



Course	ECON 3540 020 Current Economic Problems Spring 2015 Tuesday 6:00 – 9:00pm Bountiful Campus
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Instructor	Rick Haskell Office: OSH 199M (149) Office Hours: T 5:00 – 5:45 pm Bountiful Campus and by appointment Cell Phone: 801-209-3546 Email: rick.haskell@utah.edu
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Course readings	There is no specific text for this course. Published articles are assigned for each week and can be located in the Canvas Files folder for the course.
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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 encompass differing economic views of lingering theoretical questions as well as new and future economic problems. Knowledge of principles level economics courses is useful but is not required.</p> <p>Solutions to our 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 the economic foundations for these policies have long theoretical and practical histories. 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, 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 readings, discussions, quizzes, exams and analysis to drive home the concepts and applications of economics. Class attendance and participation are vital and you are not likely to 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.
Quizzes	Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of most classes and will include questions directly related to in-class discussions and assigned readings. Additional quizzes may be given without notice.
Exams	There will be one mid-term exam (In-Class 2/24/2015) and one comprehensive final exam (Take home due 5/5/2015). 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	<p>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 class on Tuesday, April 14th, and will be included in the CSBS Student Research Day competition to be held on Wednesday, April 29th (11:00 am – 2:30 pm).</p> <p>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. Each Research Group will meet with me at least twice during the term to assess progress and make sure you have the resources needed to create a successful research poster. The most difficult part of this assignment is to narrow your topic sufficiently. This assignment will comprise 20% of your grade for the course.</p>
Reaction Papers	You will be required to write four (4) Reaction Papers due 2/1/2015, 2/22/2015, 3/16/2015, and 4/5/2015 to be submitted through the Canvas assignment submission function. These papers should be used to assist you in your research project. For <i>each paper</i> you are required to find published journal articles 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 economic models and graphics as well as other informational tables 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 you will participate in five (5) separate Canvas Discussions for which there are various articles, blog posts, etc. posted in Canvas's Discussion forum for you comment on or discuss. You are required to review at least two of these items for each Canvas Discussion, enter into the discussion with specific and substantive comments in respect to the topic, separately comment (reply) to the posting(s) of at least one other student, and separately reply to comments made by at least one other student to one of your postings – *this will result in you having crafted 3 separate and unique posts*. The Canvas Discussions are not turned in as file submissions or email attachments; they're turned in through the Canvas Discussion function and are due no later than **1/25, 2/16, 3/8, 3/29, and 4/19**.

During the semester there will be five 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	1/25/2015
Canvas Discussion #2 – Healthcare	2/16/2015
Canvas Discussion #3 – Education	3/8/2015
Canvas Discussion #4 – Immigration	3/29/2015
Canvas Discussion #5 – Income Inequality	4/19/2015

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.

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- 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.

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 you 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	1/13	Course introduction, Economic Foundations (Micro/Macro) Political Economy, Institutions, Internal and External Policy Spaces	
Week 2	1/20	The US Since the 1980's, Growth and Debt	Palley Chp 1&3, Baker Chp 1 & Appendix, Piketty & Saez 2007, Reinhart & Rogoff 2010,
	1/25	Canvas Discussion #1 Due	
Week 3	1/27	The Distribution of Surplus Inequality	Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx Piketty & Saez 2003, Pope 2009, Roubini 2011
	2/1	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 <i>A Radical Idea</i> Haskell 2013
Week 5	2/10	Human Capital Investments: Healthcare Human Capital Investments: Immigration	Lee et al 2007, Kuttner 2008 Peri 2011, Tang 2013
	2/16	Canvas Discussion #2 Due	
Week 6	2/17	Labor Market Models Unemployment	<i>Putting it all together</i> – Haskell 2013 Schmitt & Conroy 2010
	2/22	Reaction Paper #2 due	
Week 7	2/24	Economics and the Environment Mid-Term Exam	Li 2010, The Climate Battle
Week 8	3/3	Fiscal Policy Basics Monetary Policy Basics	Romer 2011; Seidman & Lewis 2009 Palley 2013, Bernanke & Reinhart 2004, Eichengren & Temin 2010
	3/8	Canvas Discussion #3 due	
Week 9	3/10	Fiscal and Monetary Policy in the US and EU; Keynes vs. Hayek	Eichengren 2010, Arestis & Sawyer 2011
	3/15	Reaction Paper #3 due	
Week 10	3/17	Spring Break – no class	
Week 11	3/24	Austerity, Sequestration, Governance through Ideology	<i>America's European Moment</i> 1

		Gold, Inflation and International Monetary Considerations	Eichengren & Temin 2010, Palley 2013
	3/29	Canvas Discussion #4 due	
Week 12	3/31	Globalization, International Trade Economic Development	Darity & Davis 2005, Ranis & Stewart 2000, <i>The Future of Agriculture is Industry</i> – Haskell 2013
	4/5	Reaction Paper #4 Due	
Week 13	4/7	Technological Innovation and Labor Beyond Jobs	Pearson 2014, Immigrants from the Future 2014, Smith 2014
Week 14	4/14	Research Projects/ Posters In-Class Presentations	
	4/19	Canvas Discussion #5 Due	
Week 15	4/21	Hegemony The Sustainability of Capitalism	McDonough 2006, Clark 2009, Watson 2010 Sachs 2012
Week 16	4/28	No class due to participation in CSBS Student Research Day 4/29	
	4/29	CSBS Student Research Day 11:00 am 2:30 pm	
Week 17	5/5	Final Exam Due (take home)	