

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
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COURSE SYLLABUS

HON 357
Foundations of Economic Exchange

Spring 2008

Catalog Description:

(Same as ECON 420.) Prerequisite, acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. Classical and neoclassical theory of economic exchange. Philosophical critiques and commendations of market exchange. Human nature as self-regarding in market exchange and other-regarding in social exchange. Property rights systems in economic exchange. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Essential Facility:

Access to computer lab

Course Goals, Objectives, and Learning Outcomes:

From the perspectives of two forms of rational orders, constructivist and ecological, this course will study the foundations of economic exchange. We will examine the extent to which reason and the deliberate action of a constructivist order and the undesigned principles of norms and traditions in an ecological order can inform our understanding of impersonal exchange in markets and personal social exchange with friends, neighbors, and family. The main topics covered in the course are:

Content:

- Exchange as the foundation for specialization and markets
- Constructivist and ecological lenses for understanding wealth creation
- Knowledge foundations of market exchange
- Self-interest foundations of market exchange
- Other-interest foundations of social exchange
- Biological and cultural foundations of social exchange
- Property rights as foundational, social orders
- Constructivist and ecological rationality in economic systems

Required Texts:

F.A. Hayek. The Fatal Conceit. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
J. Surowiecki. The Wisdom of Crowds. New York: DOUBLEDAY, 2004.

Instructional Strategies:

This course uses a combination of hands-on learning in laboratory experiments and Socratic roundtable discussions of readings. In addition to the recent research, the readings range from works by 18th century Scottish philosophers Adam Smith and David Hume to 19th century marginalists Walras and Jevons and 20th century Nobel economist F.A. Hayek. The students will write an original proposal for an experiment to address an unanswered question raised in class and will present the proposal to class.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Participation in class discussions and laboratory experiments
2. Blog posts and comments
3. Final paper
4. Final presentation

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars, which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. Upon recommendation of the Center for Academic Success, adaptations of teaching methods, class materials, including text and reading materials or testing may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Bibliography:

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