



Department of Economics Course Outline

		Term:	Spring 2007
Course:	Economics 349 [The Economics of Social Problems]	Section:	20
Time:	TR 9:00 ? 11:50	Place:	ST 143 (subject to change)
Instructor:	Kendra McLeish		
Office:	SS 1046	Telephone:	210-9490
Office Hours:	MW 10:00-11:00 and by appointment. These hours are subject to change.	E-Mail:	knmcleis@ucalgary.ca

Textbook(s):

A list of readings will be provided as part of a detailed course outline. Some of the readings can be downloaded from the class web page.

Book(s) on Reserve:

Schiller, *Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice Hall
Miller, Benjamin and North, *The Economics of Public Issues*, Norton, 2001
Sharp, et al., *Economics of Social Issues*, Irwin/McGraw Hill, latest edition
Becker & Becker, *The Economics of Life*, McGraw Hill
Aaron, *Behavioral Dimension of Retirement Economics*, Russell Sage, 2000
Elster, *Addiction: Entries & Exits*, Russell Sage
Blau et al, *Economics of Women, Men & Work*, Prentice Hall

Course Outline:

This course will use the tools of economic analysis to contribute to our knowledge of various social problems. Using the economic model of the rational agent, we will explore how individuals behave in social context and evaluate policies addressing the issues in question. Topics to be covered include discrimination, crime, health care, income inequality, and poverty.

Class participation is an important part of your learning experience. You should be prepared to read the assigned material in advance in order to contribute to in-class questions and debates. Most of the questions that will come up have no clear cut response. Therefore, the point of the course is not to find the "right" answer. What you should expect to learn from this course is to identify the many sides of socio-economic problems using economic models, and to be aware of the pros and cons of the policy instruments that we use to solve them.

The following is a tentative list of the topics (and readings) we will be discussing. This is only a tentative schedule.

- Review of Economic Principles
- The Income Distribution
- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Crime and Punishment
- Drugs and Addiction
- The Environment
- Aging, Health Care, and Pensions

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Final grades will be based on a midterm exam (30%, date to be announced), a final exam (40%, date set by the Registrar's office), and problem sets (30%). Late work will not be accepted.

Several problem sets will be assigned throughout the term, involving the analysis of a specific problem using the methods developed in class. You are welcome to work with a small group (2 or 3 students) on the assignments and a group assignment is to be handed in. All students in the group will receive the same mark for that assignment. Assignments will be collected at the beginning of class and late assignments will not be accepted. I strongly recommend that you take the time to work through and understand the problem sets. Exams will be of a similar nature and, as such, the problem sets give you an opportunity to practice.

Tests and final exams are marked on a numerical (percentage) basis, and then converted to letter grades. The course grade is then calculated using the weights indicated above. As a guide to determining standing, these letter grade equivalences will generally apply:

A+	95-100	B	75-79	C-	55-59
A	90-94	B-	70-74	D+	50-54
A-	85-89	C+	65-69	D	45-49
B+	80-84	C	60-64	F	0-44

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, *at the instructor's discretion*, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.

A passing grade on any particular component of the course is not required for a student to pass the course as a whole.

Programmable calculators are NOT allowed during the writing of tests or final examinations. Non-programmable

calculators WILL be allowed during the writing of tests or final examinations, but cell-phones are strictly forbidden during the writing of examinations.

No deferred midterms will be given

. In case of documented illness or family emergency, the extra weight will be shifted to the final examination. The Instructor should be *notified in advance* if a student will be unable to write a midterm. In any case, documentation must be provided as soon as possible (within a day or so of the missed midterm).

Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, etc.) should discuss their work with the Instructor *within* seven days of the work being returned to the class.

There will be a Registrar scheduled **final examination**, lasting 2 hours and held in a classroom. The FULL COURSE will be covered.

Tests and exams WILL NOT involve multiple choice questions.

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. In the Department of Economics, we recommend that all students enrolled in the Spring/Summer session should discuss their needs with the instructor of the course no later than seven (7) days after the start of this course.

Students? Union Vice-President Academic:

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KM:pst

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