

Economics Syllabus- Fall '15

ECONOMICS

This course is designed to build the critical reading and thinking skills you will need to understand the economic challenges and opportunities during your lifetime. This class has been structured to mimic some of the college courses or trainings that many of you will experience in the coming years. Economics is often referred to as a dismal science because it is often taught with a strong math or graphing focus. This economics course is very different because it is meant to help you understand some of the reasons behind things in your daily life. Such as, why is it cheaper to buy a T-shirt than to make your own? Making \$23 million/year is LeBron James underpaid? How do you ensure that your load of slaves arrive healthy? Why do people pee in pools? How do I become wealthy, or at least rich, and is there a difference between the two? What role should the government have in my life?

At its core, Economics is not a science as much as it is a way of investigating the world. We will be applying this paradigm over the course of the fall to problems and then use different paradigm in the Spring as we learn about government.

COURSE ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

This course is designed to develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions which global citizenship requires. Students completing this course will learn and practice skills which will be applicable in their present and future lives and careers. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to merge economic theory and its relevance to their daily lives. This economics course is aligned with several of the Oregon State Social Study Standards.

CLASSROOM RIGHTS

This list, cocreated by students and Mr. Sixta, lists some of your rights as students in this classroom.

1. You have the right to an education.
2. You have the right to property and privacy.
3. You have the right to health and safety.
4. You have the right to give input and be heard regarding your educational environment.
5. You have the right to be treated with respect from your peers, teachers and others in this classroom.

MR. SIXTA'S COMMITMENT TO ENSURING STUDENT RIGHTS

1. Every student in my class has the opportunity to receive an equitable education that is relevant, engaging, interesting, and useful for their life.

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2. This classroom is a safe environment for all students. Hateful speech and violent actions will not be tolerated.
3. Students and their families receive the respect of person, property, and privacy that they deserve and are entitled to as students, citizens, and residents of the Butte Falls High School Community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

- Prepare for every class by completing assigned reading and written work
- Write a 400 word chapter report that will be due by the end of class on Thursday
- Actively participate in all learning experiences in every class discussion
- At the end of the semester you will be required to take a final

ASSIGNED TEXTS

- Wheelan, Charles. *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002. Reissued Print Edition.
- *PBS Frontline: Inside the Meltdown*
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/meltdown/>
- *PBS Frontline: Is Wal-Mart Good for America*
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/walmart/>
- *Inside Job*. Dir. Charles Ferguson. Audrey Marrs, 2010. Film.
- *The Take*. Avi Lewis. Icarus Films, 2004. Film.

COURSE OUTLINE

This is a tentative schedule for the course. It is subject to change as new educational opportunities arise.

<u>SEMESTER 1</u>	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Unit</u>
Week 1-2	Introduction to Economics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 2: <i>Incentives Matter: Why you might be able to save your face by cutting off your nose (if you are a rhinoceros)</i>
Week 2-4	Economic Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction & Chapter 1: <i>The Power of Markets: Who Feeds Paris?</i> ● Chapter 5: <i>Economics and Information: McDonald's didn't create a better hamburger</i>
Week 4	How Markets Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 1: <i>The Power of Markets</i>

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Week 5-7	<p>Government & the Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 3: <i>Government and the Economy: Government is your friend (and a round of applause for all those lawyers)</i> ● Chapter 4: <i>Government and the Economy II: The army was lucky to get that screwdriver for \$500</i>
Week 8-9	<p>Business & Labor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 6: <i>Productivity and Human capital: Why is Bill Gates so much richer than you are?</i> ● Chapter 8: <i>The Power of Organized Interests: What economics can tell us about politics</i>
Week 10-11	<p>Money, Banking, & Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 7: <i>Financial Markets: What economics can tell us about getting richer quick (and losing weight, too!)</i> ● Chapter 10: <i>The Federal Reserve: Why that dollar in your pocket is more than just a piece of paper</i>
Week 12-13	<p>Measuring Economic Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 9: <i>Keeping Score: Is my economy bigger than your economy?</i> ● Chapter 13: <i>Development Economics: The wealth and poverty of nations</i>
Week 14-17	<p>The Global Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 11: <i>International Economics: How did a nice country like Iceland go bust?</i> ● View: <i>Frontline: Inside the Meltdown or Inside Job</i> ● Chapter 12: <i>Trade and Globalization: The good news about Asian Sweatshops</i> ● View: <i>Frontline: Is Walmart Good for America or The Take</i>
Week 18	Final

Evaluations

There will be multiple types of evaluation over the course of this semester. I am a firm advocate that consistent qualitative and quantitative feedback will help you get more out of your studies. In addition to receiving traditional grades for this course, I will regularly write comments on papers, tests, projects, and other assignments for this course. During class, I will make time to talk with you about the projects you are working on and expect that you will hold me accountable for providing feedback on your work or clarifying assignments. Other forms of communicating evaluation will be done by:

1. **Quarterly conferences** will be conducted between student and instructor to discuss classroom learning, social skill development, and portfolio projects.
2. **Proficiency:** School Districts in the State of Oregon are moving to a proficiency-based approach of measuring student achievement. As a result, we will have at least one

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proficiency report card showing which Oregon State Social Study Standards you have mastered and which still need to be completed. As we progress this year, I will communicate with you and your caregiver more about the goals and meaning of this proficiency report card.

3. Formal Course Grades

The grades for the course will be based on the following elements.

1. Projects (20%)
 - a. The Stock Market Game
 - b. Developing Country Project
 - c. Game Design
2. Weekly Chapter Summaries (40%): Every week there will be a summary/economic reflection paper due. Papers will be due every Thursday at 5pm. If you turn in every paper when it is due over the course of the semester then the two lowest paper scores will be dropped.
3. Weekly Quizzes (15%): Every Monday there will be a short individual quiz to review key topics from the readings.
4. Final (10%)
5. Miscellaneous Assignments (15%)

RCC Option

This class has been submitted to RCC to receive college credit.

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Though we will use cell phones and laptops in class many times to reference information and to support one another's learning, to better enhance individual and collective focus all phones need to be silenced during class sessions. In addition, please refrain from texting and other forms of electronic "chatting" and "surfing" the web during class activities and discussions. Use of Facebook, Snapchat, and other social media that doesn't relate to class material are not allowed during the class period. If you need to communicate electronically or check the Internet, please do so before or after class. Electronic devices cannot only distract the user but they can also be disruptive to your peers' ability to focus and learn. Your cooperation is appreciated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism or any other academic dishonesty. In particular, papers with plagiarized ideas or languages will be graded "NC" and must be rewritten with proper citations and references if the student intends to pass the course for credit. A student will receive the grade of "NC" for any unit that contains plagiarized or other academic dishonesty.