

Economics of Social Change (ECON-2420)

Course Syllabus / Fall 2020-21, TH 6-8.45 PM, Room C344 and [online](#)

Materials/announcements will be posted at postrgrowth.ca/economics

Instructor: James Magnus-Johnston (PhD Candidate, McGill University; MPhil, Cambridge University)
jmagnus-johnston@cmu.ca // Office hours by appointment

Summary: Processes of social change (related to poverty reduction, peace-building, environmental sustainability, economic development) can be supported or inhibited by economic forces. This course will examine and apply (in a non-technical manner) key economic principles that impact efforts to create social change. It also examines the assumptions of economic approaches, and the role of economics in the social sciences.

Objectives: This course aims to both enrich and challenge traditional economic concepts by incorporating relevant concepts from a variety of other disciplines. The emphasis is on lines of inquiry relevant to contemporary economic challenges, including sustainability and inequality.

Deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty: November 17, 2020

Reading List

REQUIRED TEXTS

Daly, H. E., & Farley, J. C. [*Ecological economics: Principles and applications*](#). Washington: Island Press, 2010.

Eisenstein, Charles. *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, & Society in the Age of Transition*. Berkeley, Calif: Evolver Editions, 2011. (available free online)

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

The following will be referenced in lectures. A number of articles have also been posted on [the course webpage](#).

Raworth, Kate. *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*. White River, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017.

Beinhocker, Eric D. *The Origin of Wealth: Evolution, Complexity, and the Radical Remaking of Economics*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2006.

Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Assignments and Grades

Pop quiz grades (ongoing)	10%
Class participation (ongoing, inc. peer reviews)	10%
Learning statements (ongoing)	20%
Chapter presentation (ongoing)	20%
Policy proposal (Nov 19)	20%
Final presentation (Dec 3)	20%

Letter	%	GPA	Descriptor
A+	90-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	80-89	4	Excellent
B+	75-79	3.5	Very Good
B	70-74	3	Good
C+	65-69	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-64	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49	0	Failure

Quiz: Quizzes based on keyword definitions will randomly be given at the beginning of class. The quizzes are used not only for demonstration of knowledge and preparation, but also to ensure promptness and attendance.

Class participation in discussions: To foster more active discussions on class readings, your participation will be graded and the instructor will maintain a record of your contributions. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of interaction – that is, not only the volume of interaction, but its quality and consistency. Someone who interacts often but attempts to monopolize the conversation, for instance, may receive a lower grade than someone who contributes regularly and is respectful of the contributions of others. Regular contributions, however, are required. Your participation grades will be posted at the middle and the end of the semester.

Learning statements: At the beginning of each class, students will briefly write and share their understanding of a topic as a means of catalyzing conversation about the academic reading. At the end of class, students will be expected to reflect on their initial entry and consider whether your understanding has changed.

Reading / Summaries: One of our first exercises will be for you to come up with a reading schedule to designate time outside of class to read; you will be expected to hold yourself accountable to this reading schedule. If helpful, you can arrange peer group reading sessions. For each assigned reading, one group will prepare a synopsis in point form that outlines the main argument of the reading. Following the discussion, the group will be tasked with preparing a half-page written summary of the reading and discussion. Note: Periodically, class time will be allocated to reading in class, but students should not rely on this time to integrate the topic matter.

Policy Proposal (1500 words): Building upon your annotated bibliography, each student is invited to write a 1500+ word analysis of a policy idea presented in one of our main texts. Please provide context for the policy prescription, outline its key features, and be sure to include conflicting or dissenting viewpoints on the subject. To help with the process, you will be given an opportunity to discuss your research question with classmates on November 19th.

Presentation: In lieu of a final exam, each student will present their policy findings during the final class of this course. You will be marked on style (5 marks), clarity (5 marks), substance (10 marks), and class engagement (5 marks).

Policies

Final grades: Grades submitted by instructors become final only after they are vetted by the Dean's Council. That process occurs early in January for fall semester grades and early in May for winter semester grades.

Academic integrity: *Academic Integrity*—All material referred to in any assignment MUST be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on CMU's [website](#) and in the CMU Calendar. If you still have questions about appropriate referencing and what plagiarism is, a useful tutorial can be found [here](#). For more information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, appeals, and other matters, please see CMU's *Academic Calendar*.

Accessibility: CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loeppky, Coordinator of Accessibility Programs at sloeppky@cmu.ca or 204.487.3300 x.340. In recognition of individuals with asthma, allergies and severe environmental/chemical sensitivities, CMU is striving to become a scent-free campus. Students, staff and guests are asked to refrain from wearing fragrances and scented personal care products at CMU. This includes perfumes, colognes, aftershave and scented hair products. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by those affected.

Academic support services: Student studying, tutoring, and the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program are offered to CMU students free of charge in the Marpeck Mezzanine.

Counselling: University students face many challenges and at times may benefit from having a trained professional to talk to. There are qualified counsellors at CMU who volunteer their services free of charge to students on the CMU campus. Students wishing to book an appointment with a counsellor are asked to contact the North Side Receptionist at 204.487.3300 or info@cmu.ca. Confidentiality is maintained at all times. The counselling office is located at C365 (north side) and is free for CMU students.

On-campus health guidelines

Being on campus: As a general assumption, students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to be on campus according to their regular schedule when they are well and while symptom free, and to not be on campus when they are not well. This means not attending when a person:

- a) Is sick with a cold or flu, or having other COVID-19 like symptoms
- b) Is immuno-compromised or otherwise at health risk
- c) Lives with a child or a family member who is at health risk
- d) Is facing discomfort related to pandemic risks
- e) Learns online given inability to come from another country
- f) Has COVID-19 impacted childcare responsibilities

Students who meet one or more of the criteria listed above and seek exemption from attending classes in person all semester must complete the online studies form available at www.cmu.ca/onlinestudiesform.

Notification Protocol: For purposes of potential contact tracing, students, staff, and faculty are required to submit the online notification form available on the CMU website when they will not be present on campus for class, work, or any other regularly scheduled activity. The form may be found at www.cmu.ca/notificationform.

Self-Screening: To reduce the potential risk of COVID-19 to the community, students, staff, and faculty must complete the Manitoba Health COVID-19 online screening tool daily before they come onto campus or leave their residence room. Recommendations from the shared health screening tool must be followed. The Manitoba Health COVID-19 online screening found at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool>.

Related Links

- [Government of Manitoba's "About COVID-19," including notable symptoms](#)
- Government of Manitoba [Screening Tool](#), including contact info for Health Links
- [CMU Education and Operations 2020-21](#) Framework
- CMU's [COVID-19 Updates](#) and Resources
- Student [FAQ](#) regarding COVID-19

Continuity plans for COVID-19

For more info, see "[Guidelines for In-Person Sessions in Hybrid Classes](#)"

Faculty at CMU will do our best to accommodate learning when individuals need to remain absent from campus for reasons listed above, under "On-Campus Health Guidelines."

In addition to this, **individuals that anticipate needing to stay off campus for the duration of the semester** should note your situation to Academic Office as soon as possible. The VPA's office will work with the Academic Office, Information Technology and the Coordinator of Accessibility programs and the relevant faculty members to accommodate remote learning.

In the event of interruption or closure (ie. if you can't come to class, the instructor can't come, or the campus closes), please join us online using the "live discussion" button on the course webpage.

Course schedule (at-a-glance)

Sep		Chapter	Supp.
10	Introduction	Ch. 1	Raworth
17	The physical laws / paradigm shift	Ch. 2-3	
24	What's renewable and what's not	Ch. 4-5	
Oct			
1	Scarcity, enough, and the market	Eisenstein	
8	Earth systems and market failures	Ch. 6-7	Ch. 10-12
15	Whither supply and demand?	Ch. 8-9	
22	How humans make choices	Kahneman	
29	Income vs. wellbeing ("happiness")	Ch. 13	Layard
Nov			
5	Money and concepts of justice	Ch. 14-15	Eisenstein
12	The financialization		
19	Policy rhetoric and design	Ch. 20	TBD
26	Scale, distribution, allocation	Ch. 21-23	Eisenstein
Dec			
3	Conclusion		