THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Course	ECON 3540-001 Current Economic Problems Spring 2016 MW 11:50am-1:10pm BUC 303
Professor	Johan Uribe Office: OSH 376 Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 2-3pm and by appointment Email: Johan.Uribe@economics.utah.edu
Course readings	Gosling, James J., Eisner, M. A. (2013). Economics, Politics, and American Public Policy. 2nd ed. Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-0765637703 Stiglitz, Joseph E., (2013). The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers out Future. W. W. Norton & Company, 1st ed. ISBN-13: 978-0393345063
Course overview	This course takes a three pronged approach to the study of current economic problems. First, students are presented with up-to-date data and facts pertaining to the problem. Second, the history and background of the problem are discussed. Lastly, contrasting theories related to the problem are explored and debated. Putting these three dimensions together, the class will be able to critically examine and understand some of the most important economic problems facing us today.
Learning goals	The goal of this course is to equip students with the tools to critically approach important social problems. This includes teaching students how to combine appropriate data, history and theory into a coherent understanding of complex, multifaceted issues.
Learning approaches	Every class will center around one specific topic. Interactive learning activities will be designed to help students understand the day's topic from one of three perspectives: data, theory, and history. Each class will also incorporate a discussion of the day's topic and how it relates to previous classes. Short lectures will be given by the professor when appropriate.

Evaluation

Course Evaluation	Percentage
Group Exam 1	15%
Group Exam 2	15%
Group Exam 3	15%
Group Presentation 1	15%
Participation (peer graded)	10%
Homework Essays (6)	30%
Total	**100%**

Grades will be determined in accordance with University of Utah grading policies. The cutoff percentages for grading purposes are as follows:

A = 94; A- = 90; B+ = 87; B = 83 ; B- = 80; C+ = 77;
C = 73; C- = 70, D+ = 67; D=63; D- = 60; F <60

Written feedback will be provided on all 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.

Group Exams: All students will be placed into randomly assigned groups, assigned a topic, and given three short readings. The students will then be expected to use the previously assigned readings, class room discussions, and exam readings to put together a coherent exposition of the assigned topic. 50% of your grade will be from your peers, using a canvas based peer grading module, and 50% of your exam grade will be evaluated by me according to the predefined rubric.

Expectations

You can expect me to:

- Grade and provide feedback on assignments within one week of the date they are submitted.

- Return email messages within 24 hours, within 48 hours on weekends or holidays.

- 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:

- 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 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. The policy is explained in detail here:

  (http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php)

- 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 your instructor and fellow classmates 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 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. (www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/)
About the instructor	I am a sixth year PhD Student at the University of Utah with four years of teaching experience at both Westminster College and the University of Utah.
Syllabus changes	This syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and on Canvas in a timely manner.

TOPICS:

1. Poverty
   a. Rural and urban poverty: current status
   b. Labor markets in the United States
   c. History and evolution of poverty in the United States

           d.   Policy Proposals and policy evaluations
2. Inequality
           a.   Economic growth and the distribution of income/wealth
           b.   Current status of inequality
           c.   History and evolution of inequality in the U.S.
           d.   Policy Proposals
3. Racial and Gender Inequality
4. Politics in the United States

Readings: A comprehensive list of readings will be posted within the first week. Readings are due on the date listed.

Poverty:
Housing Policy
Welfare policy
Geographic Distribution
Household Structure