

Contemporary US Economics - Discrimination
BC-204, Corvallis
Spring Quarter 2015
Monday & Wednesday 4:30 – 5:50 P.M.
CRN 44745

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Office Hours: M & W (12-1) and T & Th (8-9)

TEXT & REQUIRED RESOURCES:

Taking Sides: Clashing Views of Economic Issues, 16th edition McGraw-Hill Publishers.

Materials handed out during class and on Moodle

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We are often confronted in the media, in our community, and in our personal life with problems that deal with economic issues. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to a number of social issues in order to illustrate how economists might address such controversies. As is always the case in complex human affairs, there are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas we will investigate. Often, reality is not simply black and white, but is colored by an infinite number of subtle shades of gray. Therefore, when confronted by differing opinions and points of view, it is necessary to develop the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and make decisions in the face of uncertainty. The use of such 'critical thinking skills' can have a profound impact upon one's life in terms of academic, professional, and personal success.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Lectures, student presentations, discussions, case studies, and videos.

This class is very interactive in nature. Several of the topics that will be discussed carry individual value judgments. It is important that all students feel comfortable in being able to express their opinions. Due respect will be given to all opinions. That does not mean that you cannot disagree with each other, in fact, I expect that you will, but please do it in a non-confrontational manner. It is part of my job to get you to thinking about different aspects of the topics. I encourage you to voice your thoughts on these subjects. Only by doing will this class prove to be dynamic and informational!

All students will come to class having read the assigned materials and be ready to discuss the issues of the week. There will be a daily quiz to assess your understanding of the material at the beginning of class. Obviously, these are not the only important economic issues that would be interesting to discuss. If there are additional issues that you wish to discuss, please contact me and we can incorporate them into the class.

As this is an interactive course it is required that all students be prepared and take part in the discussions. All discussions will be respectful and non-personal. Everyone's viewpoint will be respected and learned from. Personal judgments will not be tolerated. If students do not volunteer input they will be called on in class.

DEBATES:

In groups, students will present their chosen topics. The material presented will be from the text **and** information obtained outside of course materials. A 20 minute presentation for both the “yes” and “no” sides of the issues will be given (i.e. 40 minutes total to discuss both sides).

Students will be expected to present a well-thought-out review of the topic. Simply reading from the text will not be allowed. Please do not solely depend on the textbook. Many of the topics listed in the text, for example Obamacare, are in constant flux and will require outside reading to ensure that the information is current. To earn maximum credit, you will need to provide information from outside sources to fully defend your issue. Make sure you identify the source if you use it in class.

Each member will be graded individually on their presentation though the presentation should be coordinated. In other words, one student cannot give detailed information and another one just say “I agree.”

INDIVIDUAL WORK:

Topic Reviews - Each student in the class will write an 800 - 1,000 word review on one of the topics presented during that week of class. These reviews will be due on Fridays at 8:00 A.M. in Moodle. Each review should include the major points presented by the groups including both sides of the issue as well as your personal opinion on the subject. It is not enough to just say, “I agree with the presentation.” It is important that you explain why you agree or disagree with the information and topic.

No late work will be accepted. Please do not ask. You are accountable for 10 reviews (each from a different week of class).

Daily Quizzes – You will be given a daily quiz to determine your understanding of the assigned reading. Issue quizzes are closed book and will be given at the beginning of each class covering material in the reading indicated on the outline for that day. Therefore, students must complete their assigned reading before class. Late quizzes are not given, however, you may arrange to take quizzes early during office hours. Your lowest quiz grade will not be calculated in your final grade.

Final Exam – Your final exam will be an essay question where you will write a pro or con essay about a specific topic. Your instructor will provide you more information about the topic on the day of the final.

Grades – I will post grades on Moodle. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Group work:

Debates (5 x 30 pts each) 150

Individual work:

Daily Reading Quizzes (19 x 10 pts each) 190

Reviews (9 x 15 pts each) 135

Final Exam 125

Total 600 Points

Tentative Outline by Date – EC220 for Spring Quarter 2015

Date	Lecture Topic
3/30	Course Introduction
4/1	<i>Issue 1.1:</i> Are Profits the Only Business of Business
4/6	<i>Issue 1.2:</i> Should the Compensation of Executives Be Subject to Government Regulation?
4/8	<i>Issue 1.3:</i> Has the Supreme Court Made It Possible for Corporations to Buy Elections?
4/13	<i>Issue 1.4:</i> Should the United States Stop All New Offshore Drilling for Oil?
4/15	<i>Issue 1.5:</i> Are Health Savings Accounts Working Effectively?
4/20	<i>Issue 1.6:</i> Should NBC and Comcast Been Allowed to Merge? (Additionally, should Comcast and Time Warner be Allowed to Merge?)
4/22	<i>Issue 2.1:</i> Is Obamacare a Disaster for the Economy?
4/27	<i>Issue 2.3:</i> Did the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Create Jobs?
4/29	<i>Issue 2.4:</i> Do American Consumers Need a Financial Protection Agency?
5/4	<i>Issue 2.5:</i> Should Minimum Wage and Living Wage Laws Be Eliminated?
5/6	<i>Issue 2.6:</i> Does Immigration Benefit the Economy?
5/11	<i>Issue 3.1:</i> Is a Fair Trade Policy Superior to a Free Trade Policy?
5/13	<i>Issue 3.2:</i> Is Loan Mitigation the Answer to the Housing Foreclosure Problem?
5/18	<i>Issue 3.3:</i> Are Biofuels Like Ethanol the Answer to U.S. Energy Problems?
5/20	<i>Issue 3.4:</i> Is Climate Change a Threat that Requires Urgent Action?
5/27	<i>Issue 3.5:</i> Can U.S. Deficit and Debt Problems be Solved Without Increases in Taxes?
6/1	<i>Issue 3.6:</i> Is China's Currency Undervalued and Should the United States Take Action to Correct This Undervaluation?
6/3	<i>Issue 3.8:</i> Is the Inequality in U.S. Income Distribution Surging?
6/8	Final Exam 4:30 – 6:20 P.M. on Monday, June 8th

VETERANS:

Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with the instructor during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, please contact Disability Services, (541) 917-4789.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to follow college policies regarding academic integrity as articulated in the Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook [<http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/righttoknow>]. You will receive an F in the course if you are found to be involved in academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.)

LBCC COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION:

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. (for further information: <http://po.linnbenton.edu/BPsandARs/1015%20-%20Nondiscrimination%20Policy.pdf>)

SYLLABUS:

This syllabus and outline are a guide, not a contract. They will change during the term as I attempt to provide the most compelling and useful learning experience possible. If things do not make sense, please talk with me. As changes are made, I will announce them in class. You should check the syllabus at least once a week for course updates. Not reading the syllabus does not constitute a valid excuse for missing a milestone.