

Economics, 2015 – 2016

Room 510

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Economics is the study of all the ways humans exchange goods and services. Economics describes how people act when they are trying to solve the problem of *unmet wants*. (You'll see...) Finance is the study of how individuals and groups acquire and manage large sums of money.¹ Being New Yorkers, you should all know at least a little bit about each of these things. The good news is that you already do! Economics is a way of studying human behavior – it's a lot of common sense with specialized vocabulary. Finance is more intricate in terms of specifics that only apply in certain times and places. At the end of our year together, you'll be well-versed in the basics of both.



Course Goals

This course is organized for your study of the systems that run the world. Of course love and rainbows and puppy dogs make the world go round, but if the food for those puppy dogs isn't grown, harvested, packaged, and delivered on time, Snoopy isn't going to make it. ☹️ All of those steps along the way happen in a marketplace of buyers and sellers who are looking out for their own interest. Their actions are quantifiable and predictable; this is what economics is all about. This class focuses on the math behind the economics, but there's no way to understand the math without understanding the underlying interactions in the market itself first. From a finance perspective, this class will help you learn how the market works, meaning the stock market, the bond market and foreign currency markets and what corporations, individuals, and governments do with their money and why.

Scope and Sequence

The first semester of our course focuses on economics and the second semester focuses on finance. Our topics include:

- Concepts in Microeconomics
- Concepts in Macroeconomics
- Measures of Economic Activity: GDP, GNP, etc.
- Money and the Money Supply
- Equities and Debt Markets (stocks and bonds)
- Annuities and the Time Value of Money
- Finance for me: Student loans, credit cards, home loans, taxes
- How to Retire



Trade happens.

Grading Outline

You will earn your semester grades according to the following breakdown:

Homework (10%):	Expect to have homework after each class. A complete homework assignment shows evidence of thought and reasonable answers. I will demonstrate how homework should be completed in order for you to learn from it best.
Classwork (10%):	You will have in-class assignments on a regular basis to help you acquire and practice new material and develop intelligent questions. Do your best.
Who You Are (5%):	Are you diligent? Are you engaged? Are you on time? Are you "showing up" in class?
HW Checks (20%):	These are small assessments (5-10 minutes) given in class based on recent homework assignments. They are graded for accuracy. If you understand the homework, you'll do well.
Assessments (35%):	These are class-length opportunities to demonstrate what you know and what you can do based on the material you have learned in class. They are graded for accuracy.
Major Exams (20%):	Assessments cumulative of the semester for you to demonstrate your command of all you have learned. There will be one in January and one in June. They are graded for accuracy.

Please read the grade breakdown above again. The idea that, "Well, I do all my homework, so I should get a good grade," doesn't really apply here; you must perform well when it counts. That said, without doing your homework, you don't stand a chance. Homework is the place to practice concepts, work with ideas and raise questions to ask about things you don't yet understand.

The **only way** to earn a high grade in this class is to work diligently and ask questions when you have them. You will be able to see your updated grades frequently throughout the semester. You will learn more about this in the first week.

¹ In the words of philosopher Method Man, "Cash Rules Everything Around Me."

We will not be using a textbook this year, but we will have a series of readings from various sources in books, magazines, journals, and online. It is also extremely important to take and keep very careful notes. Stay organized.

In addition to the book, you will need to take diligent notes in class. Information about supplies follows. There is a **website** for this class. Please go to www.mrtmath.org and create a Bookmark / Favorite. You will use this site often. Explore it. If you have constructive suggestions as to how to make it more useful, let me know.

You Need to Know

- **Questions** are learning that is about to happen. This is encouraged. Most questions are intelligent ones. Unintelligent questions are the ones that your peers just asked but you didn't hear because you weren't listening.
- **Homework** is due at the beginning of the period. As you are seated, please put your homework out on your table before you do anything else. This is your way of having it ready to turn in.
 - **Note:** Leaving a prompt blank doesn't mean you tried it but couldn't finish it. Blank is the absence of effort. To me, it means you didn't try. If you are genuinely confused about a prompt but you still want (some) credit, you must write in words or draw a clear diagram what you are confused about, what you do know, where you get stuck, or how much you can do. It is not acceptable to write something like: "I found the data but I forgot the formula." That's what your notes, the textbook and website or the Internet are for. You can do it.
- We have a very limited amount of time to cover material people have been working on for thousands of years, so you can't afford to be **late to class**. Beacon regulations mandate that attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you will be marked absent. This will be reflected in your grade. If you miss a Homework Check because you were late, you will not be able to make it up. Be on time and be tuned in.
- **Late Work** generally doesn't fly. Turn things in when they're due. If you have a legitimate reason for something to be late, you will have known about it ahead of time (i.e. "I'm going to visit colleges."). If that's the case, contact me.
- **Trips to the bathroom** happen at lunch or during passing time. You can do it. You will not be allowed to go to the restroom during assessments. Please don't ask.
- If you were **absent**, the **work you missed** is due at the end of the week on which you return. For example, if you are absent on Tuesday but back in class on Thursday and Friday, then the homework from Monday night (which was due on Tuesday), the homework from Tuesday night and any classwork from Tuesday is due by the end of the day (2:35) on Friday. There is a folder in the classroom used to submit Absent Work. Use the website.
- Please be mindful of your **beverages in the classroom**. If you would like to have something to drink, make sure it doesn't become a distraction to you or your classmates. If you come to class late first period or after lunch with a brand new full beverage of some kind, that means it was more important to you than being on time to class. It will be thrown out. There is no eating in class unless you clear it with me for some legitimate reason. New York City school buildings have critters. We can't encourage them.

Supplies

- one 1-inch 3-ring **binder** that is just for Econ with a steady supply of lined and graph paper. The binder is important because it will quickly be filled with articles and printouts of various kinds.
- one **notebook** that is just for Econ (spiral or marble/composition is up to you)
- **pencils** for both classwork and homework. All mathematical / graphing work is to be done in pencil. The reason for this is that often people make mistakes; work needs to be done in pencil so you can erase to preserve the neatness of your work. Other written work can be done in pen.
- one or two red, blue, green, pink, whatever color you want **pens** you bring to class each day
- a scientific calculator – graphing calculators are not necessary. We will not be using phones as calculators. Please don't ask.
- a small 4 or 6-inch **ruler** to be kept in your bookbag or binder that can be used at any time
- Please bring one package of print/copy paper. This is critical to our success this year. It counts as a homework assignment. Bringing a second package of paper is good for one extra credit homework assignment.

How Can I Be Successful?

That's the real question, isn't it? Come to class awake and prepared with your materials at the ready, always keep in mind to be present to what you are doing, stay focused on what you need to accomplish before the period ends, ask yourself: "What am I supposed to be getting out of this?" and then make it happen, and always give yourself your best effort. *Your present self is working for your future self.* Your Boss right now is the You from the future. Work hard.

The only place where *success* comes before *work* is the dictionary. Think about it.

Welcome!