

ECN 324: History of Economic Thought
Fall 2009
TR 14:00-15:15
Room TBA

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Course Description

This course explores the history of economic ideas. It is aimed at students who have completed introductory courses in business, macro and microeconomics, and corporate finance. It covers the main schools of economic thought: Mercantilist, Physiocratic, Classical, Marxian, Marginalist, Neoclassical, Keynesian, Chicago, Institutional, Welfare Economics, Game Theory, and the German Historical School as well as the historical context within which they came into being in order to understand why such thinking materialized.

Course Objectives

This course endeavors to equip students with the following capabilities:

1. The ability to detect the differences between the main schools of economic thought.
2. The ability to understand the historical debates between the advocates of different theories that created modern economic theory.
3. A critical attitude toward the hidden values behind the “scientific” theories.
4. The ability to interpret contemporary events in the world of business and economics from the perspective of the great economic thinkers who have preceded us.
5. The ability to speak intelligibly (in English) and write coherently (in English) about subjects 1-4.

Classroom Activities

Class sessions will be comprised of a mixture of lectures and short seminar-style presentations and discussions.

Course Materials

Textbook

- Brue, Stanley and Randy Grant. 2007. *The Evolution of Economic Thought*. 7th ed. Thomson South-Western.

Reference books, sources of readings and other information

- Buchholz, Todd. 1999. *New Ideas from Dead Economists*. Plume Books.
- Heilbroner, Robert. 1999. *The Worldly Philosophers. The Lives, Times and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers*. 7th ed. Touchstone.
- Blaug, Mark. 1986. *Great Economists before Keynes*. Cambridge University Press.

- Blaug, Mark. 1987. *Economic History and the History of Economics*. New York University Press.
- Niehans, Jürg. 1990. *A History of Economic Thought*. Johns Hopkins.
- Hausman, Daniel. 1994. *The Philosophy of Economics*. Cambridge.
- Rostow, W. W. 1990. *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present*. Oxford.
- Spiegel, Henry. 1991. *The Growth of Economic Thought*. Duke.

Evaluation

Students have to make a short presentation of a chapter (5 minutes) and a “map” presentation of a particular theme (HET Maps, 10 minutes). Each presentation will be worth 20% of the overall course grade.

There will be one in-class mid-term exam. It will be worth 20% of the overall course grade.

Finally, students have to write a short (4-10 pages) academic paper. The paper should be about a comparison and evaluation of two discussed theories. The paper will be worth 40% of the overall course grade.

HET Maps

Once during the semester each student will be required to chart a particular thread of the history of economic thought that interests each student most. For example, a student could decide to focus on the development of the concept ‘present value’ from William Petty to present day. The student will present their ‘map’ in a 10-minute presentation to the class.

Schedule

September 3: Introduction to the course.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 1.

September 8: The Mercantilist School

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 2.

September 10: The Physiocratic School

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 3.

September 15, 17: The Classical School—Adam Smith.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 5.

September 24, 29: The Classical School—David Ricardo.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 7.

October 1, 6: The Classical School—Malthus, Bentham, Say, Senior, and Mill.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 6, 8.

October 8, 15: Marxian Socialism.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 10.

In-class exam, October 20

October 22, 27: The German Historical School and The Institutionalist School.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 11, 19.

October 29, November 5: The Marginalist School.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 13, 14.

November 10, 12, 17: The Neoclassical School.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 15, 16, 17.

November 19: Game Theory.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 18: 354-359.

November 24, 26: Welfare Economics.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 20.

Presentations of HET maps, December 1

December 3, 4, 8: The Keynesian School.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 21, 22.

December 10, 15: The Chicago School.

Reading: Brue/Grant, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, Chapter 24.

Final paper due December 17