

Boston College  
Department of Economics  
Spring Semester, 2000-2001

EC 233 - History of Economic Thought

Instructor: Professor F. M. McLaughlin

Office: Carney 130

Office Hours: MWF 10:00-10: 55 a.m. and by appointment

Class Meetings: MWF at 11:00 a.m.

Place: Carney 106

Required Texts:

Smith, A., Wealth of Nations, L. Dickey, ed., Hackett, 1993, [WN below].

History of Economic Thought Course Pack, [contains all other assigned readings].

Journal Abbreviations

AER - American Economic Review

HOPE - History of Political Economy

JEH - Journal of Economic History

JEP - The Journal of Economic Perspectives

JPE - Journal of Political Economy

QREB - Quarterly Review of Economics and Business

Scope of the Course

This course will survey the history of economic thought from the ancient Greeks through the modern period. The emphasis of the course will be on classical and neo-classical economics from Adam Smith through the monetarist thought of the 1970s.

Attendance:

The Dean of Arts & Sciences has reminded faculty that class attendance is required, and may be taken into account in grading. According to the academic regulations published in the A&S Catalog students are expected to attend class regularly, take tests, and submit papers and other works at the times specified in the course syllabus. Students who are absent on the day of a previously announced test are not entitled, as a matter of right, to make up what was missed, and the professor may include as part of the semester's grades, marks for the quality and quantity of students' participation in class.

Course Grades:

Course grades will be based on two examinations taken in course on February 21 and March 28 [30 percent each], and a comprehensive final examination taken during the examination period [40 percent]. Students should plan to be present on scheduled examination dates. Make-up examinations will not be given except at the request of the Dean, and only when the absence is for serious reason. Students are responsible for the assigned readings, which must be done in advance of class meetings. Class attendance and participation will be taken into consideration in borderline cases when computing final grades.

Calendar:

Introduction [1/17]

Economics in Ancient Greece [1/19, 1/22]

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, [Ostwald translation], Bobbs-Merrill, 1962, Book. V, Chs. 2 to 5, pp.115-128, Course Pack, pp. 1-8.

Economics in the Scholastic Period [1/24, 1/26]

DeRoover, R, "The Concept of the Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy," JEH, Dec. 1958, pp. 418-38, Course Pack, pp. 9-19.

McLaughlin, "Notes on Usury," Course Pack, pp. 21-28.

Mercantilism [1/29, 1/31]

Smith, A., WN, pp.117-152.

Dickey, L., "Smith's Critique of Mercantilism, Appendix III, in Smith, Adam, WN, L. Dickey, editor, Hackett, 1993, pp. 226-242.

Physiocracy {2/2}

Smith, A, WN, pp.152-166.

Gide, C., and Rist C., "The Physiocrats," in A History of Economic Doctrines, D.C. Heath, 1948, ch. 1, pp. 21-68, Course Pack, pp. 29-53.

Rashid, S., "Adam Smith's Interpretation of The History of Economics," QREB, Autumn, 1987, pp. 56-69, Course Pack, pp. 55-61.

Adam Smith's Economics [2/5, 2/7, 2/9]

Smith, A., WN, pp.1-49

Smith, A., WN, pp.49-83.

Smith, A., WN, pp.83-116; pp.166-219.

Perspectives on Smith's Economics [2/12, 2/14]

Rosenberg, N, "Some Institutional Aspects of the Wealth of Nations," JPE, Dec. 1960, pp. 557-570. Course Pack. pp. 63-76.

Stigler, G., J. "The Successes and Failures of Professor Smith," JPE, Dec. 1976, pp. 1199-1213. Course Pack, pp. 77-84.

Malthus' Economics [2/16, 2/19]

Robert Malthus: The First of the Cambridge Economists, in Keynes, J. M., Essays in Biography (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1933), pp. 95-149. Course Pack, pp. 85-112.

Ricardo's Economics [2/21, 2/23, 2/26]

Dorfman, R., "Thomas Robert Malthus and David Ricardo", JEP, Summer, 1989, Vol. 3, No.3, pp. 153-164. Course Pack, pp. 113-123.

Stigler, G. J., "The Ricardian Theory of Value and Distribution," JPE, June, 1952, pp. 187-207. Course Pack, pp. 125-145.

Stigler, G. J., "Ricardo and the 93% Labor Theory of Value", AER, Vol. XLVIII (June, 1958), pp. 357-367. Course Pack, pp. 147-152.

Economics in Post-Ricardian England [2/28]

Checkland, S.G., "The Propagation of Ricardian Economics in England," Economica, New Series, Vol. 16, No. 61 [February 1949], pp. 40-52. Course Pack, pp. 153-165.

John Stuart Mill's Economics [3/12, 3/14]

Taylor, O.H., A History of Political Economy (McGraw Hill, 1960, Ch. 10, "John Stuart Mill: Economics and Political Economy," pp. 247-270. Course Pack, pp. 167-179.

Marx' Economics [3/16, 3/19, 3/21]

Schumpeter, J.A., "Marx the Economist," Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Harper, N.Y., N.Y., 1976, Ch. 3, pp. 21-44. Course Pack, pp. 181-193.

Marginalism [3/23, 3/26]

Hutchison, T.W., "The 'Marginal Revolution' and the Decline and Fall of English Political Economy," HOPE, Fall, 1972, pp. 442-468. Course Pack, pp. 195-208.

Henry, J. F., "J.B. Clark and the Marginal Product: an Historical Inquiry into the Origins of Value Free Economic Theory," HOPE, V. 15, Fall, 1983, pp. 375-389. Course Pack, pp. 209-216.

Walras and General Equilibrium [3/28]

Friedman, M., "Leon Walras and His Economic System," AER, V. 45, Dec., 1955, pp. 900-909. Course Pack, pp. 217-221.

The Problem of Capital and Interest [3/30, 4/2]

McLaughlin, "Schumpeter's Theory of Economic Development." Course Pack, pp. 223-226.

Historical and Institutional Criticism [4/4, 4/6]

McLaughlin, "The History of American Labor Economics." Course Pack, pp. 235-237.

Dorfman, J., "The Role of the German Historical School in American Economic Thought," AER, May, 1955, pp. 17-28. Course Pack, pp., 227-233.

The Economics of Alfred Marshall [4/9, 4/11]

Viner, Jacob, "Marshall's Economics in Relation to the Man and to his Times," AER, June, 1941, pp. 223 to 235. Course Pack, pp. 247-253.

Schumpeter, J., "Alfred Marshall's Principles: A Semi-Centennial Approach," AER, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1941, pp. 236-248. Course Pack, pp., 239-245.

The Economics of Keynes [4/16, 4/18, 4/20]

McLaughlin, "Keynes' Challenge to the Classical Tradition," Course Pack, pp. 255-263.

The Monetarist Counter-Revolution [4/23, 4/25]

Johnson, Harry G., "The Keynesian Revolution and the Monetarist Counter-Revolution," AER, May 1971, pp. 1-14. Course Pack, pp. 265-277.

A Summing Up [4/27, 4/30]

Samuelson, Paul, "Economists and the History of Ideas" AER, March, 1962, pp. 1-18. Course Pack, pp. 279-288..

Final Examination