

Eastern Illinois University  
Revised Course Proposal  
ECN 2800G, Economics of Social Issues

1) Catalog Description

- a) Course level: ECN 2800G  
b) Title: Economics of Social Issues  
c) Meeting times and credit: 3-0-3  
d) Term to be offered: F,S,Su  
e) Short Title (max 16 char.): Ecn Social Issue  
f) Course Description: This is an applied economics course. It analyzes current social issues using concepts, principles, and models from economic theory. Not equivalent to ECN 2801G or ECN 2802G and may not be counted as part of the 36 semester-hour requirement for an economics major nor the 21 semester-hour requirement for an economics minor nor the Option in Economics with International Studies.  
g) Prerequisites: None  
h) Writing Level: This course is considered writing-active.

2) Student Learning Objectives

- a) Objectives fostering general education goals
- i) EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively.
- Students will participate in class discussions of our society in its historical context as a product of an on-going process involving increasing specialization and exchange, increasing physical inter-dependence, decreasing transportation and communication costs, and increasing physical prosperity.
  - Students will participate in class discussions of the difference between the pace of the social, institutional and emotional adaptations and the technological and financial innovations that accompany this process.
  - Students will participate in class discussions of the way in which the fundamental problem (potential divergences between individual and group interests) becomes more important and more difficult to resolve as the process of social evolution proceeds.
  - Students will be required to write in standard English on writing assignments and exams.
- ii) EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Students will repeatedly complete exercises, exams or problems which will demonstrate their ability to analyze complicated social relationships and predict aggregate or individual outcomes.
  - Through exams and assignments, students will demonstrate the ability to state, criticize and defend the standard assumptions of rational choice models.
  - Through exams and assignments, students will demonstrate the ability to analyze the limitations imposed by the simplifying assumptions used in economic models and to form reasonable judgements about the applicability of the economic model to real-world questions.
- iii) EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens.
- Students will read works of non-fiction that examine social problems from perspectives highlighting their social nature and asserting that sometimes people

who experience bad outcomes did not make faulty choices that led to those outcomes.

- Students will solve or participate in economic models demonstrating that people just like themselves can experience undesirable outcomes if the system of interaction is inadequate.

### 3) Course Outline

This course lends itself well to customization according to instructor preference. A sample outline is provided below. Topics for sections III, IV, and V could be drawn from a list including but not limited to Environmental Degradation, Impoverished Politically Oppressive Regimes, Poverty, Crime, Education, Agriculture, Health Care, Housing, and Communism vs. Capitalism. If time permits, more than three such topics may be examined.

- I. The Long Sweep of History ..... 6 weeks
  - A. Introduction
  - B. The Organization of Antiquity
  - C. The Middle Ages
  - D. The Emergence of Market Society
  - E. The Industrial Revolution
  - F. The Rise of Big Business
  - G. The Great Depression
  - H. The Rise of the Public Sector
  - I. The Rise of Modern Capitalism
  - J. The Socialist Critique
  - K. Globalization
- II. Demonstrating The Fundamental Problem ..... 1½ weeks
  - A. Students Presented with Surmountable Problem
  - B. Students Presented with Insurmountable Problem
- III. Selected Topic 1 ..... 2 weeks
  - A. Descriptive material (selected)
  - B. Framed as the Fundamental Problem
  - C. Potential Corrections
  - D. Analysis and Limitations
- IV. Selected Topic 2 ..... 2 weeks
  - A. Descriptive material (selected)
  - B. Framed as the Fundamental Problem
  - C. Potential Corrections
  - D. Analysis and Limitations
- V. Selected Topic 3 ..... 2 weeks
  - A. Descriptive material (selected)
  - B. Framed as the Fundamental Problem
  - C. Potential Corrections
  - D. Analysis and Limitations
- VI. Summary and Conclusions ..... 1½ weeks
  - A. Evaluating Social goals and Outcomes
  - B. Efficiency vs. Equity and other Social Goals

### 4) Evaluation of Student Learning

- a) Indicate how achievement of objectives will be evaluated: Students will be evaluated based on their performance on/in classroom economic simulations, short essays, exams, papers, and classroom presentations. Frequent, brief writing activities and

assignments will be required. Some of these writing assignments will be graded. Instructors will be free to select the specific grading scheme within these guidelines. A sample scheme is shown from F99. Quizzes and exams in this example had written components.

Item	Possible Points
Quiz 1	25
Quiz 2	25
Exam 1	100
Quiz 3	25
Exam 2	100
Quiz 4	25
Exam 3	100
Quiz 5	25
Term Paper or Class Presentation	100
Final Exam	100

The best 4 of 5 quizzes will be counted. The lowest of the three hourly exams or the term paper/presentation will be dropped.

500 Points Accumulated	Possible Points Grade Earned
450 and above	A
400 to 449	B
350 to 399	C
300 to 349	D
299 and below	F

- b) Explain the writing level selection in (1h): The essays, papers, and written portions of exams will be used primarily to assist students in mastering course content and secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills.

5) Rationale

- a) Indicate General Education segment and justify: This course is appropriate for inclusion in the general education program under "Social and Behavioral Sciences." It contributes to students' efforts to enhance their literacy and oral communication skills by requiring them to read and listen critically, by providing abundant opportunities to participate in guided discussions, and by requiring and assessing written work. This course develops the students' critical and reflective thinking by confronting them with social, economic and political dilemmas. Where the in-class experiments are used, the students not only are exposed to such dilemmas but are actually burdened with their experimental analogues; the students actually struggle with these dilemmas rather than just reading or thinking about them. By internalizing the dilemmas in this way, student interest in the economist's method of inquiry and analysis is stimulated. It is hoped that this leads to intellectual habits including curiosity and critical thinking. This course fulfills the cultural diversity component of the General Education program.
- b) Justify level and list prerequisites: The content and requirements of the course are consistent with 2000 level courses. There are no prerequisites.

- c) Discuss similarity to existing courses: This course is a revision of ECN 2800C which was a part of the integrated core in the area of "Human Behavior, Social Interaction, and Well-Being." This course should maintain the same curriculum ID as ECN 2800C. This course does not overlap significantly with any other course. The perspective is uniquely economic and the approach and coverage differ markedly from our other economics courses.
- d) Specify programs requiring course or permitting as approved elective: This course is intended as a service course for general education. It is a requirement in the Environmental Biology Option of the Biological Sciences major.

6) Implementation

- a) Faculty assignment: This course may be taught by any member of the Economics Department.
- b) Text:
  - i) The Making of Economic Society, Robert Heilbroner and William Milberg, 10<sup>th</sup> edition(1998).
  - ii) Economic Issues & Policy, Jacqueline Murray Brux and Janna L. Cowen(1999).
  - iii) Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto, Osha Gray Davidson(1996).
  - iv) The Economics of Public Issues, Roger Leroy Miller and Daniel K. Benjamin and Douglass C. North(1996).
  - v) There Are No Children Here, Alex Kotlowitz(1992).
- c) Additional cost to students: There will be no additional costs to the student.
- d) Term first offered: Spring 2001 (This course was originally approved as ECN 2800C and has been offered since Fall 1990.)

7) Community College Transfer

A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course.

- 8) Date approved by the department: 4/12/2000
- 9) Date approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee: 4/18/2000
- 10) Date approved by CAA: 10/19/2000

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