DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
COURSE OFFERINGS
Spring 2024

ECON2107 Christian Virtues and Economic Progress *Prerequisite: ECON1101*

*John Piderit, S.J.*

Recent work on humanistic economics by David Rose and Deirdre McCloskey highlights the importance of human trust and respect of people in society in order for society economic institutions to function well in both autarky and under international trade. Rose in particular explores the difficulty of maintaining trust as societies grow larger. For Rose, trust is an ingrained, acquired characteristic read into our DNA. It developed when humans were hunters and gatherers over thousands of years, and it increased the generativity of those who developed this trust, and in this way it became embedded in the DNA of homo sapiens. McCloskey and Rose propose a new type of economics called virtue economics or humanistic economics. They argue that long-term substantial growth requires the presence of trust factors not included in standard neoclassical analysis. The institutions examined in this course were novel at their founding and established by Christian groups because they were committed to certain moral values and ethical principles.

ECON2207 The Global Economy *Prerequisites: ECON1101*

*Ricardo Lopez*

This course aims to deepen your understanding of real world economic issues, while providing you with a stronger analytical base. We will focus on international trade theory and policy, and issues in international finance.

ECON2231 Financial Forecasting *Prerequisites: ECON1151, MATH1100*

*Course is open only to economics majors and economics minors*

*Richard McGowan, S.J.*

The theory and practice of applied time series analysis will be explored. First the different segments (trend, seasonality, cyclical, and irregular) of a time series will be analyzed by examining the Autocorrelation functions (ACF) and Partial Autocorrelation functions (PACF). The specifics model to model the various types of time series include linear regression, panel regression, seasonal decomposition, exponential smoothing, ARIMA modeling as well as combining models. This course is offered as a hybrid
ECON2242 Public Policy in an Aging Society *Prerequisites: ECON1101*

*Joseph Quinn*

We live in a rapidly aging nation. In two decades, the age distribution of the US will look like that of Florida today. We will analyze the underlying demographic trends, the economic status of the aged, the fiscal challenge of an aging society, public policies (especially social insurance) designed to assist older Americans, the impact of public policy on individual behavior, and proposals for reform.

ECON2246 Impact of News on Financial Markets *Prerequisites: ECON1101*

*Hossein Kazemi*

The impact of news on financial markets is examined in this course. More specifically, this course studies how Central Banks and Financial Markets react to economic and financial news. Using tools of economics and finance, the impact of macroeconomic data releases, business and financial news, as well as domestic and global political news on the financial markets will be measured and evaluated in this course. It further examines how the markets, including bonds, equities, commodities and foreign exchange markets, react to the news.

ECON2269 Aspects of Economic Growth *Prerequisites: ECON1101*

*Veysel Ulusoy*

This course aims at providing both the theory and empirics of modern economic growth theories. In addition to Classical and Neoclassical economic growth approaches, current views such as endogenous growth theory will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on why some countries lag behind others and ways to solve this problem. The factors that are affecting economic growth such as technology, capital accumulation, change in employment, education, human capital, saving, energy consumption, and democracy are studied in detail. The course also addresses the role of financial markets and policy formation of economic growth.

ECON2299 Independent Study *Prerequisite: Permission of Department*

The student works under the direction of an individual professor.

**Upper Level Electives**

#Enrollment limited; significant writing/research component.
+Fulfills cultural diversity core requirement.
For up-to-date information on Economics course offerings, please see [http://www.bc.edu/economics](http://www.bc.edu/economics)

ECON3242 Economics of Aging *Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON2228*

Not open to students who have taken ECON2242

*Matthew Rutledge*

In a world facing the challenges associated with rapidly aging populations, the tools of economics will be essential to designing effective public policy solutions. The course first describes the institutional environment – including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and employer retirement plans – in which individuals and families make decisions about
their older years. It also debates potential reforms that aim to resolve the shortcomings and inequities of those policies and to put them on sounder fiscal footing. Then students will conduct their own empirical research with the same survey data used by professional economists, and learn how to effectively communicate the results to a broader audience.

ECON3308 Game Theory in Economics Prerequisites: ECON2201 or ECON2203

Hideo Konishi/Tayfun Sonmez

This course is an introduction to game theory. Game theory consists of a coherent set of concepts and analytical tools to examine interactive or strategic situations between people, that is, situations where the well-being of one actor depends not only on what s/he does but also on what others do. Hence in deciding how best to act, each person needs to consider how others are likely to act as well. Game theory has become a widely used tool of analysis in a wide range of disciplines, including economics, business, political science, law, and international relations.

Econ 3309 Game Theory and Social Behavior Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON2228

Moshe Hoffman

We apply insights from game theory to explain human social behavior, focusing on novel applications which have heretofore been the realm of psychologists and philosophers – for example, why people speak indirectly, in what sense beauty is socially constructed, and where our moral intuitions come from – and eschewing traditional economic applications such as industrial organizations or auctions.

ECON3312# Evolutionary Economics Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON2228

Donald Cox

This course uses evolutionary biology to better understand the psychology of preferences, a central concept in economics. Why are people risk averse? Impatient? What explains novelty seeking, habits, addiction? What makes parents provide for children? We will use evolutionary thinking to explore these and a host of other diverse topics: violence, adolescent risk taking, sexual behavior, mating preferences, marriage and divorce, rearing and investing in children, extended families, trade and specialization, cooperation and conflict, cults and gangs, religion, and interactions between genetic and cultural forces. This course has an intensive research and writing requirement and enrollment is limited. You should be comfortable using stata.

ECON3314 How Incentives Explain Seemingly Irrational Behavior Prerequisites: ECON2201

Bethany Burum

Behavioral Economics and social psychology have revealed many surprising quirks of social behavior, providing robust evidence that people deceive themselves, are systematically overconfident, believe implausible things to avoid inconsistency, and so on. This course will demonstrate that we can make sense of these seeming irrationalities through understanding how incentives shape behavior. We begin by understanding how genetic and cultural evolution shaped us to respond to certain incentives, including material resources and the social rewards (peer approval, a good reputation, etc.) that have long been associated with resources and mating opportunities. We then investigate how incentives operate in both blatant and subtle ways to motivate our behavior, applying this lens to many of the greatest hits from behavioral economics and social psychology, including confirmation bias, strategic ignorance, insensitivity
to impact of charitable giving, and more. Assignments will focus on how to evaluate empirical evidence and test explanations convincingly.

#Enrollment limited; significant writing/research component.
+Fulfills cultural diversity core requirement.
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**ECON3324 Money and Financial Markets Prerequisites: ECON2202 or ECON2204, ECON2228**

Not open to students who have taken ECON2246

Hossein Kazemi

This course covers topics such as the significance and multiple functions of money in the economy, the behavior of interest rates, the banking system, financial markets, and the management of financial institutions. This course further covers the Federal Reserve System and the conduct of monetary policy, different asset classes, the foreign exchange market, and the international financial system. There is a heavy emphasis on use of market data and the analysis of economic releases-earnings reports, government policy statements, etc.-to provide a comprehensive introduction to the subject. Moreover, through an extensive use of Bloomberg in this class students learn how to access and analyze data and economic releases to provide a window into how modern practitioners in the discipline analyze financial markets.

**ECON3326 Experimental Economics Prerequisites: ECON2201**

Lucas Coffman

This course is for anyone who wants to be able to answer questions using experiments. This course is an introduction to experimental methods, particularly those developed by economists. We will discuss in detail all of the steps to an experiment, from design, measurement, and randomization to cost and power analyses. This is strictly a methods course; the experiments we discuss are chosen to give a broad understanding of experimental methods, not a foundation of famous experimental results. Nonetheless, we will cover experiments in a variety of interesting fields; behavioral economics, economics of developing countries, discrimination, labor economics, cognitive and social psychology, and more. There are two main value-addeds from this course. First, you will be equipped to design and run an experiment to answer important questions. Second, in understanding what the optimal experimental design should look like, you will be armed with better lenses through which to view naturally existing data.

**ECON 3327 Financial Econometrics Prerequisites: ECON2228, MATH 1100**

Geoffrey Sanzenbacher/Veysel Ulusoy

ECON3327 is designed to teach about the sorts of advanced econometrics topics that are often applied in financial settings, or, more broadly, in applied research. The course will include treatments of the analysis of time-series, pooled cross-sectional data, and panel or longitudinal data. The course will cover basic theory, but will focus much more on application. During the course you will be working with Economic data ranging from stock pricing data to macroeconomic data to microeconomic survey data.

**ECON3331# Distributive Justice Prerequisites: ECON2201 or ECON2203**
Uzi Segal

This course will analyze modern analysis of justice and fairness. We will discuss bargaining situations and social choice questions. Part of the course will be devoted to the recent experimental literature regarding fairness. Limited enrollment (12). Significant writing/research component. This course requires a strong conceptual understanding of Micro Theory.

ECON3339 Applying Economic Theory in the Practice of Law Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON2228

John Felter

In this seminar, we will investigate, discuss, and write about how the economic theory that you are learning can be applied in several areas of substantive and procedural law. We will apply both traditional (neoclassical) and behavioral economic theory. We will perform both positive and normative analyses. Among may other law and economics topics, we will explore how, thinking like economists, will allow you to analyze: the allocation and transfer of property rights, the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of criminal laws, the deterrence and compensation goals of the tort (accident) law system, the effectiveness and efficiency of the laws and rules that govern the United States judicial system, applying game theory, why civil legal disputes are commenced and often, but not always, settle, the use or misuse of statistics and expert evidence, the efficiency and accuracy of jury trials, the effects of allocating attorneys’ fees and fee-shifting in civil litigation, and the costs and benefits and operation of the United States patent law system. Throughout the semester, the emphasis will always be on how the economic theory that you are learning can be applied in the practice of law in real world situations.

ECON3340 Labor Economics Prerequisites: ECON2201 or ECON2203, ECON2228

Haibin Jiang/Mark Kazarosian

This course will introduce students to the methodology of labor economics from both institutional and neoclassical perspectives. The principal emphasis will be on neoclassical theory and empirical work dealing with the supply and demand for labor; the operation of the labor market; the determination of wages; and the impact of trade unions and collective bargaining. Special emphasis will be placed on applications of theory and empirical findings to policy questions. It is highly recommended that students have a strong grasp of Calculus.

ECON3348 Economics of Electricity Markets Prerequisites: ECON2201

Andrew Copland

Every five minutes of every hour, of every day, of every year, virtual auctions set clearing prices and quantities for electricity markets in New England. This process, along with related markets, drives $10+ billion to change hands every year, and is replicated (with slight differences) in six other regions across the United States. When it works well, it is a little-noticed backbone of modern life. When problems arise, cities can be plunged into prolonged rolling blackouts with devastating consequences. While we’ll briefly examine standard models of resource economics, this class will spend the significant majority of its time thoroughly analyzing the history, present state, and possible futures of the electricity markets, with a particular focus on the industry in the United States. We’ll use economic
reasoning to consider pressing challenges facing the industry, such as the incorporation of
decarbonization and green technologies into our electric grid, how battery storage is
changing the energy landscape, and how to prepare for the coming electrification of
transportation and heating.

ECON3353 Industrial Organization – Competition and Antitrust Prerequisites:
ECON2201 or ECON2203

Charles Murry

This course is an economic analysis of market outcomes when firms have market power.
Central to the course is the understanding of the potential harm of market power on
consumers and workers through a series of case studies of recent and current antitrust
legislation. Topics covered include mergers, collusion, product differentiation, patents and
standards, and issues related to big tech and platforms.

#Enrollment limited; significant writing/research component.
+Fulfills cultural diversity core requirement.
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ECON3363# Micro Public Policy Analysis Prerequisites: ECON2201 or ECON2203

Joseph Quinn

This is a seminar on the economic analysis of current microeconomic public policy issues. During the
first half of the course, students will read and discuss articles on selected topics (from the syllabus), and
prepare first drafts of papers on topics of their own choice. The second half of the course will be run like
a professional economics conference. Students will read and critique others’ papers, present their own
drafts to the class, and then revise their own papers on the basis of the comments received.

ECON3365 Public Finance Prerequisites: ECON2201 or ECON2203 and ECON2228

Mark Kazarosian/Christopher McHugh

This is a course in the microeconomics of the public sector. We will discuss the rationale for the
government's role in a market economy, major expenditure programs, and the theory and structure of the
tax system. The focus will be on the federal (as opposed to state and local) government's expenditure
and tax programs, with special attention given to topics of current concern.

ECON3372 International Finance Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON2202 or
ECON2204, ECON2228

Not open to students who have taken ECON3371 or ECON3376

Christian Velasquez

International financial markets, international trade and balance of payments issues will be studied by
using analytical models of the open economy. Topics of particular interests are exchange rate
determination, capital flows, trade flows, and other international linkages between economies. The
course will apply the analytical tools of international economics to address macroeconomic aspects of
current policy issues such as the global impact of the financial crisis, exchange rate policy, sovereign
debt crises, and persistent trade deficits and international indebtedness.
ECON3374 Development Economics and Policy Prerequisites: ECON1151, ECON2201

Haldun Evrenk

This course examines development economics and development policy. The purpose is to understand the lives of the poor and the economies of poor countries in order to decipher what – if anything – can be done to improve their lives. We will consider what might be holding the poor back including population growth, lack of education, poor health, corruption, and institutional impediments. We will examine different empirical methods to evaluate the effects of a policy or program, and what we do, and do not, know about poverty. Students will write a paper which considers the research and economic reasoning for a particular program to help the poor by a government giving foreign aid, a developing country government, or an NGO. This course is appropriate for economics majors as well as for majors in international studies with the appropriate prerequisites.

ECON3376 International Economic Relations Prerequisite: Permission of Department

Not open to students who have taken ECON3371 or ECON3372

James Anderson

This course introduces the study of economic relations among countries. It combines material contained in ECON3371 and ECON3372, and substitutes for both those courses. Primarily designed for International Studies majors, it is also appropriate for economics and other social science majors, with the proviso that the comprehensive coverage of the course implies that the workload is heavy and expectations for students are high. Topics include the determinants of trade in goods, services, and capital; the economic policies that nations use to influence such trade; the theory and practice of international macroeconomics; and problems of coordinating macroeconomic policies among countries. The course features the usefulness (and limitations) of game theory for explaining international economic interactions.

ECON3379 Financial Economics Prerequisites: ECON2201, ECON1151, MATH1100, ECON2228

Peter Ireland

This undergraduate elective focuses on financial economics, with specific emphasis on asset pricing and the valuation of risky cash flows. After developing and studying the details of consumer decision-making under uncertainty, it uses that general framework as a basis for understanding both equilibrium and no-arbitrage theories of securities pricing, including the capital asset pricing model (CAPM), the consumption capital asset pricing model (CCAPM), Arrow-Debreu theories, martingale pricing methods, and the arbitrage pricing theory (APT).

ECON3389 Machine Learning for Economics Prerequisites: ECON1151

Arnab Palit

The world we live in is characterized by an exponential increase in data that accurately describes our daily lives, referred to as “big data.” To harness this information, new methods like Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence have emerged, enabling high-dimensional statistical analysis. The aim of this course is to provide students with an
introduction to modern data-driven learning, particularly for causal economic analysis. While we will cover the theoretical foundations, our emphasis will be on application and learning how and when to use these methods effectively, as well as identifying their limitations. The coursework comprises homework assignments utilizing simulated and real-world data, weekly online discussions on real-life data analysis problems, and a group project in the form of a case study. We will use R as our primary data analysis software and devote a significant amount of class time to teaching how to efficiently code various analytic models. Prior coding experience is welcome but not necessary, as everything you need to know about R will be taught from scratch.

ECON3399 Independent Study Prerequisites: ECON2228, ECON2201, ECON 2202; Permission of Department

The student works under the direction of an individual professor.

Senior Thesis

ECON4498 Senior Honors Thesis Prerequisite: ECON4497

Robert Murphy

Required of all seniors seeking a degree with Honors in Economics.