

Boston College
Department of Economics
Fall Semester, 2002-2003

EC 233 - History of Economic Thought

Instructor: Professor F. M. McLaughlin

Office: Carney 130

Office Hours: MWF 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and also by appointment

Class Meetings: MWF at 1:00 p.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].

Scope of the Course

Although this course will survey topics in the history of economic thought from the ancient Greeks through the modern period, substantial emphasis will be given to Adam Smith and the history of English classical economics in the century following the publication of Smith's Wealth of Nations in 1776.

Notes:

Grades will be assigned in this course in either one of two ways. Students must choose their preferred option by September 27.

The first option is to take two one-hour examinations given during the course of the semester, and a comprehensive final in the examination period. Each of the two in-course examinations will count for 25 percent of the final grade. The final examination will count for 40 percent. Class participation will count for the remaining 10 percent. The dates for the hour examinations are October 4 and November 4.

The second option is to substitute a research paper for one of the two in-course examinations. The paper and the remaining examination will each count for 25 percent of the final grade. The final examination will count for 40 percent. Class participation will count for the remaining 10 percent. Students who choose this option must contact me and choose their paper topics by September 27, the end of the third full week of classes. Failure to meet this deadline is an implicit choice of the non-paper option.

Students should 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 reading the course assignments, and must prepare for class by doing assigned reading in advance of class meetings where the material will be discussed.

Class attendance will be a minimum indication of class participation. 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 Arts & Sciences Catalogue 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 professors may include as part of the semester's grades, marks for the quality and quantity of students' participation in class.

Office Hours

Scheduled office hours will be held on MWF from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and also by appointment.

Economics in Ancient Greece

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

Aristotle, The Politics of Aristotle, [Barker translation], Oxford University Press, 1958, Bk. I, Chs. 8 to 11, pp. 18-32, Course Pack, pp. 9-16.

Economics in the Scholastic Period

DeRoover, Raymond, "The Concept of the Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy," JEH, Dec. 1958, pp. 418-38, Course Pack, pp. 17-27.

DeRoover, R., "Scholastic Economics: Survival and Lasting Influence from the 16th century to Adam Smith," Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 69, pp. 161-190, Course Pack, pp. 29-44.

Notes from a reading of Noonan, John T, The Scholastic Analysis of Usury, Harvard, 1957, Course Pack, pp. 45-52.

Adam Smith on the Commercial System [Mercantilism]

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 117-152.

Adam Smith on the Agricultural System [Physiocracy]

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 152-166.

The Economics of the Physiocrats

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. 53-77.

Adam Smith: Labor Productivity and Distribution

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 3-49.

Adam Smith: the Nature and Accumulation of Capital

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 49-83.

Adam Smith: on Economic History

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 83-116.

Adam Smith: on the Role of the State

Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 166-210.

Adam Smith: an Assessment

Stigler, G., J. "The Successes and Failures of Professor Smith," JPE, Dec. 1976, pp. 1199-1213. Course Pack, pp. 101-108.

Dickey, L. Appendix I in Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 213-219.

Dickey, L. Appendix III in Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 226-242.

Rashid, S., "Adam Smith's Interpretation of The History of Economics," Quarterly Review of Economics and Business, Autumn, 1987, pp. 56-69, Course Pack, pp. 79-85.

Rosenberg, N, "Some Institutional Aspects of the Wealth of Nations," JPE, Dec. 1960, pp. 557-570. Course Pack. pp. 87-100.

Dickey, L. Appendix II in Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 220-225.

Dickey, L. Appendix IV in Smith, Adam, Wealth of Nations, Hackett, [abridged edition], 1993, pp. 243-249..

Tribe, Keith, "Adam Smith: Critical Theorist?," Journal of Economic Literature, June 1999, pp. 609-632, Course Pack, pp. 111-134.

The Economics of Malthus

Notes on the Population theory of Malthus, Course Pack, pp. 109-110.

Dorfman, R., "Thomas Robert Malthus and David Ricardo", JEP, Summer, 1989, V. 3, No.3, pp. 153-164. Course Pack, pp. 135-146.

Robbins Lionel, "Malthus as an Economist," Economic Journal, Vol. 77, June, 1967, pp. 256-261, Course Pack, pp. 147-149.

The Economics of Ricardo

Stigler, G. J., "The Ricardian Theory of Value and Distribution," JPE, June, 1952, pp., 187-207. Course Pack, pp. 151-171.

Stigler, G. J., "Ricardo and the 93% Labor Theory of Value", AER, Vol. XLVIII (June, 1958), pp. 357-367. Course Pack, pp. 173-178.

Economics in Post Ricardian England

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. 179-191.

The Economics of John Stuart Mill

Taylor, O.H., A History of Political Economy (McGraw Hill, 1960, Ch. 10, "John Stuart Mill: Econ. & Political Economy," pp. 247-270. Course Pack, pp. 193-205.

The Economics of Karl Marx

Schumpeter, J.A., "Marx the Economist," Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Harper, N.Y., N.Y., 1976, Ch. 3, pp. 21-44. Course Pack, pp. 207-219.

The Advent of Marginal Analysis

Hutchison, T.W., "The 'Marginal Revolution' and the Decline and Fall of English Political Economy," HOPE, Fall, 1972, pp. 442-468. Course Pack, pp. 221-233.

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. 235-242.

Leon Walras and General Equilibrium

Friedman, M., "Leon Walras and His Economic System," AER, V. 45, Dec. 1955, pp. 900-909. Course Pack, pp. 243-247.

The Problem of Capital and Interest

McLaughlin, "Schumpeter's Theory of Econ. Develop." Course Pack, pp. 249-252.

Historical and Institutional Criticism

Notes from Paul McNulty on the History of American Labor Economics." Course Pack, pp. 253-255..

Dorfman, J., "The Role of the German Historical School in American Economic Thought," AER, May, 1955, pp. 17-28. Course Pack, pp., 257-263..

Prasch, Robert E., "Retrospectives: American Economists in the Progressive Era on the Minimum Wage," The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Spring, 1999, pp. 221-230, Course Pack, 265-274.

Persky, Joseph, "The Neoclassical Advent: American Economics at the Dawn of the 20th Century," The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Winter 2000, pp. 95-108, Course Pack, pp. 275-288.

The Economics of Alfred Marshall

"Alfred Marshall," in Keynes, J. M., Essays in Biography (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1933), pp. 150-266. Course Pack, pp. 289-347.

The Economics of John Maynard Keynes

McLaughlin, "Keynes' Challenge to the Classics," Course Pack, pp. 349-347.

The Monetarist Counter-Revolution

Johnson, Harry G., "The Keynesian Revolution and the Monetarist Counter-Revolution," AER, May 1971, pp. 1-14. Course Pack, pp. 359-372.

Summing Up

Samuelson, Paul, "Economists and the History of Ideas" AER, March, 1962, pp. 1-18. Course Pack, pp. 373-382.

Looking to the Future

Thaler, Richard, "From Homo Economicus to Homo Sapiens," The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Winter, 2000, pp. 133-141, Course Pack, pp. 383-391.

Colander, David, "New Millenium Economics: How Did It Get this Way, and What Way is It?," The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Winter, 2000, pp. 121-132, Course Pack, pp. 393-404.