Course Outline  
Econ 104 Introduction to Macroeconomics

Course Description
Four (4) credit hours
Fulfills the UMass Amherst Social World General Education Requirement

This is an exciting and eventful time to be studying macroeconomics. Current events of the past several years have called into question the dominant mainstream theory of the past thirty plus years.

The lectures will build a foundation of theoretical understanding about how the Macroeconomy works. We will introduce mainstream neo-classical theory of the macro-economy as well as some important critiques from the heterodox tradition. Discussions will be utilized for review, class assignments and some problem solving but will mostly involve additional readings on important issues of our time: Jobs, Deficits, Income Inequality, and the Global Financial Crisis.

The study of Economics involves many abstract concepts, which requires students to master new tools of understanding. Topics relating to unemployment, inflation, policy choices, the financial crisis and growth versus sustainability lend themselves handily to critical inquiry as well as important questions facing individuals and society today. Any discussions related to the above typically illuminate how outcomes result from complex relationships of individuals, their behaviors and social institutions.

Is this course for you?
This course requires a basic understanding of internet browsing, email, and word processing. With these, you should have little trouble learning how to use Blackboard – the learning management system used for the course. The online discussion component of the course provides the opportunity to develop your ideas in collaboration with others.

This course involves a lot of written work. At the end of each module, you will be required to post responses to discussion questions, to comment on others’ responses. There will be four (4) assignments, a final paper, a midterm and a final exam. Discussion questions must be completed in a timely manner if you are to receive full credit. Note that the discussions will close once the window for them has passed.

Given the fast-paced nature of the course, deadlines for this course will be strictly enforced. Failure to meet scheduled requirements may put you at serious risk of failing the course – a significant waste of time, energy, and money.

If you have a documented learning disability, please contact the course instructor during the first week of class about accommodation.

With the above points addressed, that’s it for technical details – read below for information on readings, information on how you will be evaluated, and finally, a class schedule. Good luck! Your instructor is here to help; you may email the instructor directly or post to the troubleshooting discussion board with any questions about the course – logistical, substantive, or otherwise.

Texts
- Additional readings are available as files through the course site.
Students are expected to be knowledgeable of current economic issues. This can best happen through regular reading of a national newspaper such as the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal.

**Grades**
Grades will be based on the following: discussion forums, assignments, a short paper, a mid-term exam and a final exam. The exams will consist of short answer essays, graphing, mathematical computation and multiple-choice questions. The weights for the assignments are as follows.

Midterm Exam 25%
Final Exam 25%
Paper 10%
Discussions 15%
Assignments 25%

Final grades will be computed as follows:
A 94 – 100  B+ 87 – 89  C+ 77 – 79  D 60 – 69
A- 90 – 93  B 84 – 86  C 74 – 76   F 0 – 59
B- 80 – 83  C- 70 – 73

**Assignments**
This course will rely on Blackboard to inform you of assignments, readings, exams and any other course announcements.

**Paper Assignment**
Find an article in a newspaper or magazine related to some issue in economics. This article should be macro in nature. The article does not have to be immediately current but should not be more than two years old. Articles about presidential campaign issues related to economic policy, or about the current economic issues would work well. Check with your instructor if you have any questions about the viability of your chosen article.

1. The paper should include a brief summary of the article(s).
2. The paper should relate the current event as reported by the article to some theoretical aspect as presented by the textbook. Use charts, graphs or theory to illuminate this connection.
3. This paper should be about 3 pages typed.
4. The paper should include and properly formatted bibliography.
5. The due date will be indicated on Blackboard.

**Discussion Forums**
You are required, and expected, to participate in the discussion forums. Make sure to respond to discussion questions by the due dates.

**Course Schedule**
See the course schedule below (subject to revision):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module No.</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Blackboard Course Content</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Intro     | Welcome to the Course | To do:  
• Review the course syllabus and get familiar with Blackboard  
• Introduce yourself on the General Discussion Board | |
| 1         | The Macroeconomy | **1. Assigned Readings:**  
• Krugman, Chapter 6, Macroeconomics: The Big Picture.  
• Krugman, Chapter 7, GDP and CPI: Tracking the Macroeconomy  
• Beyond GDP  
• Stiglitz, GDP Fetishism  

**2. Videos:**  
• [Professor Gerald Epstein on GDP](Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• Wealth Inequality in America, Perception vs Reality | Assignment 1: GDP Graphing and Excel  (Sep. 15th, 2019)  
Discussion Forum Response for "A Nation's Success"  (Sep. 15th, 2019) |
| 2         | Unemployment & Inflation | **1. Assigned Readings:**  
• Krugman, Chapter 8, Unemployment and Inflation; pp. 217-229 & 233-241  
• Peck, "How a Jobless Era Will Transform America."  

**2. Videos:**  
• Watch "Roger and Me" under library resources  

**3. Activities:**  
• What's the real price? | Assignment 2: Unemployment Data  (Sep. 29th, 2019)  
Discussion Forum Response for "Roger and Me"  (Sep. 29th, 2019) |
| 3         | Income & Expenditure; AD & AS | **1. Assigned Readings:**  
• Krugman, Chapter 11 " Income and Expenditure"  
• Keynesian Cross in Excel (worksheet)  

**2. Videos:**  
• Watch "The Great Depression and the Keynesian Revolution"  
• [Prof. Crotty on Keynes](Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• [Prof. Epstein on Planned vs. Unplanned Spending](Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• [Prof. Epstein on the Income and Expenditure Model](Econ 104 | Assignment 3: Keynesian Cross  (Oct. 20th, 2019)  
Discussion Forum Response for “The Great Depression and the Keynesian Revolution”  (Oct. 20th, 2019) |
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<td></td>
<td>Aggregate Demand &amp; Supply</td>
<td>• [Prof. Epstein on the Income and Expenditure Model: Fiscal Policy](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• [Prof. Crotty on Investment and the Multiplier](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Videos:</td>
<td>• [Prof Crotty on AD-AS curves](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• [Prof. Epstein on the Aggregate Demand Curve](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• [Prof. Epstein show Shifts in AD Curve](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
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<td>• [Prof. Epstein on the Dilemma of Stagflation](Econ 104 on YouTube)</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam (open from Sep. 19th to Oct. 24th, 2019)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion forum response on “Austerity” (Nov. 3rd, 2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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• Crotty: The Austrians Attack  
• Pollin: Austerity is not a solution |                                              |
|           |                                             | 2. Watch: • [Prof. Pollin on Military Expenditure](Econ 104 on YouTube)                     |                                              |
Article: "The Illusion of High Interest Rates" |                                              |
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| 2. Watch: | • Elizabeth Warren on Consumer Protection  
• Prof. Crotty on Financial Market Theories, Part 1  
| 5         | The Fed                  | 1. Assigned Readings:  
• Krugman, Chapter 14: "Money, Banking and the Federal Reserve System"  
• Eichengreen: Chapter 2 of Exorbitant Privilege  
• Greider (2009) "Dismantling the Temple"  
• A Day in the Life of the FOMC  
• Skim: Modern Money Mechanics  
2. Videos:  
• Watch Video about the Federal Reserve "The Drawing Board" |                                          |                                          |
| 6         | The Financial Crisis     | 1. Videos:  
• Watch "The Inside Job" under library resources  
• Professor James Crotty: Financial Crisis Background (Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• Prof. Crotty on Financial Crisis, Part 1 (Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• Prof. Crotty on Financial Crisis, Part 2 (Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• Prof. Crotty on Financial Crisis, Part 3 (Econ 104 on YouTube)  
• "Crisis of Credit"  
• "Untangling Credit Default Swaps"  
Discussion forum response on “the Great Recession” (Dec. 8th, 2019) |                                          |

The Final Exam (open from Nov. 4th to Dec. 11th, 2019)