

Boston College
Department of Economics
Fall Semester, 1998-9

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 9:00 a.m.

Place: Carney 106

Required Texts:

Smith, A., An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, [University of Chicago Press, 1976]. Cited as WN below.

Heilbroner, R.L., The Worldly Philosophers, [Simon and Schuster, Sixth Edition, 1992]. Cited as WP below.

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 John Maynard Keynes and the neo-classical synthesis of Paul Samuelson. Attention will also be given to contemporary developments.

Reserve Reading:

Required reading, not distributed in class, will be available at the reserve desk in O'Neill.

Note Well:

The Dean of A&S 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 Catalogue students are expected to attend class regularly, take tests and submit papers and other works at the times specified in the course syllabus. Student 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 professors may include as part of the semester's grades, marks for the quality and quantity of students' participation in class.

Grading and Examinations:

There will be two hour long examinations during the course of the semester, a written paper, and a comprehensive final during the examination period. Each of the hour examinations and the paper will count for 20 percent of the final grade, and the final examination will count for 30 percent. The quality and quantity of students' class participation will account for the remaining 10 percent. Dates for the hour examinations and the final examination are given below. 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, and should prepare for class by doing it currently. Students should raise questions about the assigned reading which should be done in advance of class meetings.

Written Paper:

A paper of 8 -10 pages will be due November 20. The topic must be agreed to by the student and professor no later than September 25. Papers must be carefully organized and written, and should be proof read before being turned in. Pay careful attention to grammar and spelling. Acknowledge all sources of facts and ideas, and be careful in citing the work of others. Plagiarism is seriously dishonest and should be thoroughly shunned.

Calendar:

September 2 Introduction.

September 4 Economics in Ancient Greece

Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. V, chs. 2-5.

September 7 Labor Day

September 9 Scholastic Economics: the Just Price

DeRoover, R, "The Concept of Just Price...", Journal of Economic History, December 1958, pp. 418-38.

September 11 Scholastic Economics: Usury

McLaughlin, "Notes on Usury."

September 14 Adam Smith: Introduction

Heilbroner, WP, Ch. 3, pp. 42-74

September 16 Adam Smith: Division of Labor

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk I, chs.1-4, pp.7-33

September 18 Adam Smith: Value Theory

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk I, chs.5-7, pp. 34-71

September 21 Adam Smith: Level of Wages

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk I, ch. 8, pp.72-97.

September 25 Adam Smith: Levels of Profit and Rent

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk I, chs. 9 and 11, pp. 98-110, and 161-197.

September 28 Adam Smith: Structure of Wages and Profit

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk I, ch. 10, pp. 111-160

September 30 Adam Smith: Capital

Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk II chs.1-3, pp.291-309 aand 351-371.

- October 2 Adam Smith: Capital
Smith, WN, Vol.I, Bk II chs.4-5, pp.372-397.
- October 5 Hour Examination
- October 7 Adam Smith on Mercantilism
Smith, WN, Vol. II, Bk IV, chs. 1 to 4
- October 9 Adam Smith on Mercantilism
Smith, WN, Vol. II, Bk IV, chs. 5 to 8
- October 12 Columbus Day
- October 14 Adam Smith on Physiocracy
Smith, WN, Vol. II, Bk IV, ch. 9.
- October 16 Criticism of Smith views on Mercantilism and Physiocracy.
Rashid, S., "Adam Smith's Interpretation of The History of Economics....," Quarterly Review of Economics and Business, Autumn, 1987, pp. 56-69.
- October 19 Adam Smith: Defense, Justice, and Public Works
Smith, WN, Vol.II, Bk V ch. 1, pp-213-223 and 231-253.
- October 21 Adam Smith: Education and Taxation
Smith, WN, Vol.II, Bk V chs. 1 and 2, pp. 282-325; 349-352.
- October 23 Malthus
Heilbroner, WP, Ch. 4, pp. 75-104.
- October 26 Ricardo
Dorfman, R., "Thomas Robert Malthus & David Ricardo", The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Summer 1989, Vol. 3, No.3, pp. 153-164.
- October 28 The Utopian Socialists.
Heilbroner, WP, ch. 5, pp. 105-135
- October 30 John Stuart Mill
Taylor, O. H., "John Stuart Mill: Economics & Political Economy," A History of Economic Thought (McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 247-270.
- November 2 Karl Marx

Heilbroner, WP, ch. 6, pp. 136-170

November 4 Karl Marx

November 6 Hour Examination

November 9 Marginalism and General Equilibrium.

Heilbroner, WP, ch. 7, pp. 171-178.

McLaughlin, "The Theory of Value in English Classical and Neo-classical Economics."

November 11 Capital and Interest.

McLaughlin, "Schumpeter's Theory of Economic Development."

November 13 The Underworld of Economics.

Heilbroner, WP, Ch. 7, pp. 178-206.

November 16 Historical and Institutional Criticism.

Heilbroner, WP, Ch. 8 pp. 213-248.

McLaughlin, "The History of American Labor Economics."

November 18 Marshall

Heilbroner, WP, pp. 206-212.

McLaughlin, "Marshall and Monetary Theory."

November 20 Keynes

Heilbroner, WP, ch. 9, pp. 249-287.

McLaughlin, "Keynes Challenge to the Classical Tradition."

November 23 The Neo-Classical Synthesis

Reading assignments will be given in class.

November 25 Thanksgiving Holiday

November 27 Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30 Monetarism

Reading assignments will be given in class.

December 2 New Classical Thought.

Reading assignments will be given in class.

December 4 Austrian Economics.

Reading assignments will be given in class.

December 7 A Summing Up

Heilbroner, Robert L., "Modern Economics as a chapter in the history of economic thought," History of Political Economy, Vol. 11, No. 2, Summer, 1979, pp. 192-198.

December 18 Final Examination [9:00 a.m.]