

**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT**

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Econ 1010-001

3 credit hours

Fall 2017

ECONOMICS AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

Tu Th 2:00PM-3:20PM

Room 204 BUC bldg

What is economics? What is a social science? How are either of these relevant to our daily lives? This course is an interactive exploration of how economic thinking, theory and history provides a lens through which to understand the social and physical world we live in. Because this is an exploration class, each student will choose **any general topic** (hopefully that is very interesting to them) around which to focus their learning and skill-building, and the exact curriculum will be tailored to the class' particular scope of interests. We begin the semester with an introduction to economics and the social sciences, followed by an exploration of the type of issues economists study. Next, we review a brief history of economic thinking. Finally, the course ends with an exploration of contemporary issues related to economics. Students can expect to finish the semester with a better understanding of what economics is and how they might approach further inquiry into economic matters.

Official Course Description

The role of economics in understanding social problems. The course provides general information for nonmajors. Specific content and emphasis will vary each term depending on the interests and expertise of the instructor.

Pre- or co-requisites

This course has no pre- or co-requisites

Learning Objectives

Economist Joan Robinson once wrote (*Collected Economic Paper*, 1980 vol.2 p.17):

“The purpose of studying economics is not to acquire a set of ready-made answers to economic questions, but to learn how to avoid being deceived by economists.”

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Explain what economics is, including critiques of different approaches to economic inquiry
- Explain what a social science is, and why the scientific method is the preferred method for economic inquiry
- Integrate a various arguments/perspectives from the history of economic thought into their own economic argument

- Demonstrate self-directed academic exploration using basic research, writing, presentation, and timeline creation skills
- Have a working knowledge of the social process (and etiquette) of scientific exploration, including discussion, debate, critique and open-mindedness

Required Readings

There is no required textbook for this course, though students will be assigned readings for each class period (see Schedule below). All readings will be made available through Canvas.

Evaluation

This class has two types of activities: required activities (worth 40 points) and elective activities (worth 60 points). Students will tailor their own evaluation scheme for 60% of their grade from the elective activities. About every 6 class periods students will evaluate their progress in earning points and set new goals for the next 6 class periods. Students may attempt 70 elective points with up to 60 counting towards their elective portion of the grade. Group work is also encouraged, though all group activities must be approved by the instructor.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES		
Activity	Description	Point value
Class attendance	One half-point is awarded for each full class period a student attends. Students absent for more than 15 minutes of class will only be awarded one quarter-point. Attendance is important – it’s the difference between getting backstage passes to a concert compared to watching a concert on YouTube. Being present is much more rewarding, engaging, and memorable (i.e. conducive to learning).	14 points
Final project	Each student will prepare a “Message to the World” final project, where they present in some format some information about economics that they think is widely misunderstood, unknown, or particularly relevant for the times. More information about this project can be found in Canvas and will be discussed in class.	16 points
Planning and progress evaluation	Four times during the semester students will evaluate their progress on activities and set goals for the next few weeks to ensure their work is spread across the semester. Each evaluation is worth 2.5 points.	10 points
Total required activity points		40 points
ELECTIVE ACTIVITIES		
Activity	Description	Point value
Discussion prompts from readings	Students can submit one set of discussion questions (3-5) about a reading. These discussions questions may (or may not) be used to lead class discussion in the following class – this means for credit the discussion questions <i>must</i> be submitted by noon of class day when the discussion about that reading will be held.	3 points each; max 15 points

	Each student may choose this activity (discussion questions) a maximum of 5 times during the semester.	
News article presentation	Students can prepare a 5-minute oral presentation of a relevant news article and lead a 5 minute class discussion. Each student may choose this activity a maximum of 3 times during the semester.	5 points each; max 15 points
Blog writing	Students can write a weekly blog post concerning class discussions and readings, relating it to everyday matters in their lives or the world. Each post in the blog with a minimum of 500 words (and a max of 1,500) is worth 3 points, for a total possible value of 45 points. When electing this option, students should inform instructor of how many blog posts they intend to create, and if they intend to create a blog on the public internet or in the (private to our class) discussion boards in Canvas. If the students choose a public blog, they may choose to keep their identity private from their classmates (but not the instructor, since identity is needed to award points).	3 points each; max 45 points
Video production	Students can produce a 3-5 minute “YouTube” type video that explains something discussed in class. It does not need to be anything fancy, but for those interested in media production, development of skills is encouraged. The video will be shown in class and open to discussion, question, and critique. Sing-songs, raps, or other creative learning techniques are also encouraged.	10 points each; max 30 points
Commenting on blogs	Students can comment, pose questions, challenge or support one another’s blog posts for 1 point of credit per comment, with a maximum of 10 points from this category. Comments will only receive credit if they are in some way contributory to a thoughtful, intellectual conversation. If no student blogs are created during the semester, the instructor will have a blog students can comment on for points.	1 point each; max 10 points
Interviews	Students can interview people in their lives and submit an 800-word summary of the interview for 3 points. Interview prompts are available in Canvas. Each interview a student completes must be from a different person and on a different topic.	3 points each; max 15 points
Economist profiles	Students can prepare an 800-word profile of an economist that interests them. This can be <i>any</i> economist that has interesting work under their belt. The profile should include the economists’ area of interest, contributions to thought, theory, or empirical understanding, and place the economist in their geographic and temporal setting (Where do they come	5 points each; max 15 points

	from? When did they live? Etc.). See Canvas for prompts/examples.	
Writing exams	Students can create an exam, including an answer key, to synthesize their learning and highlight what they feel are the most important matters discussed/read as a part of the class. See Canvas for prompts/examples. Nobody will take this exam, unless other students want to volunteer to try it out 😊	10 points each; max 30 points
Design your own activity	Students can propose any type of activity they want to the instructor, which may or may not be accepted/amended/etc.	

Grading scale

A: 94%-100%	B+: 85%-89.9%	B-: 75%-79.9%	C: 65%-69.9%	D+: 55%-59.9%	D-: 45%-49.9%
A- : 90%-93.9%	B: 80% - 84.9%	C+: 70% - 74.9%	C-: 60% - 64.9%	D: 50% - 54.9%	E: 0%-44.9%

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings due
Tu, 8.22.17 (0)	Introduction	
Th, 8.24.17 (1)	Evaluation/planning What is economics? Graphs aren't scary	1. Heilbroner and Millberg - Ch 1 The making of economic society
Fr, 8.25.17	Last day to add without a permission code Last day to wait list	
Tu, 8.29.17 (2)	What is a social science? Graphs aren't scary	2. Hunt - Ch 1 Social science, an introduction to the study of society
Th, 8.31.17 (3)	Research, writing, learning skills	3. Kahneman - Ch 1 Thinking Fast and Slow
Fr, 9.1.17	Last day to add, drop (delete), elect CR/NC, or audit classes	
Tu, 9.5.17 (4)	Finish research, writing, learning skills What do economists do?	4. Romer – Do students go to class? Should they?
Th, 9.7.19 (5)	Economic Fields Development	5. Todaro and Smith - Ch 1 Economic Development
Tu, 9.12.17 (6)	Economic Fields Urban, agricultural	6. Coote – Ch 1 The Hunger Crop: Poverty and the Sugar Industry 6. Sugrue – Ch 2 The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit
Th, 9.14.17 (7)	Economic Fields Micro, business, labor	7. Fraser – Ch 4 White Collar Sweatshop: The Deterioration of Work and Its Rewards in Corporate America 7. Litan – Web article <i>What an Economist Brings to a Business Strategy</i>

Tu, 9.19.17 (8)	Evaluation/planning Economic Fields Health, econometrics	8. Ouliaris - Web article Econometrics - Making Theory Count 8. Fuchs – Ch 2 Who Shall Live?
Th, 9.21.17 (9)	Economic Fields Macro, finance/monetary	9. Martin – Ch 1 Money: The Unauthorised Biography 9. Luke – Web article <i>Brief History of Macroeconomics and the Origins of Freshwater vs. Saltwater Economics</i>
Tu, 9.26.17 (10)	Economic Fields Institutional/behavioral/political economy	10. Gilbert – Ch 1 Stumbling on Happiness 10. Commons – Institutional economics
Th, 9.28.17 (11)	Economic Fields Ecological/environmental, feminist/home	11. Klein – Ch 5 This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate 11. Nelson – Feminism and Economics
Tu, 10.3.17 (12)	History of thought Value theories, exchange vs. production foci	12. Hunt & Lautzenheiser – Ch 6. History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective 12. Fogarty – Web article <i>A History of Value Theory</i>
Th, 10.5.17 (13)	Students choose contemporary economic issues to discuss between 11/14-12/15 (related to final presentation topics) History of thought Modes of production: primitive communism, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism	13. Watch this video called Socialism Communism Capitalism Fascism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QRrYBBnnQ 13. Kowalczyk – Web article <i>Capitalism, Socialism and Communism</i>
Tu, 10.10.17	Fall break – no class	
Th, 10.12.17	Fall break – no class	
Tu, 10.17.17 (14)	Evaluation/planning History of thought The social nature of man: <i>homo economicus</i> , Malthus, liberalism, and social harmony/class conflict	14. Karadotchev - Who is Homo Economicus and What is Wrong with Her? 14. Hardin – The Tragedy of the Commons
Th, 10.19.17 (15)	History of thought The World Wars, depression and Keynesian revolution	15. Buchholz – Ch 9 New Ideas from Dead Economists: An Introduction to Modern Economic Thought
Fr, 10.20.17	Last day to withdraw from classes	
Tu, 10.24.17 (16)	History of thought The Cold War and Neoliberal revolution	16. Wallerstein – Ch 23 The Essential Wallerstein
Th, 10.26.17 (17)	Contemporary economic issues Automation, “human capital”, labor de-skilling	17. Heller – Web article <i>Is the Gig Economy Working? Many Liberals Have Embraced the Sharing Economy. But Can They Survive it?</i> → available at this link: http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/15/is-the-gig-economy-working

		17. Matthews – Web article <i>The Economics of Immigration: Who Wins, Who Loses and Why</i> → available at this link: http://business.time.com/2013/01/30/the-economics-of-immigration-who-wins-who-loses-and-why/
Tu, 10.31.17 (18)	Contemporary economic issues Globalization	18. Gray – Web article <i>What is globalization anyway?</i> → available at this link: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/what-is-globalization-explainer/
Th, 11.2.17 (19)	Contemporary economic issues Climate change	19. Harris, Roach & Codur – The Economics of Global Climate Change
Tu, 11.7.17 (20)	Contemporary economic issues The Great Recession and inequality	20. Schanzenback, Nunn, Bauer, Boddy, & Nantz – Nine Facts about the Great Recession and Tools for Fighting the Next Downturn 20. Maloney & Schumer – Income Inequality and the Great Recession
Th, 11.9.17 (21)	Evaluation/planning Contemporary economic issues Legislation that doesn't make sense from an economic perspective	21. Acemoglu & Robinson – Ch 3. Why Nations Fail – The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty
Tu, 11.14.17 (22)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Th, 11.16.17 (23)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Tu, 11.21.17 (24)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Th, 11.23.17	Thanksgiving break – no class	
Tu, 11.28.17 (25)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Th, 11.30.17 (26)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Fr, 12.1.17	Last day to reverse CR/NC option	
Tu, 12.5.17 (27)	Final project presentations Contemporary economic issues TBA – chosen by students	TBA (depending on topics chosen by students)
Th, 12.7.17 (28)	Last day of class	None! ☺
Fr, 12.15.17 (29)	Final exam period 1:00-3:00 PM	We are having no exams in this class, so we will not meet for the final exam unless something unexpected requires it

Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Student Names and Personal Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, **I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, group projects, etc. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes (and update CIS) so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun will be respected.** If you need assistance getting your preferred name on your UIDcard, please visit the LGBT Resource Center Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building, or email bpeacock@sa.utah.edu to schedule a time to drop by. The LGBT Resource Center hours are M-F 8am-5pm, and 8am-6pm on Tuesdays.

Academic Code of Conduct

Students can find the full Student Code for the University of Utah at:
<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

Wellness Statement

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Veterans Center

If you are a student veteran, the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

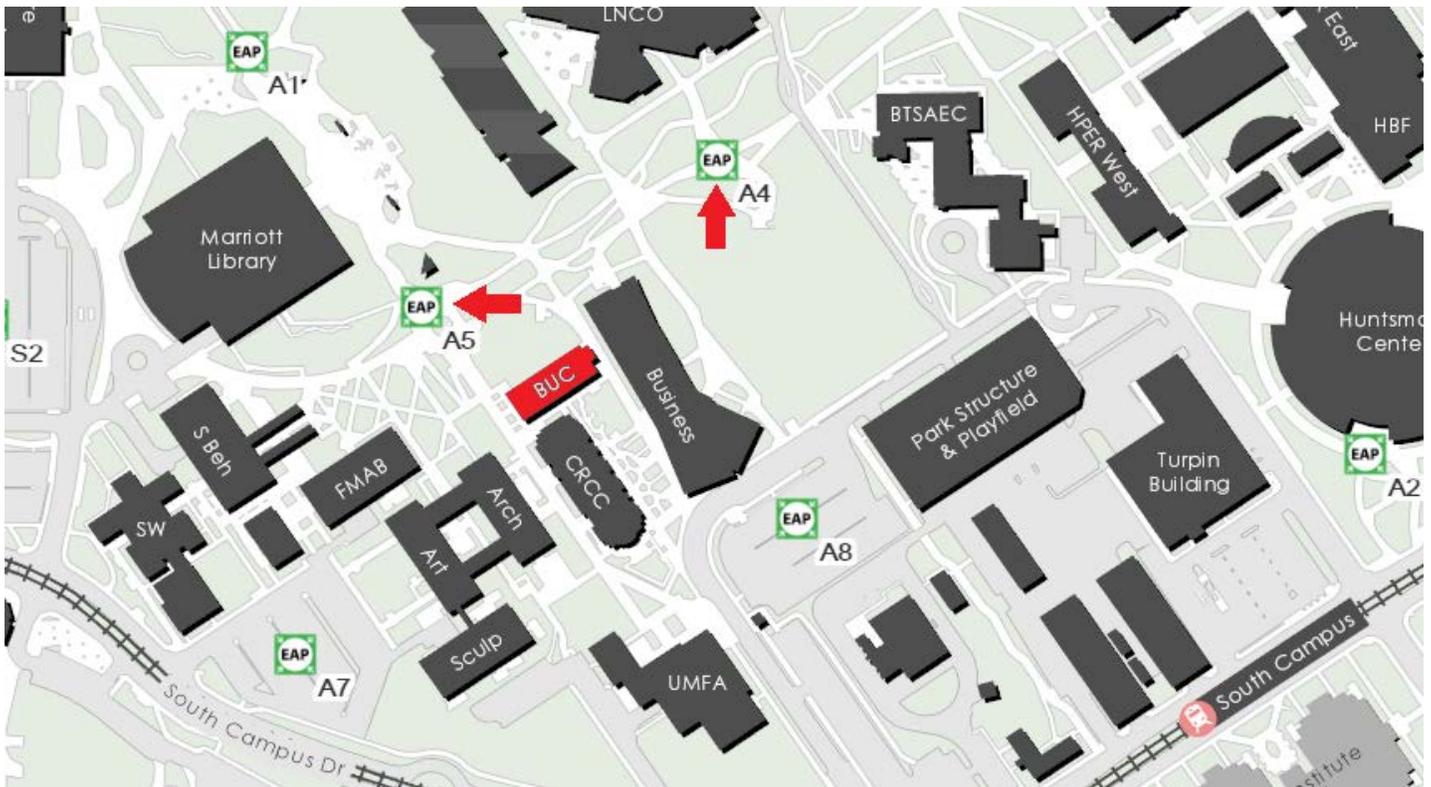
LGBT Resource Center

The LGBT Resource Center offers Gender and Sexuality (formerly Safe Zone) trainings for faculty, staff and instructors at the U. You can also schedule one for your office or Department. The aim of the training is to promote inclusive teaching and foster a respectful, safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning individuals in our classrooms. For more information about trainings/ workshops, panels and suggesting on how to ask about personal pronouns and preferred student names please go to: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/lgbtrc-programs/trainings.php>. If you plan to indicate that your classroom is a safe zone, please attend one of these trainings.

Learners of English as an Additional Language

If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu/>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

CSBS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



BUILDING EVACUATION

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate the building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please follow your instructor in an orderly fashion to the EAP marked on the map below. Once everyone is at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can also look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at <http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>.



CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Heads Up App: There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at alert.utah.edu/headsup to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus. If you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!

Safety Escorts: For students who are on campus at night or past business hours and would like an escort to your car, please call **801-585-2677**. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.