

EC 101 Economics of Social Issues (sections 01 and 02)
Department of Economics
Colorado State University

Spring 2009

Course Instructor

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Office hours: TR 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., or by appointment.

Class Meetings

Eddy 212: TR 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Yates 104: TR 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Messages: E-mail is the best way (and possibly only way) to contact me. I will answer all emails as soon as possible (I usually check my inbox approximately between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.). The office phone messaging system is extremely unreliable, so if you wish to call me, beware, I may never get the message.

Teaching Assistants

Name: Emily Brophy
Office: Clark C322
Email: Emily.Brophy@Colostate.edu
Office hours: TR 12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
or by appointment

Name: Devin Buntten
Office: Clark C320
Email: dmbuntten@rams.colostate.edu
Office hours: MWF 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Name: Liesel Hans
Office: Clark C320
Email: lieselh1@lamar.colostate.edu
Office hours: M 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
T 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Course Description

EC101 will present the elements of economic thought by showing how economists analyze four social issues: Health Care, inequality, globalization, & drugs. These issues (others easily could have been chosen) are used to illustrate the practical importance of economic concepts and theories. Differing points of view about controversial policies

such as universal health care, affirmative action, immigration, & the drug war will be presented & discussed. The question of the appropriate role for government will occupy us throughout the semester. The course is non-technical (no math or graphs!), & explains economic concepts in an intuitive, verbal fashion. The course will be successful if it helps you to clarify your own thinking about these issues.

Course Credit

- 3 credits that count toward AUCC category 3C.
- EC101 does not substitute for introductory microeconomics (EC202) or introductory macroeconomics (EC204). Some majors require one of these courses but not others. Check your major requirements to make sure that you are taking the right EC course.
- EC101 is not a prerequisite for any other EC course. The credit counts toward the economics major, but is not required to complete it.

Course Organization

Lecture format, student discussion is welcome though. All classes are taught by the instructor. No recitation sections. Tests are given during regular class hours.

Required Texts

There is no text for EC101. Several reading selections will be provided to you throughout the session. They will usually be posted in RamCT. This system allows the instructor to change, add, or subtract the readings at his discretion. You will be expected to have fully read the assigned text by the appropriate examination period.

Grading

- **7 EXAMS**, 50 points each *(70% of total points)*
 - These will be conducted in class approximately every other Tuesday. (there is a slight hiccup in the schedule around spring Break though). I will have the right to alter this schedule if I feel the change will fit into the lesson structure more appropriately than the current schedule.
 - Each exam will consist of short-essay questions regarding the material covered in class and the readings from the respective period, and sometimes you will be required to provide and justify your own opinion using these materials or outside materials.
 - The actual exam questions will be provided one week prior to the exam. You will be required to formulate your answer at home and be able to duplicate those thoughts during the exam. You will have NO references available during the exam period.
 - I will explain further in class.
- **1 AT-HOME RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT**, 100 points *(20% of total points)*
 - These will be collected at two points in time over the semester; before spring break and before finals week (maybe I'll accept them in between those times, we'll see). First, you will choose the topic you wish to

research (Health Care, Inequality, Globalization's effect upon the domestic economy, or Drug policy), then collect four relevant news articles written no more than one year prior to the date.

- Your task here is to evaluate the current government policy regarding the particular social issue that you chose in terms of a cost/benefit analysis. What are the costs of the current system and what are the benefits? Maybe ask: Why do we have the system that we do? Then, justify your opinion regarding any policy reform or non-reform using a cost/ benefit analysis regarding future benefits or costs. We will discuss cost/benefit analyses in class, or you may talk to your Instructor or your TA for advice.
- Included in your analysis will be the four articles that you found. You will use these articles along with class materials to justify your cost/benefit analysis. For example, they may provide you with real-life examples of points made in class, or may represent ideas or facts opposite to what was provided in class. They don't have to agree with each other. Basically, cite these articles as further evidence for or against any materials presented in class, or use them to make additional points not covered within my presentations.
- The word count for this will be *NO MORE THAN* 2000 words.
- You will be required to turn a hard copy in, as well as post it at www.turnitin.com. Instructions for this will be provided at a later time. Look to RamCT for instructions.
- **2 CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**, 25 points each (*10% of total points*)
 - These will be written at home.
 - These will be handed out in class at a time of my discretion.
 - They are intended to be very short. I'm just testing your reasoning.
- **NO EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE PROVIDED!!!** (*0% of total points*)
 - Prepare well! There will be no exceptions.

Grades records will be reported on RamCt.

A note on writing requirements:

Writing requirements for the course are put in place in order to improve students' comprehension of the material as well as their proficiency in writing. The points for this course are entirely based upon writing assignments. Students' writing should:

- ✓ Convey a theme or argument clearly and coherently.
- ✓ Fully support all ideas and/or opinions.
- ✓ Critically analyze and synthesize the work of others.
- ✓ Acquire and apply information from appropriate sources, and reference those sources accordingly (when applicable).
- ✓ Compose written responses in Standard English; grammar and spelling are important and will be graded. (Please speak to me if English isn't your first language, a dictionary may be allowed for in-class exams upon my approval).

The Campus Writing Center at CSU is a great resource for those needing writing assistance. I encourage students to visit their website <http://writing.colostate.edu/wcenter/> or the center itself for help with writing.

Grade Scale

- Final percent calculated on a base of 500 points.
 - A+ = 97% & greater
 - A = 90% - 96%
 - B+ = 87% - 89%
 - B = 80% - 86%
 - C+ = 77% - 79%
 - C = 70% - 76%
 - D+ = 67% - 69%
 - D = 60% - 66%
 - F = <60%
- Note that only half of the plus-minus system is used. No minuses! However, there will be absolutely no “bumping up” of grades (e.g. 89.9% = B+).
- Grades are available through the ‘my grades’ link on RamCT.

Test Policies

- Tests are given approximately every other week (spring break messes this schedule up a slight bit)
- Bring your student ID to every test. It may be checked.
- Calculators, cell phones, or other digital devices are not allowed.
- Cheating and/or Plagiarism will result in an F for the course. We’re good at catching this so don’t even think about it. I will follow the standard University procedure regarding academic dishonesty, found in the University General Catalogue (<http://www.catalog.colostate.edu/front/policies.aspx>). Further discussion on academic integrity can be found here, http://www.math.colostate.edu/PACe/Guide/academic_integrity.html. All you have to do to avoid plagiarism is correctly cite the author! (By the way, *Wikipedia* is not a valid source in this class!)
- NO MAKE-UPS except for documented, university excuses (e.g., athletes). Emergency exceptions to this rule are limited as follows:
 - Make-ups for illness require a doctor's note verifying that you were unable to take the exam.
 - Make-ups for a family emergency require verification, such as a copy of the funeral notice (Note: a plane ticket is NOT sufficient).
- You will have two weeks after the grade for the assignment has been posted to challenge that grade. After that point, the instructor will not re-evaluate the grades. You will most likely need to go over the assignment with the teaching assistant that graded it so that you fully understand why you received the initial grade.

RamCT Resources

Certain materials for this course will be available via RamCT. These materials include:

- The course syllabus
- Announcements as needed
- Grade records
- Assignment descriptions
- Required readings
- Additional outside learning materials

To access the course's RamCT website, go to <http://ramct.colostate.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>. You can login using your eID and Password. All students that are registered for this course should be able to access the site. For more information on how to use RamCT, choose "RamCT Help WebSite" at the bottom of the page on the RamCT homepage. If you still are having trouble accessing the site please contact me to help you sort it out.

Class Policies

- Every student must have internet access & an email address.
- Students must keep copies of all class materials.
- Respect the rights of your fellow students -- no eating, smoking or talking during class. Please do your best to arrive on time.
- All cell phones and other electronic devices (besides laptops, if used in an academic manner) must be turned off and put away before class. **If I view you TEXTING messages, using the internet in an unproductive manner, having earphones in one or both ears, or talking on your phone I will tell you to leave the class room for the rest of the day due to classroom disruption** (all standard conditions pertaining to undocumented absences will then apply).
- By signing up for this course, you agree to be held responsible for its requirements & policies.

Responsibilities of Students

To attend class and be aware of course requirements, policies and deadlines;
To do the assigned reading before you come to class;
To ask questions, make comments, & contribute actively to the class;
To take advantage of office hours & other course resources;
To solve problems as they arise, & to advocate for yourself;
To make the effort needed to learn (not just survive);
To take responsibility for your own performance.
To turn off and put away all electronic devices (except laptops if used properly) before class hours.

Responsibilities of Professor

- To be genuinely interested in the subject & the students;
- To be prepared, organized & enthusiastic;
- To be respectful & open-minded;
- To give you the resources you need to succeed in the course;
- To treat you professionally & fairly.

Resources:

- Easy access to the instructor via office hours & e-mail.
- Internet links to readings & supplementary material.
- [Click here](#) for tips on how to succeed in this course.
- Frequent examination, each covering a moderate amount of material.
- Attitude: I WANT YOU TO SUCCEED. I will do everything I can to help. The rest is up to you!