

ECN 310/ECN395 : U.S. Business and Economic policy

2010 Spring Semester:

Tuesday & Thursday 14:00 – 15:15

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Course Goals

This course aims to train students to:

- (1) Understand the inter-relationship between business, public policy, and society in the U.S.
- (2) Study how government at all levels – local, state, national, as well as international – influences business activities through regulation, legislation, taxation, and spending budget.
- (3) Learn about the importance of social responsibility and ethical principles in business
- (4) Discuss about pros and cons of business activities and public policies to get deeper insight of both local and global economies.

Course Description

The course offers an overview of three closely related institutions -- business, government and society -- in the United States. The U.S. has been well-known as the experimental laboratory of capitalism since its birth, and its businesses have developed and cherished to the most advanced level in the world to lead the global economy. As a result, societal concerns about the economic and social performance of big companies are growing today, and critics of business and business system seek and demand the intervention of government in order to control and restrict business activity. Thus the primary focus of the course is to examine many actual cases of the interaction between business, public policy, and society.

Classroom Activities

After the orientation/introduction, students are expected from the second week to read the textbook before the class begins. The class usually starts with some students' oral presentation on the topic assigned by the previous class and all students are highly encouraged to participate in the discussion following the topic.

Prerequisites: Basic knowledge of economics and U.S. history

Credits: 3

Evaluation

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| (1) Class attendance and Participation | 40% |
| (2) Oral presentations | 10% |
| (3) Mid-term report (3 pages. By June 04) | 20% |
| (4) Final report (5 pages. By July 21) | 30% |

Class Materials

The class will closely follow the textbook:

Lawrence M. Lesser “Business, public Policy, and Society, Second edition” Thomson Corp., 2006
But other materials such as newspaper and magazine articles are to be delivered in each class.
The websites of companies and governmental organizations should also be checked frequently.

Class Schedule

- 1 (4.13) Orientation (Textbook Chapter 1~20)**
Class orientation: How to use the text and other materials
Class management: Discussion and oral presentation
- 2 (4.15) Introduction (Ch. 1)**
Interaction between business, public policy, and society
Who are the leading critics of business?
- 3 (4.20) Business & Social Responsibility (Ch. 2)**
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Shareholders and stakeholders
- 4 (4.22) Development of CSR (Ch. 2)**
Volunteerism and philanthropy
Global standards and CERES principles
- 5 (4.27) Business Ethics (Ch. 3)**
Recent corporate scandals and ethical issues
Definition of ethics
- 6 (5.11) Business Ethics Programs (Ch. 3)**
Management and leadership
Whistle-blowing
- 7 (5.13) The Government Environment (Ch. 4)**
Government and public policy
Sources of power and protection of freedoms
- 8 (5.18) Private Sector vs. Public Sector (Ch. 4)**
Clashing goals and philosophies
Similarities: Managing human resources

- 9 (5.20) Business & Public policy (Ch. 5)**
The evolution of public policy
Stages of public policy process
- 10 (5.25) Structure of Decision-making (Ch. 5)**
Iron triangles: role of lobbyists
Issue management
- 11 (5.27) The Global Business Environment (Ch. 6)**
The foundations of international business and trade
Trade negotiations and agreement
- 12 (6.01) U.S. Trade Policy (Ch. 7)**
Trade functions of the U.S. government
Export promotion and subsidies

<<Mid-term report by June 01>>

- 13 (6.03) International Competitiveness (Ch. 8)**
Arguments for and against government intervention
America's Cold War obstacles
- 14 (6.08) Overview of Regulation (Ch. 9)**
How regulation developed in the U.S.
Regulatory reform
- 15 (6.10) Economic Regulation (Ch. 10)**
Against monopolies, anticompetitive behaviors
Case studies: GE, Microsoft
- 16 (6.15) Business and the Environment (Ch. 11)**
How nations cooperate environmental management
Business strategy and environmental rules
- 17 (6.17) Business Response to Environmental Concerns (Ch. 12)**
Greening of American corporations
Pollution prevention: New business opportunities
- 18 (6.22) Business, Employee, and the Workplace (Ch. 13)**
Obesity in the workplace
Employer compliance
- 19 (6.24) Workplace Issues for the 21st Century (Ch. 14)**
Discrimination, affirmative action, glass ceiling
Pension, executive compensation

- 20 (6.29) Managing Government Affairs (Ch. 15)**
 - Corporate involvement with government
 - The functions of trade and professional associations

- 21 (7.01) Lobbying and Campaign Finance (Ch. 16)**
 - The origins and purposes of lobbying
 - How businesses lobby and make campaign contribution legally

- 22 (7.06) Information Technology and Government Resources (Ch. 17)**
 - The history of Internet and WWW
 - Impact of IT Revolution on government and businesses

- 23 (7.08) Corporate Governance (Ch. 18)**
 - Restructuring of business system and corporate control
 - Management strategies responding to shareholder activism

- 24 (7.13) Sources of Government Financing (Ch. 19)**
 - U.S. government investment in Research and Development
 - Many forms of government funding

- 25 (7.15) Procurement, Bailouts, and Government Ownership (Ch. 20)**
 - Impact of governmental procurement
 - Governmental effort to revitalize industry and economy

- 26 (7.20) How to Work on Controversial Issues**
 - Workshop on hottest issues

- 27 (7.22) Conclusion & Review**

<< Final report by July 22>>