ECON 306: History of Economic Thought

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will serve as an introduction to the history of economic thought. Given the almost exclusive domination of a single school of economic thought in the mainstream literature, i.e., neoclassical economics seasoned to a certain extent with a Keynesian flavour, the course will introduce the student to other modes of thinking. The latter includes the Classics, Marxian, Sraffian, Post-Keynesian and Institutional economics.

The course has several aims:

1) To instill in the student the awareness of the multiplicity of viewpoints concerning the same economic phenomena in the modern world.

2) To lay bare the ideological assumptions behind the way economists look at economic phenomena.

3) To bring out the relationship between developments in the material world and the world of ideas.

4) To compare and contrast different viewpoints on certain economic issues of fundamental importance (e.g. market vs. state intervention, market vs. planning, development, globalization, economic crisis etc.).

Course Requirements

Grading
Mid-term Exam.................................................................%25
Final Exam........................................................................%35
Critical Commentaries/Charts [(5+5) x 3].........................%30
Participation.....................................................................%10

The final and mid-term exams will be based upon pre-circulated essay type study questions and short definitional questions.

Critical Commentaries/Charts will be based on the assigned readings and WSJ pieces. The structure of the critical commentaries and charts will be explained in the first-class meeting. By following the link below, you can get a reduced student subscription rate for the WSJ ($4 for 4 weeks, $12 for the term): https://r.wsj.com/PROF57fk

**Note on Academic Honesty**

Penalties for any breach of academic honesty (such as giving or receiving help or using outside material during exams, or plagiarism) are severe and include University disciplinary action. Information on the University's academic honesty policy and examples of academic dishonesty are available under Academic Honesty Policy at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy.

**Reading Material**

**Textbooks**


*Wall Street Journal*, to be used for critical commentaries and charts.

**Supplementary books**


W. J. Samuels, J. E. Biddle and J. B. Davis eds. 2003. *A Companion to the History of
Economic Thought, Oxford: Blackwell. (henceforth, CHOET)

Original sources


Marx, Karl. Capital, Volume 1, Volume 2, and Volume 3:

Marshall, Alfred. Principles of Economics

Keynes, John. The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money

Sraffa, Pierro. Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities

Veblen, Thorstein. The Theory of the Leisure Class

Lenin, V. I. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

Weekly Readings

Week 1: Introduction, the rise of capitalism and the methodology of economics

HL: 3-22

Pin Worker Productivity since Adam Smith

Supplementary


Week 2: The Mercantilists and the Physiocrats

RH: 24-28 and 35-40

Supplementary

D. A. Fusfeld: 7-22
Week 3: The Classical School: Adam Smith-I

HL: 40-64.
RH: 73-105

Smith’s Pin Factory

Supplementary

D. A. Fusfeld: 7-22
W. J. Barber: 17-22

Week 4: Adam Smith-II, Thomas Robert Malthus, and David Ricardo

HL: 65-90.
RH: 106-126.

Supplementary

D. A. Fusfeld: 23-36

Week 5: David Ricardo and the Classical theory of capital accumulation

International Trade: Cases from the USA (video)

Supplementary

D. A. Fusfeld: 37-48
W. J. Barber: 76-93

Week 7: Karl Marx and Marxian economics-I

HL: 202-219
RH: 161-183
Marx, K. 1859. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, “Preface”

Supplementary

PolyluxMarx is a Berlin-based collective that produced a guidebook for Capital, vol. I and a series of PowerPoint slides.
Week 8: Karl Marx and Marxian economics-II

HL: 220-246
RH: 183-195

Supplementary


Heinrich Answers Critics

Week 9: Thorstein Veblen and the institutional economics

HL: 316-346 and 495-501
RH: 247-263

Supplementary


Videos:

1) G. Hodgson

2) D. Acemoğlu

Week 10: Theories of imperialism: Hobson, Luxembourg, and Lenin

HL: 347-370

Supplementary

**Week 11: The Keynesian Revolution I**

HL: 398-433

*Supplementary*

Annenberg Learner: The Great Depression and the Keynesian Revolution ([video](#))

**Week 12: The Keynesian Revolution II and Post-Keynesians**

HL: 493-495 and 501-509
RH: 275-296

*G. Harcourt on Keynesians and Post-Keynesians*

*Supplementary*

E. R. Canterbery: 250-272

**Week 13: Pierro Sraffa**

HL: 509-516


Amartya Sen. 2016. “*Sraffa’s Ideas and his Books*” at the conference launching *The Catalogue of the Library of Piero Sraffa*

**Week 14: Heterodox Economics and Its Future**

HL: 517-544

Matias Vernengo, 2014. *Radical and Heterodox Economics*

David Harvey. 2018. *Value in Motion*. 
Supplementary

Faculty Panel Discussion: Vision in Heterodox Economics | The New School