

# History and Philosophy of Economics: From Aristotle to Malthus

Econ 318/Phil 362

Fall Term 2014

**Instructor:** Tyler DesRoches

**Location:** Lasserre 102

**Time:** 12.00-13.00 M, W, F

**Instructor's Office:** Buchanan E 163

**Instructors Office Hours:** W: 14:30-16:30 or by appointment.

**Teaching Assistant:** Shampa Bhattacharjee

**Teaching Assistant's Office Hours:** F: 13:15-14:15, Brock Hall Annex 0155

Please direct all e-mail to Shampa: [shampaisi@gmail.com](mailto:shampaisi@gmail.com)

## Course Description

This course will trace the development of economic thought from Aristotle to Malthus, also reading the work of Aquinas, Mun, Locke, Hume, Quesnay and, for six weeks, Adam Smith. We will focus on the conceptual foundations of economics, such as value, distribution, and economic growth, as well as the ethical dimensions of economics. In this course, the greatest emphasis will be placed on understanding the primary sources in the Course Pack (CP) and Adam Smith. Please bring the primary sources to every class for discussion.

## Required Texts (Available at the UBC Bookstore)

Henry W. Spiegel, The Growth of Economic Thought  
Robert L. Heilbroner, ed., The Essential Adam Smith,  
Course Packet of Primary Sources (CP)

## Grading

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Group Presentations        | 20        |
| Outline for Research Paper | 5         |
| Research Paper             | 35        |
| Final Exam                 | <u>40</u> |
|                            | 100%      |

## Group Presentations

Beginning on Friday, September 26 (and every Friday until November 28) there will be two group presentations that are designed to test your basic understanding of the readings and to get you to think about the readings with the help of your peers. This is also a great opportunity for students to hone their public presentation skills. Two small

groups of students (approx. 5 people each) will each give short (**10-15 minutes**) presentations to the class. After the presentations, both groups will then be required to field questions from the audience (**15-20 minutes**). We will form groups during the second week of September when students will be provided with a list of questions from which to choose one or two. Students will then naturally form a group with the other students who have chosen the same question (NB. Shampa and I may have to make some small adjustments to groups but we will do our best to satisfy everyone's preferences). Group presentations do not have to be over the top but they must be clear and concise. There is flexibility in terms of the content that groups can choose to include in their presentation; however, students must keep in mind that the ultimate objective of the presentation is to provide a clear answer to the question at hand. Every member of each group should contribute to the group's presentation in some way, shape, or form. However, the specific role that each member is responsible for will be determined by the group members themselves.

Group presentations are worth 20% of your final grade. How will the group presentations be evaluated? Every member of each group who participates in the presentation will receive the same grade based on the overall quality of the presentation and the Q&A that follows immediately afterwards. This grade will only be worth 50% of each student's grade, however. The other 50% of your grade will be determined by the members of your group.

Only if notified *in advance* will it be possible to accommodate missed presentations. Students who do not sign up with a group or do not participate in a group presentation will receive a grade of zero.

### **Research Paper**

In the last class of the term, on November 28, you are to turn in a **2,000 word** original research paper that is worth 35% of your final grade (late essays will be penalized 10% per day). In mid-October, I will give every student a hand-out that will explain exactly what is required for the research paper and the outline, which is worth 5% of your total grade (due on Monday, October 27).

### **Final Exam**

In the last class of the term, every student will receive a preview for the final exam. The exam will have three parts. Part A is a short question on Malthus that will not be previewed. Part B will list three essay questions on Smith; two will appear on the final exam and you are to write on one. Part C will list three questions that synthesize the entire course material; two of these questions will appear on the final exam and you are to write on one. Please note that you will not be allowed to make-up the final exam without a documented, University-sanctioned excuse.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

For some students laptops, tablets and smart phones can be useful tools for the classroom. However, others find such devices distracting. They can easily take away

from the social environment naturally generated by a classroom setting. While the use of laptops is not prohibited in this class, it should be kept to a minimum. Students should only use laptops for genuine classroom activities, such as taking notes, and not for updating their Facebook status, etc. If you choose to use a laptop in class I recommend that you sit in the back row so that your screen does not distract students sitting behind you.

### **Attendance**

There is no official requirement that you attend class. However, it is difficult to do well unless you attend regularly. *Attending class on Friday is particularly important because this is the day that your peers will give their group presentations.* The success of every presentation depends on a fully engaged and interactive audience. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Please contact another student enrolled in the course or the TA.

In general, I expect students to be consistently well prepared for class by having read (and thought about) the material. *These readings cannot to be passively consumed.* I welcome (and expect) questions and challenges in class. I also hope that students will drop by my office frequently to discuss what we're doing or just to say "hello" and let me know how the course is going. If you are unable to come to my office hours, please feel free to set up an appointment. You are also encouraged to discuss any problems you may have with the teaching of the course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

### **Caveat**

This syllabus may be changed by the instructor at any time. If any problems arise that might potentially jeopardize your performance in the course, you must try to inform me of the problem at the next available office hour or speak to me after class. ***Please note that cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will result in an "F" for the course.*** If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me. The University's definition of plagiarism, along with excellent resources for avoiding it, can be found at: <http://www.library.ubc.ca/home/plagiarism/>

| <u>Week</u>         | <u>Subject</u>                                 | <u>Readings</u>                              | <u>Assignment/<br/>Evaluation</u>   |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Sept. 3, 5          | Preliminaries and Ancient                      | Spiegel, Chap. 2                             |   |
| Sept. 8, 10, 12     | Ancient and Medieval Economics                 | Spiegel, Chap. 3; Aristotle and Aquinas (CP) |   |
| Sept. 15, 17, 19    | Mercantilism                                   | Spiegel, Chaps. 4-5; Mun (CP)                |   |
| Sept. 22, 24, 26    | Liberalism                                     | Spiegel, Chaps. 6-7; Locke (CP)              | First Group Presentations, Friday, Sept. 26   |
| Sept. 29, Oct. 1, 3 | The Enlightenment                              | Spiegel, Chap. 9; Hume (CP)                  | Second Group Presentations, Friday, Oct. 3  |
| Oct. 6, 8, 10       | Physiocracy                                    | Spiegel, Chap. 8; Quesnay (CP)               | Third Group Presentations, Friday, Oct. 10  |
| Oct. 13             | <b>Thanksgiving</b>                            |  |   |
| Oct. 15, 17         | Adam Smith: Science and Justice                | Smith, pp. 1-56; Spiegel, Chap. 10           | Fourth Group Presentations, Friday, Oct. 17   |
| Oct. 20, 22, 24     | Adam Smith: Moral Theory                       | Smith, pp. 57-100                            | Fifth Group Presentations, Friday, Oct. 24  |
| Oct. 27, 29, 31     | Adam Smith: Wealth and Virtue                  | Smith, pp. 110-147                           | <b>Outline for the Research Paper Due, Oct. 27;</b><br>Sixth Group Presentations, Friday, Oct. 31 |
| Nov. 3, 5, 7        | Adam Smith: Theory of Value:                   | Smith, pp. 149-194                           | <b>Outline Returned, Nov. 3;</b><br>Seventh Group Presentations, Friday, Nov. 7                   |
| Nov. 10, 12, 14     | Adam Smith: Theory of Production               | Smith, pp. 194-247; Spiegel Ch. 11           | Eighth Group Presentations, Friday, Nov. 14   |
| Nov. 17, 19, 21     | Adam Smith: Economic Inequality;               | Smith, pp. 248-320; Spiegel Ch. 13           | Ninth Group Presentations, Friday, Nov. 21  |
| Nov. 24, 26, 28     | Population and Scarcity; Review for Final Exam | Spiegel, Chap. 12; Malthus (CP)              | <b>Research Paper Due, Nov. 28;</b><br><b>Exam Preview Distributed</b>                            |

**Final Exam – December 2014 – Date: TBA**