

Boston College  
Department of Economics  
Spring Semester, 2001-2002

EC 233 - History of Economic Thought

Instructor: Professor F. M. McLaughlin

Office: Carney 130

Office Hours: MWF 9:00 a.m. to 10:50 a.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].

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

OREB - 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.

Exams and Grades

There will be two examinations given during the course of the semester, and a comprehensive final in the examination period. The dates of the hour exams will be February 13 and March 22. Each of the two in-course examinations will count for 25 percent of the final grade, and the final examination will count for 40 percent. Class participation will count for the remaining 10 percent. Make-up examinations will not be given except at the request of the Dean, and only when the absence is for serious reason. Students should plan to be present on scheduled examination dates. Students are responsible for the assigned readings, and should prepare for class by doing the readings in advance of class meetings. Students should raise questions about difficulties with the material covered in both the lectures and in the assigned readings. These questions can

be raised in class or during office hours. Students are responsible for material covered in both the class lectures and the readings.

N.B. 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 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 the professor may include as part of the semester's grades, marks for the quality and quantity of students' participation in class.

### 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.

### Scholastic Economics of the Just Price

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

### Scholastic Teaching on Usury

McLaughlin, "Notes on Usury," Course Pack, pp. 25-28.

### Adam Smith: Labor Productivity

Bk I, WN, pp.1-22

### Adam Smith: The Processes of a Market Economy

Bk I, WN, pp.23-49

### Adam Smith: Capital

Bk II, WN, pp.49-83.

### Adam Smith: The Optimal Path of Economic Growth

Bk III, WN, pp.83-116

### Adam Smith: The Commercial System [Mercantilism]

Bk IV, WN, pp.117-152.

### The Physiocrats [Economistes]

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.

### Adam Smith: The Agricultural System [Physiocracy]

Bk. IV, WN, pp.152-166.

### An Evaluation of Smith on Mercantilism

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

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

### Adam Smith: The Role of the State

Bk. V, WN, pp.166-219.

### An Evaluation of Smith's Economics

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.

### The Economics of Malthus

Notes on the Population Theory of T. R. Malthus", Course Pack, pp. 85-86.

Dorfman, R., "Thomas Robert Malthus and David Ricardo", JEP, Summer, 1989, V. 3, No.3, pp. 153-164. Course Pack, pp. 87-97.

### Ricardo's Economics

Stigler, G. J., "The Ricardian Theory of Value and Distribution," JPE, June, 1952, pp. 187-207. Course Pack, pp. 99-119.

Stigler, G. J., "Ricardo and the 93% Labor Theory of Value", AER, Vol. XLVIII (June, 1958), pp. 357-367. Course Pack, pp. 121-126.

### 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. 127-139.

### John Stuart Mill's Economics

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. 141-153.

### Marx' Economics

Schumpeter, J.A., "Marx the Economist," Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Harper, N.Y., N.Y., 1976, Ch. 3, pp. 21-44. Course Pack, pp. 155-167

### Marginalism

Hutchison, T.W., "The 'Marginal Revolution' and the Decline and Fall of English Political Economy," HOPE, Fall, 1972, pp. 442-468. Course Pack, pp. 169-182.

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. 183-190.

### Walras and General Equilibrium

Friedman, M., "Leon Walras and His Economic System," AER, V. 45, Dec. 1955, pp. 900-909. Course Pack, pp. 191-195.

### The Problem of Capital and Interest

McLaughlin, "Schumpeter's Theory of Econ. Develop." Course Pack, pp. 197-200.

### Historical and Institutional Criticism

McLaughlin, "History of American Labor Economics." Course Pack, pp. 201-203.

Dorfman, J., "The Role of the German Historical School in American Economic Thought," AER, May, 1955, pp. 17-28. Course Pack, pp., 205-211.

### 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. 213-271.

### The Economics of Keynes

McLaughlin, "Keynes' Challenge to the Classics," Course Pack, pp. 273-281.

### The Monetarist Counter-Revolution

Johnson, Harry G., "The Keynesian Revolution and the Monetarist Counter-Revolution," AER, May 1971, pp. 1-14. Course Pack, pp. 283-296.

### Summing Up

Samuelson, Paul, "Economists and the History of Ideas" AER, March, 1962, pp. 1-18. Course Pack, pp. 297-306.