



Course	ECON 3540 070 Current Economic Problems Spring 2014 Monday 6:00 – 9:00pm Sandy Campus
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Instructor	Rick Haskell Office: OSH 199M (149) Office Hours: M 4:30 – 5:30 pm Sandy Campus Cell Phone: 801-209-3546 Email: rick.haskell@utah.edu
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Course readings	The Economics of Public Issues; Miller, Benjamin & North 2013; 18th Edition, Pearson Publishing. Additional required readings will come from published articles and will be available on Canvas.
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Course Overview	<p>The purpose of this course is to discuss current economic events that characterize the world economy with a particular emphasis on US issues. Topics will attempt to encompass differing economic views of lingering theoretical questions as well as new and future economic problems. Knowledge of principles courses will be useful but is not required. A basic outline and reading list will be presented within the first week but in order to keep “current” with economic events, some readings for the course will be added throughout the semester.</p> <p>Solutions to current economic issues will shape the world’s future, but these solutions are often politically polarizing. Recent economic performance has resulted in substantial legislation, yet most of the economic foundation for these policies has had a long theoretical and practical history. This course will focus on polices recently passed and those being discussed as solutions or improvements to many of the economic issues facing Americans and the world community today. We’ll focus much of our discussion on issues present in our labor and healthcare markets, human capital investments, development economics, and address issues of immigration and international trade. In addition, we’ll discuss several issues as selected by students in the class.</p>
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Course Objective	Upon completion of this course students should be able to: 1) critically compare claims and evidence put forward by differing schools of thought, 2) analyze and understand the reason behind varying policy solutions to key economic issues (even if students do not agree with those policy issues or economic thinking), 3) develop and analyze views of the current world and US economies from a macro perspective, and 4) understand and recognize the role of institutions and culture in shaping the economy. Students will be able to discuss events in economic terms and will be prepared to separate that which is known from that which is simply supposed, guessed or assumed.
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Learning Approaches

This course employs a combination of lectures, readings, discussions, quizzes, exams and analysis to drive home the concepts and applications of economics. Class attendance and participation are vital and you will not likely pass the course without consistent attendance and participation. The assigned readings should be completed before class, will be discussed in class, and exam material will come from both the assigned readings and class discussions. Please note that you will be called upon in class with the specific expectation that you'll contribute to the class discussion. You will be required to write four (4) reaction papers, participate with other students in a research project comprising a research poster and presentation.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given periodically and will include questions directly related to in-class discussions.

Exams

There will be one mid-term exam and one comprehensive final exam. If you anticipate missing a test due to a time conflict, please notify me in advance. No make-up exams will be given if arrangements are not made before the exam dates.

Research Project

At the beginning of the term you will be assigned to work on a research project with 1-2 other students, with each topic being specific to one of the various concepts addressed in this course. Your project will culminate in the formation of a short presentation and research poster to be presented in the Economics Department on **Friday, April 11th** and will be considered for inclusion in the CSBS Student Research Day competition to be held on **Thursday, April 24th**.

These projects should display the assigned topic using contemporary and relevant data, examples, methods, and models in such a way as to highlight the issues central to the course. Presentations and posters will be judged by a select group of professors and graduate students from the Economics Department, with the scores associated with the adjudication heavily influencing your overall score for the assignment. This set of assignments, progress points and adjudication score, will be comprise 20% of your grade for the course and are due as follows:

Topic Assignment	1/13/2014
Papers and Models	2/10/2014
Contemporary Example	3/03/2014
Data Evaluation	3/17/2014
Draft Poster and Presentation	3/31/2014
Presentation and Poster Display	4/07/2014

Reaction Papers

You will be required to write three (3) Reaction Papers due **2/2/2014, 3/2/2014** and **3/23/2014** through the Canvas assignment submission function. These papers should be used to assist you in your research project. For *each paper* you are required to find a published journal article specifically associated with your research topic. These papers are to be no less than 750 words in length, must include appropriate economic graphic representation of the issue being addressed and will be graded on content, grammar, syntax and proper use of graphs and charts. It is important to note that economic graphics (models) are not simply charts, tables or graphs presenting values associated with the issue, but are specifically formatted graphs designed to present economic models with their temporal or equational dynamics.

An excellent Reaction Paper (one that receives 18+ points) addresses a timely topic, points out strengths and weaknesses of the author(s) argument(s), includes at least one economic graphic representing the dynamics or effects of the issue being addressed, and offers your personal opinion, or reaction, in respect to the issue. Examples of excellent Reaction Papers can be found in Canvas.

Canvas Discussions

During the semester there will be four Canvas Discussions presented for your participation. Each discussion will include several articles, papers, etc. posted in Canvas’s Discussion forum for you comment on or to discuss. You are required to review these postings and enter into the discussion with specific and substantive comments in respect to the postings. You are also required to *separately* comment on the posting of another student, as such you will want to begin participating in each discussion well in advance of the assigned due date. Canvas Discussions are due as follows:

Canvas Discussion #1 – Minimum Wage	1/26/2014
Canvas Discussion #2 – Healthcare	2/23/2014
Canvas Discussion #3 – Education	3/30/2014
Canvas Discussion #4 – Immigration	4/27/2014

Grading

Research Project	20%
Reaction Papers	15%
Canvas Discussions	15%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Grading Scale

A	94-100%	B-	80-83.9%	D+	67-69.9%
A-	90-93.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D	64-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C	74-76.9%	D-	60-63.9%
B	84-86.9%	C-	70-73.9%	E	0-59.9%

Grades will be determined in accordance with the University of Utah’s grading policies. Written feedback will be provided on some assignments and more detailed feedback will be provided at any time upon request. If you believe you have received an incorrect grade on any assignment for this class, please bring it to my attention immediately.

Expectations

You can expect me to:

- Treat students and others with respect, expect that as adults we are each responsible for our decisions and actions, and ask “why” often.
- Grade and provide feedback on assignments within one week of the date they are submitted.
- Return email messages and phone calls within 24 hours.
- Use Canvas to enhance student learning, communication, and convenience.
- Follow the syllabus and hold each class session as scheduled. In the event of an unsolvable conflict or emergency, I will make every effort to arrange for a qualified substitute to teach the class.
- Be readily available to meet with students, either during regularly-scheduled office hours

or at any other time that works for both of us.

- Complete final grades and provide students with feedback on final grades within two weeks of the date the last course assignment is submitted.

I expect you to:

- Actively communicate and use Canvas regularly.
- Complete reading and homework assignments, take all quizzes and exams, participate in class discussions and ask “why” often.
- Attend each class session. In the event that you must miss a class, please notify me in advance and assume responsibility for the material you missed.
- Read the course syllabus, ensure you have a clear understanding of the course requirements and evaluation methods used in the course, and fulfill the course requirements.
- Come to class prepared and participate fully, honestly, and professionally in class discussions and online class activities.
- Learn about and abide by the University of Utah’s academic honesty policy. Specifically, I expect you to not engage in cheating, plagiarism and furnishing false or misleading information to any faculty or staff member.
- Immediately notify me in the event of an emergency that prevents you from submitting an assignment or completing the course.
- Ask questions if any expectations or assignments are unclear.
- Be courteous of others when using technology. Always give speakers your full attention and make sure that any use of technology during class enhances your learning and does not distract your or others from course content.

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 the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. (www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/)

Syllabus changes

This syllabus is subject to change. Potential changes will be discussed in class and may be posted in Canvas.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	1/6	Course introduction, Economic Foundations (Micro/Macro) Political Economy, Institutions, Internal and External Policy Spaces	<i>Why some nations are rich and others are poor</i> EPI Chp 4
Week 2	1/13	The US Since the 1980's, Growth and Debt Research Project – Topics Assignment due	Palley Chp 1&3, Baker Chp 1 & Appendix, Piketty & Saez 2007, Reinhart & Rogoff 2010, <i>Over \$1 trillion in College Debt and Rising</i> EPI Chp 12,
Week 3	1/20	The Distribution of Surplus Inequality	<i>The Disincentives of Higher Taxes</i> EPI Chp 15, <i>A Radical Idea</i> Haskell 2013 Piketty & Saez 2003, Pope 2009, Roubini 2011
	1/26	Canvas Discussion #1 Due	
	1/27	Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class	
	2/2	Reaction Paper #1 due	
Week 4	2/3	Median Voter and Interest Group Models Human Capital investments: Education	Pineda et al 2004 Goldin & Katz 2009, Haskell 2012 & 2013
Week 5	2/10	Human Capital Investments: Healthcare Human Capital Investments: Immigration Research Project – Papers and Models due	Lee et al 2007, Kuttner 2008 Peri 2011, Tang 2013
	2/17	Presidents Day – No Class	
	2/23	Canvas Discussion #2 Due	
Week 6	2/24	Labor Market Models Unemployment	<i>Why are Women Paid Less?</i> EPI Chp 11, <i>The Effect of the Minimum Wage</i> EPI Chp 13, <i>Putting it all together</i> – Haskell 2013 Schmitt & Conroy 2010
	3/2	Reaction Paper #2 due	
Week 7	3/3	Economics and the Environment Mid-Term Exam Research Project – Contemporary Example due	Li 2010, <i>Are we running out of water?</i> EPI Chp 9, <i>The Deception of Green Energy</i> EPI Chp 20. <i>Greenhouse Economics</i> EPI Chp 26
	3/10	Spring Break – No Class	
Week 8	3/17	Fiscal Policy Basics Monetary Policy Basics	Romer 2011; Seidman & Lewis 2009 Palley 2013, Bernanke & Reinhart 2004, Eichengren & Temin 2010

	3/23	Reaction Paper #3 due	
Week 9	3/24	Fiscal and Monetary Policy in the US and EU;	Eichengren 2010, Arestis & Sawyer 2011
	3/30	Canvas Discussion #3 due	
Week 10	3/31	Austerity, Sequestration, Governance through Ideology Gold, Inflation and International Monetary Considerations Research Project – Data and Evaluation Due	<i>America’s European Moment, Death by Bureaucrat</i> EPI Chp 1 Eichengren & Temin 2010, Palley 2013
Week 11	4/7	Research Projects - Posters and Presentations	
Week 12	4/14	Globalization, International Trade Development	<i>The \$750,000 Steelworker</i> EPI Chp 31, <i>Globalization and the Wealth of America</i> EPI Chp 30 Darity & Davis 2005, Ranis & Stewart 2000, <i>The Future of Agriculture is Industry</i> – Haskell 2013
Week 13	4/21	Hegemony The Sustainability of Capitalism Wrap up and Review	McDonough 2006, Clark 2009, Watson 2010 Sachs 2012,
	4/27	Canvas Discussion #4 due	
	4/28	Final Exam	