



# E366 Climbing ahead, falling behind: social mobility across time and space

Summer 2024

## Instructor information

Instructor	Email	Website	Office location & hours
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## General information

### Description

Societies vary in how much children's income and status are predicted by those of their parents. This course prepares students to consider the underlying causes and consequences of different patterns of social mobility throughout world history, adopting three guiding themes: inequality and social mobility, education as an engine of social mobility, and justice. The first two themes are critical to understanding how differences in social mobility arise across societies, while 'justice' introduces a framework for students to consider how social mobility is experienced. Is high inequality accompanied by high social mobility? Are societies with greater social mobility more meritocratic? Are they more efficient? Students will additionally gain insight into the methods adopted for measuring social mobility.

### Expectations and goals

Students are able to actively participate in an informed way in discussions about the effects of economic history in different areas. They distinguish relevant technical terms and concepts. They expand their knowledge in topics such as history of economic thought and development economics and transfer their basic knowledge of the first semesters to further fields of application. In doing so, they link the competences they have acquired so far.

### Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of an oral presentation, in which they will discuss social mobility in a place and time of their choosing. Excellent presentations will incorporate a comparative perspective and may consider the relative strengths of different methodologies.

## Grading criteria

Component	Percentage
Oral Presentation	6 ECTS
Exercises	3 out of 4 mandatory



## Course materials

### Required materials

Reading materials can be found through the library catalogue and will be distributed digitally where necessary and appropriate.

- Björklund, Anders, and Markus Jäntti. “Intergenerational Income Mobility and the Role of Family Background.” In Brian Nolan, Wiemer Salverda, and Timothy M. Smeeding, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Inequality*, pp. 491-521 (Oxford: 2011).
- Ferrie, Joseph P., and Jason Long. “The Path to Convergence: Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Britain and the U.S. in Three Eras.” *The Economic Journal* 117 (2007): C61-C71.
- Heath, Anthony, and Yaojun Li, *Social Mobility*, (Cambridge: 2023).

### Optional materials

The following materials are not required but may be read according to interest. Readings for specific weeks will be distributed in advance.

### Recommended texts

- Richard Arneson, ‘Four Conceptions of Equal Opportunity’, *Economic Journal*, Volume 128, Issue 612, (2018), pp. F152–F173, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12531>.
- Bernardi, F. and Gil-Hernández, C. (2021), “The Social-Origins Gap in Labour Market Outcomes: Compensatory and Boosting Advantages Using a Micro-Class Approach”, *European Sociological Review*, 37, 1: 32-48.
- Bourdieu, Jérôme, Joseph P. Ferrie and Lionel Kesztenbaum. “Vive la Difference? Intergenerational Mobility in France and the United States during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centures.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 39, no. 4 (2009): 523-557.
- Blanden, Jo. “Cross-Country Rankings in Intergenerational Mobility: A Comparison of Approaches from Economics and Sociology”. *Journal of Economic Surveys* 27, no. 1 (2013): 38–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2011.00690.x>.
- Chen, Yuyu, Suresh Naidu, Tinghua Yu, and Noam Yuchtman. “Intergenerational mobility and institutional change in 20<sup>th</sup> century China”, *Explorations in Economic History* 58 (2015): 44-73.
- Clark, Gregory, and Neil Cummins. “Inequality and Social Mobility in the Era of the Industrial Revolution.” In Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries, and Paul Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, vol 1, pp. 211-236. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge: 2014).
- Clark, Gregory, Andrew Leigh, and Mike Pottenger. “Frontiers of Mobility: Was Australia 1870-2017 a More Socially Mobile Society than England?” *Explorations in Economic History* 76 (2020).
- Durlaf, Steven N., Andros Kourtellos, and Chih Ming Tan, “The great Gatsby curve”, *Annual Review of Economics* 14 (2022): 571-605.
- Ferrie, Joseph P. “The End of American Exceptionalism? Mobility in the U.S. Since 1850,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19 (Summer 2005): 199-215.



- Gallardo-Albarrán, Daniel and Herman de Jong. “Optimism of pessimism? A composite view on English living standards during the Industrial Revolution”, *European Review of Economic History* 25, 1 (2021): 1-19.
- Gao, Pei, Bas van Leeuwen, and Meimei Wang. “Education and Human Capital.” In Debin Ma and Richard von Glahn, *The Cambridge Economic History of China*, vol. 2, pp. 496-528 (Cambridge, 2022).
- Grätz, Michael. “Does Regime Change Affect Intergenerational Mobility? Evidence from German Reunification”, *European Sociological Review*, Volume 37, Issue 3, June 2021, Pages 465–481.
- Humphries, Jane. *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Chapter 10.
- Torche, Florencia, and Alejandro Corvalan. “Estimating intergenerational mobility with grouped data: a critique of Clark’s the Son Also Rises”, *Sociological Methods & Research* 47, no. 4 (2018): 787-811.
- Triventi, Moris, Nazareno Panichella, Gabriele Ballarino, Carlo Barone, Fabrizio Bernardi, ‘Education as a positional good: Implications for social inequalities in educational attainment in Italy’, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 43, 2016, pp. 39-52.
- Yuchtman, Noam. “Teaching to the tests: an economic analysis of traditional and modern education in late imperial and republican China”, *Explorations in Economic History* 63 (2017): 70-90.
- Weiss, Andrew. "Human Capital vs. Signalling Explanations of Wages." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9, no. 4 (1995): 133-154.
- Wright, Gavin. *Sharing the Prize: The Economics of the Civil Rights Revolution in the American South*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.

## Course schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
April 15	Introduction	Arneson (2018)	-
April 22	Economic approaches	Durlaf (2022)	-
April 29	Intergenerational income elasticity	-	U.S. Census sample
May 6	Sociological approaches & presentations	Triventi (2016)	
May 13	Transition matrix	Blanden (2013)	U.S. Census sample
May 20	No class	-	-
May 27	Economic history and social mobility	Clark (2014); Torche (2018)	
June 3	Surname persistence	-	Boulazac, 1836-1876



Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
June 10	U.S. and Australia	Ferrie (2007); Ferrie (2005); Clark (2020); Wright (2013)	
June 17	Europe	Humphries (2010); Grätz (2021)	
June 24	China	Gao (2022); Yuchtman (2017); Chen (2015)	
July 1	Women's social mobility	Heath (2023)	
July 8	Women's social mobility		Swedish linked data
July 15	Presentations		
July 22	Presentations		

### Additional information and resources

New Evidence on Social Mobility in Germany  
Centre for Economic Policy Research  
<https://bit.ly/4cIWARE>

The Sutton Trust  
Social Mobility Charity  
<https://www.suttontrust.com/>

The Opportunity Atlas  
Harvard University  
<https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>

Student Counseling Service  
Wilhelmstraße 19, 3rd floor  
72074 Tübingen  
[zsb@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:zsb@uni-tuebingen.de)