. "Of Maize and Men: The Effect of a New World Crop on Population and Economic Growth in China." Revising for *Journal of Economic Growth*.

Consult chapter 5 of Angrist and Pischke (2008) if necessary.

Week 7 Deep Roots of Economic Development (October 21)

Bai, Ying, and James Kung. 2014. "Does Genetic Distance have a Barrier Effect on Technology Diffusion? Evidence from Historical China." Working paper.

Spolaore, Enrico, and Romain Wacziarg. 2013. "How Deep are the Roots of Economic Development?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 51 (2): 325-369.

Week 8 Causes and Consequences of China's Great Leap Famine (October 28)

Bai, Ying, and James Kung. 2014. "The Shaping of an Institutional Choice: Weather Shocks, the Great Leap Famine, and Agricultural Decollectivization in China." Forthcoming, *Explorations in Economic History*.

Kung, James, and Shuo Chen. 2011. "The Tragedy of the Nomenklatura: Career Incentives and Political Radicalism during China's Great Leap Famine." *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 27-45.

Kung, James. 2014. "The Emperor Strikes Back: Political Status, Career Incentives and Grain Procurement during China's Great Leap Famine." *Political Science Research and Methods* (The European Political Science Association's journal). First online 24 April.

Consult chapter 6 of Angrist and Pischke (2008) if necessary.

Week 9 Political Resource Curse (November 4)

Brollo, F., T. Nannicini, R. Perotti, and G. Tabellini. 2013. "The Political Resource Curse." *The American Economic Review* 103 (5): 1759-1796. [You may skip the theoretical model.](#)

Chen, Ting, and James Kung. 2014. "Political Resource Curse under Authoritarianism? The Effect of Land Revenue Windfall on the Career Incentives of China's County Officials." Working paper.

Week 10 Students' Evaluations of Other China's papers (November 11)

Chen, Y. et al. 2013. "Evidence on the Impact of Sustained Exposure to Air Pollution on Life Expectancy from China's *Huai* River Policy." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* 110 (32): 12936-41.

Talhelm, T. et al. 2014. "Large-Scale Psychological Difference Within China Explained by Rice Versus Wheat Agriculture." *Science* 344 (May 9): 603-608.

Xue, Melanie. 2014. "Textiles and the Historical Emergence of Gender Equality in China." Mimeo., Department of Economics, George Mason University.

Week 11-12 Students' Presentations (November 18-25)