

Economics 342/History 342. The History of Economic Thought
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Lectures: Mon, Wed and Fri from 11:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. in Kuykendall 310

Consultation Hours: TBA

Introduction:

Economics 342/History 342 invites students to consider some of the relationships between History and Economics in light of major economic theorists and their ideas, since around 1700, or so. We will consider the connections between the history of economic thought and wider political, social, intellectual and ethical questions, such as policies towards the poor, the tensions between equality and freedom, and the roles of government in the economy. What does consideration of the history of economic thought tell us about the modern world and modern society? What are the relationships between economic thought and questions of globalization?

We will read, discuss and write about what Robert Heilbroner famously and enduringly entitled the “worldly philosophers” and their ideas (see the attached blurb), as they are linked to past and contemporary societies in various parts of the world, including, but not exclusively, Western Europe, Eurasia, North America and East Asia. In doing so, we will focus on specific topics, including, but not limited to, how we might integrate History and Economics in our study of the past, ideas and public policy; a comparison of how major theorists thought about significant common problems, such as prices and labor; specific schools of economic thought, among which were Mercantilism, Free Trade Liberalism, Marxism and Socialism; the relationship between the history of economic thought and the Great Depression; the relationships among economic thought and imperialism, religion, poverty and globalization.

Readings include both primary and secondary sources, as students are encouraged to actively engage the various dimensions of modern economic thought, including the original works and subsequent analyses. No background in Economics is required. History 152 is a strongly suggested pre-requisite, as is one introductory Economics course. Those will help with background and foundation information, but are not required.

Required Readings Ordered by the U. H. Bookstore and on 2-Day Reserve in Sinclair Library:

Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers* (Sinclair PC# 343)
Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Sinclair PC#344)
Nasar, *Grand Pursuit: The Story of Economic Genius* (Sinclair PC#346)
Jones, *An End to Poverty?* (Sinclair PC# 345)
Galbraith, *The Great Crash 1929* (Sinclair PC# 342)

The above are all available in paper and any edition will suffice, although recent editions of the Heilbroner and Galbraith volumes might have helpful new introductions and prefaces.

Required Readings Available at our Laulima Site:

- (1) Passages from various primary texts, as noted below
- (2) Readings for the discussion and short paper re. “*Does the free market corrode moral character?*”
- (3) “Reflections on the Great Depression”

Optional readings will also be uploaded to our Laulima site a few days before we consider the relevant topics. Please read these if you find a particular topic of interest; they might also assist you with your research essay and other assignments. These are not required readings.

Any other readings will be provided by the Department of History and distributed in class. Unclaimed copies of those can be picked up in the “History 341” box outside of Sakamaki Hall B410, the instructor’s office. Unclaimed assignments will also be available there.

Background Readings:

The following are not required, but could be of assistance as we work our way through the syllabus and you ponder your essays. Most are available at Hamilton Library. The instructor has some on his shelves and will loan them to you. He invokes the death penalty if they are lost, or not returned for some other reason(s). Please feel free to browse the professor’s and Hamilton’s shelves; that is time well spent.

Cambridge Economic History of Europe

Cambridge Economic History of India

Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain

Cambridge Economic History of the United States

Cameron, *A Concise Economic History of the World: From Paleolithic Time to the Present*

Rider, *An Introduction to Economic History*.

Grassby, *The Idea of Capitalism before the Industrial Revolution*.

Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*.

Baiman and Boushey, eds. *Political Economy and Contemporary Capitalism: Radical Perspectives on Economic Theory and Policy*.

Robbins, *A History of Economic Thought: The LSE Lectures*, Medema and Samuels, eds.

Foley, *Adam’s Fallacy: A Guide to Economic Theology*

Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (3 volumes)

Nelson, *Economics for Humans*

Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834*

Backhouse and Bateman, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Keynes*

Haakonssen, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*

Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists*

Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*

Barber, *A History of Economic Thought*

Elliott and Cownie, eds. *Competing Philosophies in American Political Economics*

Heilbroner and Milberg, *The Crisis of Vision in Modern Economic Thought*

“*The Worldly Philosophers at Fifty*,” Special Issue of *Social Research* (Summer 2004).

Adelman, ed. *The Essential Hirschman*

Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*

Required W.W.W. Sources:

The following will be helpful for readings, lectures and essays. Please subscribe for the term, so that you

have access to relevant book reviews and discussions.

The History of Economic Thought Website at <http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/index.htm>

Economic History at <http://eh.net/lists/>

Post-Autistic Economics Review at pae_news@btinternet.com and www.paecon.net

Disabled Student Policy:

If you need accommodation because of a disability, please do not hesitate to contact the KOKUA Program (V/T) at 956-7511 or 956-7612 and in Room 013 in the QLCSS and/or speak with the instructor to discuss specific needs. Confidentiality and privacy will be respected. The instructor will work with you and the KOKUA Program to meet access needs related to the disability and to ensure a meaningful and full learning experience. Please note that lectures will be posted on Laulima after the class sessions in which they are delivered. These will be in text form, and thus will not include answers to in-class questions and any ‘side comments.’

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students can identify and engage with the major figures, texts and ideas in the history of modern economic thought.
2. Students can read, analyze and use primary and secondary historical sources as part of that process of identification and engagement.
3. Students can develop clear arguments using historical sources and methods, thereby confidently and competently expressing their positions in expository prose and oral presentation.
4. Students can discuss and engage with modern social, political, philosophical and ethical questions in light of economic theorists, doctrines and ideas.
5. Students can engage with a greater sense of history, knowledge and competence current and future discussions about the economy.
6. Students can trace the continuities and discontinuities in economic thought and doctrine as they relate to fundamental questions, e.g. the role of the government in the economy, or the debate about the causes of poverty.
7. Students can identify, discuss and engage with the major historiographical and analytical issues in the History of Economic Thought.

Course Requirements:

No examinations.

Periodic in-class discussions and short writing assignments, generally one or two paragraphs long. These are open-note and open-book, and will cover materials considered in lectures and readings. Students will be assigned discussion groups. No outside reading is expected. Advanced warning provided, so no ‘pop quizzes.’ (25 points each for a total of 200 points)

One 10 pp research project on a relevant topic of your choice. For example, you could compare and contrast what different economists thought and wrote about a single issue, such as labor or taxes; focus on the works of one particular economist and consider his life and work in light of the longer history of economic thought; consider an economist we do not cover in our course, as there were and are many important and interesting

“worldly philosophers” for which we do not have the time this term; consider how economists thought about a significant event, such as The Great Recession. You are encouraged to explore a topic which captures your attention and to swim around in the available materials, both primary and secondary. The hard copy of the syllabus includes a list of potential sources. The instructor also has files of readings which might prove helpful. We will stop and take stock several times during the term, to ensure that you are comfortable with your topic and sources. Please expect to hand in a preliminary statement with a few sources (25 points), deliver an in-class presentation of about 5 minutes, or so (50 points) and complete a research essay with sources, due the final day of the examination period. (100 points)

Participation in our in-class discussion of “*Does the free market corrode moral character?*” Please be prepared to discuss and defend one of the positions articulated in that pamphlet, available free at our Laulima site. You can refer to other readings and lectures as you think appropriate. Please use both historical and theoretical evidence for your position. You can also join with others who share your position for a collective contribution. This is a two-part assignment: 25 points for the discussion and 25 points for a 2 pp statement of your positions. No outside reading is expected. (50 points)

Please read the attached “Writing Guidelines” for common points about writing and proofreading essays.

The Writing Center provides free consultations if you would like additional assistance with your writing.

Lectures, Topics and Readings:

I. Introduction and Overview: What is the History of Economic Thought? What is it good for?

The Worldly Philosophers, Preface, Introduction and Chapter 11

Grand Pursuit, Preface and Epilogue

“Introduction,” *Capitalism in the 21st Century* (Laulima)

“Continental Political Economy from the Physiocrats to the Marginal Revolution” (attached)

“British Economic Theory from Locke to Marshall” (attached)

II. The Origins of Modern Economic Thought? Mercantilism and the Physiocrats

Readings on Mercantilism and the Physiocrats (Laulima)

III. “The Economic Revolution” of Political Economy, circa 1800, or so

The Worldly Philosophers, chapter 2

IV. The Founding Fathers: Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment

The Worldly Philosophers, chapter 3

The Wealth of Nations (passages) (Laulima)

V. Malthus, Ricardo and “The Dismal Science”

The Worldly Philosophers, chapter 4

Essay on the Principle of Population (passages) (Laulima)

VI. Food, Population and the Poor, circa 1800

An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate

VII. The Victorians: Utopian Socialists, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill

Grand Pursuit, chapter 1
The Worldly Philosophers, chapters 5 - 7
Selected economic writings by Karl Marx (Laulima)

VIII. The *Fin-de-Siecle*: Weber, Veblen, Marshall and Society, circa 1900, or so

Grand Pursuit, chapters 2-4
The Worldly Philosophers, chapter 8
The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (passages) (Laulima)

IX. – X. The Twentieth Century Giants: Schumpeter, Hayek, and Keynes

Grand Pursuit, chapters 5-15
The Worldly Philosophers, chapters 9 and 10
The General Theory (passages) (Laulima)
“Creative Destruction” (Laulima)

XI. In-class research discussion and presentations

XII. Twentieth-Century Macroeconomic Thought: Growth, Unemployment and Development

Grand Pursuit, chapters 16-18
Sen, *Development as Freedom* (start)

XIII. The History of Economic Thought and the Great Depression

The Great Crash 1929

XIII. Introducing Alternative Economic Thought: Radical, Marxist and Non-Western Economics

Sen, *Development as Freedom* (finish)

XV. “Does the free market corrode moral character?” discussion and 2 pp essay

“Does the free market corrode moral character?” (Laulima)

No final examination. Final 10 pp research essay due on the last day of the exam period.