



RUTGERS

UNIVERSITY | NEW BRUNSWICK

Fall 2021: Economics & Public Policy,

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Instructor Information



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Virtual Office hours: via ZOOM, Wednesdays, 3 PM - 4 PM EST or by appointment

Course Delivery Format

This course is delivered in a **remote asynchronous** format. This means the learning activities and communication takes place outside of real-time. There are no "live/synchronous" class sessions. You do not have to log in at any specific scheduled time. However, there may be times, if you're working in groups on an assignment, you would need to set up a live session via the **Canvas Conferences** feature (also known as BigBlueButton), [Rutgers WebEx](https://it.rutgers.edu/webex/) (<https://it.rutgers.edu/webex/>), or through [Rutgers ZOOM](https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/) (<https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/>). The instructor will conduct a live virtual office hour once a week to

address questions, clarify topics, etc. **Note:** even though you don't need to log in at any specific time, you are required to adhere to all course work due dates.

Special Needs Accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. Refer to the [ODS documentation guidelines](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines) (<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>).

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please [complete the Registration form on the ODS web site](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form) (<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>).

Should you require my assistance in facilitating the process, I will be happy to do so. Just let me know. Below is the full contact information for the office of disability services:

Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045.

-mail Address: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu (<mailto:dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu>)

- Phone: (848) 445-6800 • Fax: (732) 445-3388
- <https://ods.rutgers.edu> (<https://ods.rutgers.edu>)

Course Description

This course introduces students to core concepts that economists use to explore public policy options in an evolving global context. Familiarity with central tenets of economics has become a prerequisite for engaging in debates policy priorities, shifting employment relations and human resource management practices. Through a variety of teaching modalities, the class will help students gain a critical appreciation of economists' reasoning, in turn enabling them to better understand contemporary controversies over policymaking and contribute to building sustainable social arrangements.

Topics include macro- and micro-level approaches to economic analysis; the needs for government regulation and the functioning of markets; the scope for and effects of fiscal and monetary policies; the promises of competition and the provision of social protection; the organization, benefits and

consequences of trade; the peculiarities of labor as a commodity and constraints on treating people as human resources; inequalities of income, wealth and opportunity.

The course's first module provides a non-technical primer on core theoretical ideas; the second module explores them in a changing empirical context; and the third module examines contemporary trends and challenges.

SMLR Learning Objectives

IV. Theoretical Perspective: Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Explain and distinguish foundational theories of economics and apply them to contemporary macroeconomic issues in a global context of increasingly open markets.

V. Understanding Context: Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions.

- Compare and contrast particular economic regimes as a critical context for public policy priorities, union initiatives to raise labor standards, and management decisions.

Overview of Topics



Module 1: The Economy and Economics

- **Week 1: The Economic Status Quo - Inequitable and Unsustainable (September 1-6)**
 - Assignment: Discussion Forum #1
- **Week 2: Thinking like an Economist - Between Promise and Peril (September 7-13)**
 - Assignment: Short Essay
- **Week 3: Fundamentals of Microeconomics (September 14-20)**
 - Assignment: Prepare for Quiz
- **Week 4: Fundamentals of Macroeconomics (September 21-27)**
 - Assignment: Quiz
- **Week 5: Challenges to Conventional Economic Thinking (September 28-October 4)**
 - Assignment: Discussion Forum #2

Module 2: Economic Theory Meets the Real World

- **Week 6: Tools for Managing the National Economy (October 5-11)**
 - Assignment: None

- **Week 7: Globalization and its Discontents (October 12-18)**
 - Assignment: Discussion Forum #3
- **Week 8: No Instruction (October 19-25)**
 - Assignment: Midterm Exam
- **Week 9: The 2008 Financial Crisis and the COVID pandemic and recession (October 26-November 1)**
 - Assignment: Discussion Forum #4

Module 3: Toward Social and Environmental Sustainability

- **Week 10: Public Policies for Unequal, Insecure and Warming Times, Part 1: Technology and Jobs, Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing, Immigration, and Employer Power in the Labor Market (November 2-8)**
 - Assignment: Group Project, Part 1
- **Week 11: Public Policies for Unequal, Insecure and Warming Times, Part 2: Unions and Employee Representation (November 9-15)**
 - Assignment: Group Project, Part 2
- **Week 12: Public Policies for Unequal, Insecure and Warming Times, Part 3: Innovation in Taxation, Pre-distribution rather than Redistribution, Climate Change, Toward New Thinking on Value and Valuation (November 16-22)**
 - Assignment: Group Project, Part 3
- **November 23-29: No class during Thanksgiving week**
- **Week 13: Forging the Future of Work (November 30-December 6)**
 - Assignment: Group Project, Part 4
- **Week 14: No Instruction (December 7-13)**
 - Assignment: Final Paper

Due Dates and Late Submissions

All submission of work is due no later than **11:59 PM EST** on the last day of the course week for which they are assigned. Work cannot be made up. Late submissions will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are late (unless an extension has been arranged beforehand).

Course Schedule

Each week is **7 days** in length. It begins on **Tuesday mornings** and ends on **Mondays at 11:59 PM EST**. Students may enter the course and engage in coursework at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The instructor will provide the course material for each week by 10 AM on Tuesday. He will also send an announcement that alerts students to the start of the new week.

Evaluation

This is a graduate-level course. While it utilizes a variety of teaching modalities, there will be a strong emphasis on reading and discussion. In turn, during four weeks of the semester, you will be asked to participate in online discussions about the readings. These discussions will provide an opportunity for you to share the outcome of your own engagement with the material and learn from your peers through interaction.

During the course, readings will be complemented by videos and short recorded lectures, which go over the most basic concepts assigned for a particular week and/or contextualize it. The instructor will provide a lot of guidance on the material. Readings themselves will be a mix of excerpts from academic textbooks, original scholarship and media reporting.

This is a list of all assignments, including how much they count toward the overall course grade:

Grading Components	Percentage towards Final Grade
Four discussion forums (Weeks 1, 5, 7, 9)	20% total (5% each)
Short essay on an economist of your choice	10%
Quiz on basic economic concepts	15%
Midterm exam	15%
▶ 12-week group project	15%
Final essay	25%
Extra credit assignment	Up to 2% additional

These are the grade brackets that will be used in the course:

Letter Grade	Percentage Points
A	90-100%. Note: Score of 100% are extremely unlikely for student work in essays or discussions. The A+ grade starts at 97%.
B+	87-89.9%
B	80-86.9%
C+	77-77.9%
C	70-76.9%
D+	67-69.9%

D	60-66.9%
F	

Discussion Forums

Students are expected to participate in four discussion forums. In the forums, students discuss and raise questions related to the themes of course readings. **Three postings are the minimum for full credit.**

An original comment must be made by the first comment deadline on **Thursday at 11:59 PM EST** (except you have until Saturday in the first week). Two additional comments and/or replies to other students are required before **11:59 PM EST on Sunday**. The forums close at **11:59 PM EST Monday** nights. Directions and expectations for engaging in forums are available via each of the discussion forums.

The discussion forums will have the following topics:

- **Week 1:** Introduce yourself by summarizing how you think that economic realities constrain democracy. Please feel free to highlight one particular mechanism or phenomenon.
- **Week 5:** Among the challenges to conventional economic thinking, consider the challenges to conventional economics. Which do you find most interesting, and/or convincing? Do you have any examples of these ideas from your own experience?
- **Week 7:** Choose among three questions: 1) How did democratization make the gold standard and free trade unfeasible? 2) What was the rationale behind the liberalization of economic affairs in the late 20th century, and has it delivered on his claimed promises? 3) Has globalization been "good" or "bad" for workers? What types of policies would help?
- **Week 9:** Are there lessons from the 2008 financial crisis and Great Recession for our current pandemic recession? What should the government be doing to cope with the current recession?

Short Essay

The short-essay assignment seeks to encourage your reflections on the social construction of the economics discipline by asking you to engage more closely with one of the "great economists." Please write a one-page essay on an economist of your choice, answering the following question: How has the social environment during the economist's lifetime shaped his/her intellectual contributions? In your answer be sure to address the following points:

- What was the social and political environment at the time when the economist made the most significant contributions?
- Were there any normative motivation for the economist's intervention(s)?

- How have potential “disciples” of the economist’s particular line of thought further developed the ideas over time?

Quiz

The quiz will cover basic principles from economics, including micro and macro. It seeks to make sure that you have done the work during the course's first four weeks and will go into the rest of the course with a solid grasp of the necessary foundational concepts.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will consist of essay questions on themes and topics from reading assignments, videos, and other course content.

Group Project

You will be engaged in a group project during weeks 10-13. For each of the four weeks, you are expected to put together two PowerPoint slides, which (in week 13) will be further framed by an



introductory and a concluding slide. The 10-page PowerPoint will focus on your proposals for building a desirable future of work. It should have the following parts:

- One slide as cover page with a title for your presentation, the list of contributors and a main argument;
- Two slides for each week covering the topics in weeks 10 to 12 (six slides total) . The two slides should cover promising policies to reorient the American models of capitalism (slide 1) and the scope for moving toward a more sustainable strategy of economic development (slide 2)
- Two slides on the evolving debate about the future of work (week 13);
- One slide on policies in line with both the presentation’s argument, with the focus determined by what your group could agree on for building a desirable future of work.
- Suggestion about optional experimentation with presentation format: You are encouraged (though not required) to deviate from the PowerPoint format, including by incorporating video as part of the project submission. The video could be a discussion panel of the group, explaining presentation, or a supporting video/audio from external sources (TED Talk, for example). Basically, if you are up for it, please feel free to experiment to break up the PowerPoint format. You are also welcome to use

Infographics [_ \(https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvenngage.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Ctobias.schulzecen%40rutgers.edu%7C9](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvenngage.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Ctobias.schulzecen%40rutgers.edu%7C9)
or **Mindmaps** [_ \(https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canva.com%2Fgraphs%2Fmind-maps%2F&data=02%7C01%7Ctobias.schulzecen%40rutgers.edu%7C9e3ab282bf36432f491108d72575](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canva.com%2Fgraphs%2Fmind-maps%2F&data=02%7C01%7Ctobias.schulzecen%40rutgers.edu%7C9e3ab282bf36432f491108d72575);

to illustrate certain points, data, etc. In the **Learning Support Items** Module , the **Tools for your assignments and presentations** section lists various tools that you can explore/use. The free software **Adobe Spark** [_ \(https://spark.adobe.com/\)](https://spark.adobe.com/) would also be great for this project. If you run into issues with such experimentation, please feel free to reach out to **Marta Pulley** [_ \(https://smlr.rutgers.edu/faculty-staff/marta-pulley\)](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/faculty-staff/marta-pulley), the Instructional Technology Specialist at Rutgers SMLR.

Final Paper

The final paper is a five-page essay on feasible steps that American policymakers could take to building a just and sustainable future of work in the face of contemporary global economic constraints. Please refer to and critically engage with the materials used for your group project. The goal of this assignment is for you to reflect on what you have learned this semester. A list of references should be supplied but does not count toward desired length.

- **Note to PhD Students:** I am willing to help you make the most of the course for preparing your thesis. I would recommend a longer final paper from you, but I am flexible in terms of its content. Please get in touch with me with proposal about what you want to write about.
- **Note to Masters-level students looking for extra credit:** There is an extra credit assignment that will earn you up to an extra 2 percentage points of an "A" grade. This will not change your grade substantially (say from a B to an A), but could make the difference in tipping you up if you are on the borderline (say from a B to a B+, or a B+ to an A). The extra credit assignment involves analyzing U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data on differential employment impacts of the pandemic by gender, race, age, and/or disability.

Student Responsibilities

Online learning requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While online learning offers you flexibility and convenience to learn from anyplace, anytime, you are still expected to adhere to the all due dates. You are expected to:

- Have access to a reliable computer, and access to the Internet

- Login to Canvas for your course multiple times a week
- Check for any announcements, update to the syllabus, assignments, and/or discussions and respond accordingly
- Actively participate in the Discussion Forum
- Complete the assigned readings and/or media
- Complete the assigned exercises and projects
- **Adhere to all due dates**
- In case of computer failure, make sure you have an alternative plan of access to your Canvas courses
- Be sure to backup your important documents and assignments on a flash drive or other external device.

Computer Requirements

- Access to the internet
- Reliable computer
- Headphones/Headsets - highly recommended
- Webcam - optional
- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint
- [Basic Computer Specifications for Canvas \(https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-the-browser-and-computer-requirements-for-Canvas/ta-66#:~:text=Computer%20Specifications%20For%20best%20performance,%20you%20should%20access:](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-the-browser-and-computer-requirements-for-Canvas/ta-66#:~:text=Computer%20Specifications%20For%20best%20performance,%20you%20should%20access:)



Technical Support

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas:

- Visit the [Canvas Student Tutorial \(https://community.canvaslms.com/community/answers/guides/video-guide\)](https://community.canvaslms.com/community/answers/guides/video-guide)
- Contact [Rutgers IT Help Desk \(https://rutgeronline.desk.com/\)](https://rutgeronline.desk.com/) 877-361-1134, accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Visit the [Rutgers Canvas Student orientation \(https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas\)](https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas)
- View tutorials at [Course Tools Tutorials](#) (in the Modules section)

Canvas Student App

For convenience, you can also download/install the Canvas Student App for Android or iOS devices. Follow the instruction on the respective app centers:

- [Canvas Student App for Android \(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.instructure.candroid&hl=en\)](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.instructure.candroid&hl=en)
- [Canvas Student App for iOS \(https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/canvas-student/id480883488\)](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/canvas-student/id480883488)

How to Access ZOOM

All class virtual office hours are scheduled through ZOOM. If you have not activated your Rutgers ZOOM account, you will need to do so prior to class starts.

1. Follow instructions on [Creating Rutgers ZOOM Account \(https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/\)](https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/). Note: be sure to read what to do if you have an existing personal Zoom account that uses your Rutgers email.
2. Once you have activated your Rutgers ZOOM account you will then need to make sure your Canvas default email is in the format [netid@rutgers.edu \(mailto:netid@rutgers.edu\)](mailto:netid@rutgers.edu). Follow instructions on [How to check and set your Canvas Default Email](#) if needed. Then you can access the scheduled ZOOM virtual office hour sessions.
3. To access and join the scheduled virtual office hour sessions, select the ZOOM tab from the left navigation menu, then select Join to join the scheduled session. If you are new to ZOOM, review the tutorials under [Course Tools Tutorials](#) or at [Rutgers ZOOM Home page. \(https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/\)](https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/)



Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be the product of an identified individual or individuals. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the university community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of this course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. For more information visit the [Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy \(http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/\)](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/) website.

Copyright Policy

The instructor for this course holds the copyright to the presentation slides, discussion questions, and assignments. The copyrights to the readings and films belong to their rights holders (authors, producers,

publishers, etc.). Students may not copy or distribute this material outside of the class without permission. For more information visit [Rutgers University Copyright Policy](http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7-current.pdf) (<http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/50.3.7-current.pdf>)

Help with formatting of the course site

I ask all students to let me know if edits need to be made to the auto-captions included with videos provided on Canvas.

