ECONOMICS TOPICS COURSES  
(from Fall 1998 to present)

ECO205E **Topic: Economic Rhetoric and Crisis.** Examines the role of economic rhetoric in shaping popular understanding of economics and public policy. Surveys institutions producing pop-economic knowledge from education to media, paying particular attention to the various interpretations of the current economic crisis. “The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist” (John Maynard Keynes, 1936). *Critical Media and Cultural Studies major elective.*

ECO 305A **Topic: Economics and Cinema.** An interdisciplinary seminar applying film studies to economic themes portrayed in the arts. Features a diverse selection of classic and recent films, discusses the economic issues they address, and analyzes the artistic devices used to convey those issues. As a final project, students will create and present a proposal for a movie including a synopsis of the story, its economic context, and an analysis of the ways it would express social-economic issues. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203 or consent.*

ECO 305A **Topic: Games, Rationality, and Behavior.** Uses class games derived from game theory and cross-disciplinary experiments to develop an understanding of rationality. Drawing on readings in economics, philosophy, psychology, and evolutionary anthropology, explores the power and limitations of rationality as a core concept for understanding our behavior and ourselves. *Prerequisites: two ECO courses, junior/senior status.*

ECO 305A **Topic: International Economic History.** Traces the evolution of economic institutions from the Stone Age to present, paying particular attention to the diversity of these institutions across cultures. Studies the relevant interest-group considerations that motivate social processes, traditions, and structures – often asking, “who wins and who looses?” Major historical themes include the political economy of oil and war, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and punishment and social order. *Prerequisite: ECO 212, 213, or instructor's consent.*

ECO 305B **Topic: U.S. Macroeconomic Policy.** Examines the history of U.S. macroeconomic policies. Emphasis will be on monetary policy, but fiscal and other stabilization policies will also be considered. Specific policy decisions will be analyzed in detail. The history of the Federal Reserve System, and its changing role in Federal regulation of the macroeconomy and the banking system, will be discussed and critically analyzed. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203 (or 212 and 213).*

ECO 305C **Topic: Economic Impacts of Social Capital.** Interdisciplinary course focused on interrelations between economic performance (economic development and economic growth), polity and transitions to democracy, social capital, civic engagement, trust, and institutional infrastructure. Roles of the state, the market, and civil society in building sustainable communities in a variety of developed and developing countries, and emerging market economies, including the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, will be analyzed. A portion of the course will also examine civic engagement in the Metro-Orlando area.
**ECO 305C Topic: Economic History of Conflict.** Traces the evolution of economic institutions from antiquity to present as they relate to conflicts and war, while particularly focusing on the economic history of the U.S. and its conflicts. Studies the relevant economic interest-groups that drive social processes, traditions, and structures to interpret and understand histories encountered. This approach will be applied to several important historical conflicts throughout the course, concentrating on those particularly relevant to our understanding of current debates -- the Crusades and other religious wars, colonialism and neo-colonialism, the Cold War, several conflicts in the Middle East, and the political economy of the military industrial complex. Will explicitly tell the story from the (usually ignored) perspective of politically and economically weak groups (Native Americans, poor, Africans, immigrants, foreigners, savages, heathen, primitives, workers, labor-unions, etc.).

**ECO 305C Topic: Rhetoric and Markets.** Examines the differences between the actual functioning of markets, as understood by economists, and the political rhetoric about them. Students will thus acquire a “map” of the competing academic, social, and political positions that will go some way towards penetrating the rhetorical veil of ignorance obscuring the political discourse. *Prerequisites: ECO 212 and ECO 213.*

**ECO 305D Topic: Comparative Modern Empires.** Economics developed as a discipline in parallel with the British Empire, both as a mode of justification and as a critical voice. Recently, these debates have become particularly urgent as different economic systems come under the increasing pressures of globalization. We will compare the political economy of the British Empire and the United States, and attempt to draw useful geopolitical conclusions from the analysis. *Prerequisites: ECO 212 and ECO 213.*

**ECO 305D Topic: European Emerging Markets.** Provides historical background to the Soviet and East European economies between 1950-1990; institutional features of Soviet type economies (balanced planning, pricing, success indicators, etc.); patterns of economic performance under communism; conceptual approaches to transformation and elements in the process of transformation; development of capital markets; foreign investment; EU enlargement; case studies of national strategies and outcomes. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203.*

**ECO 305D Topic: Post-Communist Transitions.** Examines the major economic problems of transition from centralized planning to a market-based economy. Focus on the problems of creating an institutional infrastructure compatible with markets and private property, in the context of real social, political, and cultural practices in post-communist societies. Examples are drawn from Russia and former communist countries since the 1980s. *Prerequisites: ECO 212 and 213.*

**ECO 305D Topic: Transition Economies.** Provides historical background on the Soviet and East European economies from 1950-1990; institutional features of Soviet-type economies (character of plan targets, balanced planning, pricing, indicators of economic performance, etc.); patterns of economic performance under communism; conceptual approaches to "transformation;" elements in the process of transformation, and review of related literature; development of capital markets, foreign investment, European Union enlargement; and case studies of national strategies and their outcomes, particularly Russia, Poland, Hungary, Romania. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203.*

**ECO 305E Topic: The Economics of International Financial Markets.** Covers current institutions and practices making up international financial markets. Interactions among national monetary systems, the forex market, and other international financial assets are examined. Students develop basic
understandings of speculation, risk hedging, portfolio management, derivatives, fundamental versus
technical analysis of stocks, and other topics. Also includes simulated real-time international asset trading
via the Internet.

**ECO 305J Topic: The Economic Policy Study Group.** Economic policy issues of current interest are discussed
and analyzed in a cooperative group setting. Topics are chosen collectively by the class members. Topics may
include: welfare reform; issues in international trade; the flat tax; anti-poverty programs; social security reform;
environmental policies; and macroeconomic stabilization policies. *Prerequisite: ECO 213.*

**ECO 305K Topic: Comparative Theories of Growth and Technical Change.** An introduction to
comparative theories of growth and technical change. Classical, Keynesian, and neoclassical theories of
growth will be presented and developed. Included are the Harrod-Domar model and its recent extensions,
the Solow model, as well as recent developments in both classical and neoclassical endogenous theories
of growth. Emphasis will be placed on empirical applications of each approach. *Prerequisites: ECO
202/212 and 203/213.*

**ECO 305K Topic: Economics and Human Behavior.** Human behavior is often 'economically
irrational,' contradicting traditional assumptions of economists. For example, in their actual behaviors,
people are often willing to give up economic benefits to enforce their sense of fairness or justice, or for
other 'non-economic' goals. Surveys scholarly research on actual human behaviors, both the purely
individual as well as social. Involves extensive readings, classroom exercises and quasi-experiments,
discussions, and readings-based papers. Research in other disciplines relevant to a new understanding of
economic behavior, and the latest work that monitors human brain activity that is also beginning to affect
economics also reviewed. *Prerequisites: ECO 202, ECO 203, ECO 204.*

**ECO 305L Topic: Gender Issues in Latin American Economic Development.** Explores the relationship
between gender and economic development in Latin America. Examines the evolution of women's
property rights, access to resources and employment, and socio-economic position. Uses economic tools
to understand the role that gender plays in various development models, as well as in the analysis of
poverty, inequality, credit, land, and labor markets. Looks at the impact of economic change and
economic development on gender, families, and the household, as well as women's responses to such
changes via movements for social and gender justice. Finally, examines 'post-development' feminist
alternatives to modernization that are emerging from the Global South. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203
or ECO 212 and 213.*

**ECO 305L Topic: Gender and Economic Development in Latin America.** Explores the relationship
between gender and economic development in Latin America. Examines the affects of women's property
rights, access to resources and employment on household decisions, and local development strategies.
Uses economic tools to understand the role that gender plays in various development models as well as in
the analysis of poverty, inequality, credit, land, and labor. Looks at the impact of economic change and
economic development on gender, families, and the household, as well as women's responses to such
changes via movements for social and gender justice. Finally, examines 'post-development' feminist
alternatives to modernization that are emerging from the Global South.
ECO 305M  **Topic: History of International Trade and Finance.** Traces the history of international trade and finance from the classical period, through the medieval period, to the modern period. Focuses on issues concerning the evolution of the institutions that facilitated trade and finance, and the impact that they had/have on economic and social behavior.  Prerequisites: ECO 202/212 and 203/213.  International Relations major elective.

ECO 305N  **Topic: The Global Marketplace.** Many economists herald markets as institutions that promote individual freedom, expansion of wealth, and social harmony; others condemn them for generating avarice, economic inequality, and social dissolution. Addresses how economists and others have interpreted the increasing scale and scope of market relations upon society historically, and applies these understandings to the global marketplace today. Critically examines several key institutions in today’s global marketplace, including the WTO, NAFTA, and multinational corporations. Prerequisites: ECO 202 and 203.

ECO 305Q  **Topic: The Global Marketplace.** Focuses upon how economists and philosophers have interpreted and debated the proper role of ‘the market’ in contemporary global society and in producing good economic outcomes. Critically evaluates global market integration from a number of economic and ethical positions across today's political spectrum. Specific topics discussed include the World Trade Organization (W.T.O.), North American Free Trade Agreement (N.A.F.T.A.), outsourcing, and foreign direct investment (F.D.I.).

ECO 305R  **Topic: Urban Political Economy.** Explores the central concepts and themes in urban economics and urban social theory. Briefly examines the neoclassical perspective and shifts focus to the political economy approaches to urban built spaces and relations. The latter draw on radical and social theory to look at economic processes, forms of power, and cultural meanings as complexly determining the historical patterns of urban development and change. Course also presents ideas from sociology, geography, political science, urban studies, and anthropology. Themes include modernization and the city, de-industrialization, neo-liberal urbanization, forms of social exclusion, negotiation of urban difference and rights, and alternative urban development. Prerequisites: ECO 202, 203, and 221.

ECO 305S  **Topic: Health Economics.** An application of economic reasoning to organization, delivery and cost of healthcare services in the U.S. Examines the supply and demand of health care, the market for health care professionals, health providers and health insurance, and the role of government in the health care market. Emphasizes comparative analysis of healthcare financing and delivery in several industrialized nations. Compares the performance of the U.S's healthcare system to other nations, considers possibilities for healthcare reform in the U.Ss and discusses the relative merits of current reform efforts. Prerequisite: ECO 202 and 203.

ECO 305U  **Topic: Economic Development of Latin America.** Explores the key issues and debates with respect to economic development in Latin America. Begins with a look at Latin American economies in historical perspective (e.g., colonialism, independence/nation-building, and revolutionary movements) and continues through 20th-century stages of development and associated theories. Surveys mainstream economic development theories and their relevance to Latin America, as well as Latin American theories of development and underdevelopment such as dependency and structuralist theories. Also examines contemporary critiques and alternatives such as social movements, post-structuralist views, grassroots
development, and gender and development. Specific topics to be covered include trade policy, debt crises, stabilization policy, poverty and inequality, rural development, and sustainability.

**ECO 305W Topic: China's Development Experience.** Introduces contemporary Chinese economic development in historical and global contexts. Delineates changes in China's economic systems across different time periods, examines domestic and international forces driving these changes, evaluates the performance of distinct economic institutions and policies China experimented with in the past six decades, and explores the challenges posed by China's current development model to China itself and other countries in the world. Lessons from the Chinese development experience and implications for the rest of the developing world and global capitalism highlighted throughout the course. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and ECO 203, or ECO 212 and ECO 213.*

**ECO 305Y Topic: Economics and Contemporary Social Issues.** Through readings of current books on contemporary social issues, examines and critiques the author analyses and perspectives through the lens of economic ideas and the values they reflect. At least two of the books will be chosen by students in the course. *Prerequisites: ECO 202 and ECO 203, or ECO 212 and ECO 213.*