

Ecological Economics / “Economics of Social Change” (ECON-2420)

Course Syllabus / Fall 2022-23, TH 10-11.15 AM, Room B126

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

Instructor: James Magnus-Johnston (PhD Candidate, McGill University; MPhil, Cambridge University)
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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 15, 2022

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

Class participation	10%
Chapter presentations	20%
Pop quizzes	20%
Policy proposal	20%
Final presentations	20%
Final test	10%

Letter	Percentage	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

An “excellent” assignment (A) would display:

1. Original thinking and a superior grasp of the subject matter
2. A highly developed capacity for critical evaluation, synthesis, and creativity
3. Appropriate descriptions and quotations
4. Organizing and subordinating information well; writing and/or speaking clearly
5. The use of research sources using *any* recognized style format. For reference, see:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Eighth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018

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.

Chapter presentations: 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): 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: 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 sloepky@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.

Continuity Plan: Faculty and students should plan to stay home when ill and follow public health requirements for respiratory illness. When students cannot come to class, please seek notes from the

designated note-taker. If the instructors cannot be in class, an announcement will be made in Moodle, and we'll use the 8x8 video platform to communicate via videoconference.

Schedule

			Ch.		Th	8	1	Intro - What is Economics	
Sept	T	13	2	Physical laws ("fundamental vision")	Th	15	3	Econ as policy?	
	T	20	N/A	Systems theory	Th	22	4	Resource econ	
	T	27	2	Illusion of scarcity	Th	29	8	The Market	
Oct	T	4	9	Supply & demand	Th	6	10	Market failures	
	T	11	11	Failures & abiotics (ref: Ch. 5)	Th	13	12	Faiulres & Biotics (ref: Ch. 6)	
	T	18	Pt 1	Behavioural Econ	Th	20	13	GDP vs. Welfare	
	T	25	14	Money	Th	27	15	Distribution	
Nov	T	1	16	Real vs. monetary econ	Th	3	17	Internationalization vs. Globaliz...	
				Reading Break					
	T	8	18	Globalization	Th	10	19	Financialization	
	T	15	20	Policy design	Th	17	N/A	Peer reviews (policy proposal due)	
	T	22	21	Managing scale	Th	24	22	Distribution	
	T	29	23	Allocation / policy examples	Th	1	24	Conclusion	
Dec	T	6		Exam					
				Eisenstein					
				Kahneman					