

ECONOMICS 190S

The Development of Modern Economics

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"Nobody can separate the `internal' history of science from the `external' history of its allies. The former does not count as history at all. At best it is court historiography, at worst Legends of the Saints. The latter is not history of `science', it is history." (Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, p. 218.)

This class generally concerns the history of 20th century economics, focusing attention on the development of the discipline as a mainstream discourse in the United States. One of the particular concerns of the course will be to suggest the ways, and the history of how, a broad and varied set of approaches and practices early in the 20th century evolved, by late in the 20th century, to a single mainstream, now called [neoclassical economics](#) or some such variant, and a variety of marginalized discourses mostly critical of neoclassical economics.

The seminar will meet once a week. There will be required material to be read each week. All required reading is in either a) the paperback *The Ordinary Business of Life* (OBL) by Backhouse, b) E-reserve at the course's Blackboard site, or linked to "Course Documents" on the course's Blackboard site.

Course Requirements: Each week each student will prepare a one to two page typed response to that week's **non-textbook** readings, to be turned in at the end of that class. Those responses will be the basis for the seminar discussion. 30% of each student's course grade will be based on those weekly response papers, and participation in the seminar discussion. Additionally, as befits a course with "R" and "W" designations, students undertake a research project, which will result in a final paper. Students work in pairs as part of that class project, each writing partnership producing in effect one chapter of the longer class project. Resources will include the [Social Science Citation Index](#), [JSTOR](#) (the online searchable data base of economics journals), [Silver Platter](#) and other tools (and especially archival materials in the [Economists' Papers Project](#)).

The focus of the course is the class project/paper. In Fall 2010 the class project will be the construction of a serious intellectual biography of [Martin Bronfenbrenner](#). Pairs of students will work on the various sections of that project, using published materials, interviews, archival sources, and so on. It is my intention as well to make sure that very successful papers can be developed, via independent study in Spring 2011, into honors papers to secure graduation with distinction in

economics. The paper grade will constitute 70% of each student's final course grade.

I will work closely with you, functioning as your research director, to facilitate development of the project and the emerging paper. We will meet as necessary in tutorial sessions so that I may assess your progress and guide the work that remains to be done. These consultations will specifically involve working with you on successive drafts attending to the structure and argument and language, in short the rhetoric, of the paper as is appropriate for a course that carries the "writing" designation. **Your attendance at the seminars and the tutorials is required. Unapproved absences will result in a "0" for the participation grade.**

The final paper will be turned in on the last day of class.

Weekly discussions are based on common readings to be done by all class members **for** the specific class session:

Week 1. First Class Meeting. Information session; discussion of class project, reading responses, class resources, etc.

Week 2. Historiography. Required Reading: Prologue, in Backhouse (OBL); Weintraub's "How Should We Write the History of 20th Century Economics?" (Blackboard Course Document). {Background Reading: Chap 16, "A Methodological Postscript" in Mark Blaug, *Economic Theory in Retrospect* (3rd ed.); E. R. [Weintraub](#), Chaps. 1, 8 in *Stabilizing Dynamics*, 1991; Additional Reading can be found in the collection of papers put together by Mark Blaug, *The Historiography of Economics* (1991).

Week 3. English Economic Thought Circa 1900. Required Reading: Chapter 8 (OBL); Chap 9, "Economic Orthodoxies", in Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, 1986 (e-reserve). {Background Reading: Chap 2, "Cambridge Civilisation", in Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, 1986; Chap 8, "The Marginal Revolution" in Mark Blaug; Chap 4, "Leon Walras" in Bruna Ingraio and Giorgio Israel, *The Invisible Hand*, 1990.}

Week 4. The Development of American Economics. Required Reading: Chapter 9 (OBL); Bradley Bateman's "Clearing the Ground: The Demise of the Social Gospel Movement and the Rise of Neoclassicism in American Economics" in Mary Morgan and Malcolm Rutherford's *From Interwar Pluralism to Postwar Neoclassicism* (1998) (e-reserve); Malcolm Rutherford's "American Institutional Economics in the Interwar Period" in Samuels, Biddle, and Davis's *A Companion to the History of Economic Thought* (2003) (Blackboard Course Document). {Background Reading: "Marginalism and Historicism in Economics: Chapter 6" of Dorothy Ross's *The Origins of American Social Science* (1991) (e-reserve); Bradley Bateman's "Reflections on the Secularization of American Economics" (Duke Library e-journal) *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 30, 1, March 2008; William Baumol's "[On Method in U.S. Economics a Century Earlier](#)" *American Economic Review*, 75 (6) 1985}

Week 5. Business Cycles. Required Reading: Chapter 10 (OBL); Chapters 3 & 4 in Mary S. Morgan's *The History of Econometric Ideas* (1990). (e-reserve) {Background Reading: (business cycles); Judy L. Klein's *Statistical Visions in Time* (1997); Kyun Kim's *Equilibrium Business Cycle Theory* (1988)}.

Week 6. [Keynes](#) and Revolution? Required Reading: Chapter 15 of Skidelsky's *John Maynard Keynes, Volume 2* (e-reserve); Chapter 7 of Francesco Louça's *The Years of High Econometrics* (Blackboard course document); "The General Theory of Employment" by [J. M. Keynes](#): [The](#)

Quarterly Journal of Economics. Vol. 51, No. 2 (Feb., 1937), pp. 209-223 (Blackboard Course Document). {Background Reading: J. M. Keynes, *Collected Works, Vol. 13 (The General Theory and After, Part 1, Preparation)*.}

Week 7. General Equilibrium and The Neoclassical Synthesis. Required Reading: Chapter 11 (OBL); Chapter 6 in Weintraub's *General Equilibrium Analysis: Studies in Appraisal*, 1985, (e-reserve); Chapter 4 of E. R. Weintraub's *Microfoundations (1979)* (Blackboard Course Document) {Background Reading: Ingrao and Israel, Chap 7.}

Week 8. Economics and World War II. Required Reading: Chapters 13, Backhouse (OBL); Leonard, Chaps 12-13 of *Von Neumann, Morgenstern, and the Creation of Game Theory* (Blackboard Course Document){Background Reading: Andrew Pickering's "Cyborg History and the WWII Regime" in *Perspectives on Science*, 3, 1995, pp.1-45.}

Week 9. The Modern Economist: Engineer or Expert? Required Reading: Mary Morgan's "Economics" in Porter's and Ross' *Cambridge History of Science Volume 7* (e-reserve); and Chapter 6 of Michael Bernstein's *A Perilous Progress* (e-reserve).

Week 10. The Economics Profession in the U.S., Britain, and France. Required Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 of Marion Fourcade's *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France 1890s to 1990s* (2009) (Blackboard Course Document)).

Week 11. Economics among the Social Sciences. Required Reading: Backhouse and Fontaine's "[Introduction: Contexts of Postwar Social Science](#)" (Blackboard Course Document).

Week 12. Neoliberalism. Required Reading: Backhouse's "The Rise of Free Market Economics" in Medema and Boettke's *The Role of Government in the History of Economic Thought* (2005) (Blackboard Course Document).

Week 13. Heterodoxies. Required Reading: Chapter 14, Backhouse (OBL); Bruce Caldwell on "Hayek" (Blackboard Course Document); (handout) Chapter 6 & 7 in J. E. King's *A History of Post Keynesian Macroeconomics*. {Background Reading: Chapters 5-6 of Karen I. Vaughn's *Austrian Economics in America* (1994).}

Week 14. Tutorials on Final Paper