

George Mason University
Economies in Transition ECON 380-002
Monday, 4:30-7:10 p.m. Arlington Campus, Founders Hall 118

Instructor: Dr. Ekaterina Brancato

Office Hours: By appointment only (contact me in advance by email or by phone)

Email: Ekaterina.Brancato@gmail.com. This is the best way to reach me.

Phone: My phone number will be posted via blackboard message after the first week of classes (**PLEASE NO TEXT MESSAGES**, for record keeping purposes – email. *If you send a text message, assume that I will have no knowledge of contents*).

Important note for students: Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class. **All messaging through the blackboard will be sent to your GMU mail account.**

Objectives/Course Overview:

In this course we will examine economic development, especially in transition economies, from an institutional perspective. In addition, we will review basic principles of international economics, such as foreign exchange regimes, trade policy, and balance of payments. Approximately half of the lectures will be devoted to history of economic thought and specific developments in Russia and other countries in the former Soviet Union block.

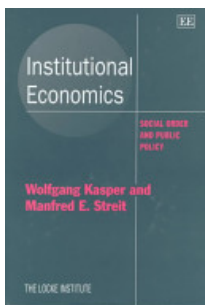
Emphasis will be placed on understanding the basic material presented in class and supplemented by reading assignments, on improving economic problem-solving skills, and on refining *writing*.

Class meetings will consist of lecture and discussion of assigned reading and related topics. *All assignments must be completed before class.* **This class involves a large amount of writing and reading. The pre-requisite is excellent grasp of concepts covered in Econ 103/104 – NO EXCEPTIONS. An additional pre-requisite is your ability to express thoughts well in English and your ability to handle fairly complicated extensive texts.**

Text and Reading Assignments:

Required:

Institutional Economics: Social Order and Public Policy, by Wolfgang Kasper and Manfred E. Streit, 1998



How Capitalism Was Built: The Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia by Anders Aslund, **edition 1**

Animal Farm, by George Orwell,* text available at <http://msxnet.org/orwell/>

Rabbits and Boa Constrictors, by Fazil Iskander,* text will be provided as pdf via blackboard

*Although these are not strictly economic texts, they will complement the historical events covered in this course and our discussion of the relationship between the individual and society. In any case, Orwell should be an easy re-read from high school curriculum and Iskander’s piece is an anti-utopian satire that will keep you quite engaged.

Recommended:

The Mystery of Capital by Hernando De Soto

In Defense of Global Capitalism by Johan Norberg (2003)

The Elusive Quest for Growth by William Easterly (2002)

Economic Development (Fifth edition) by E. Nafziger (2012)

The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World by Hernando De Soto; Harper Collins Paperback (1989, 1990 or any later addition)

Why Perestroika Failed? by Peter Boettke

Markets vs Hierarchies: A Political Economy of Russia from the 10th Century to 2008 by E. Brancato (2009)

From Subsistence to Exchange and Other Essays by Peter Bauer

Additional reading assignments will be posted on blackboard periodically, usually a week in advance. If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to keep track of assignments and announcements. Some reading assignments may be sent via email; it is still your responsibility to make sure that you are up-to-date on the reading. Email me if you are not sure.

Grades:

Grades	%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	30%
Short essays	30%

Points	Grade
93-95	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
Below 60	F

Short Essays:

As you can see, the essays are rather important. There will be two to four essays related to the reading or the topics covered in the course.

Essay style and length:

A few pages long, depending on your writing style and skill. Any format is fine, as long as you are consistent. Inconsistency will result in points taken off. Points will also be subtracted for improperly constructed sentences and poor writing style, grammatical errors, and misspelled words. Lengthy bibliography with short portion written by you will not yield a good grade. Neither will a large portion of essay rephrasing or citing someone else’s thoughts. Please use 1.5 spacing, with font size equivalent to Times Roman 12. (It does not have to be this particular style.) Please use normal margins (1” top/bottom/l/r).

Using others' work:

If you quote or paraphrase someone else, you must have **both** a footnote (or short reference within text, depending on the style) and a full reference in the bibliography. You need to properly punctuate the borrowed text. Plagiarism yields a grade of 'F'. Today, there are many accessible tools to check for plagiarized content.

Unless directed otherwise, you are required to have at least one source (per essay) of peer reviewed material, which is published books or scholarly journals (this content is available at the library on the shelves or electronically through the library website, in Econlit or JSTOR databases, for instance). These references will be other than the required reading or *Markets vs Hierarchies*. Wikipedia, New York Times, WSJ, etc. are **not** acceptable sources in this respect. You can refer to Wiki and other websites, such as World Bank site, IMF, but not exclusively, it could be source beyond your two peer reviewed references.

Deviations from these guidelines will result in lower grade.

Questions for the essays and submission deadlines will be posted via blackboard. Essays will be collected via email.

Exams:

There will be three exams. Typically, the second and third exams are comprehensive. Exams **may** contain a bonus section, which would be optional. Bonus section would consist of short questions from the material covered in class and longer essay questions based on the extra readings assigned each week. While you would not be required to answer the bonus section questions, I strongly encourage you to do so because points earned for the bonus section may be used to improve your grade for each exam. A study guide will be posted on blackboard approximately a week before each exam. Make-up exams will be discussed based on individual circumstances, and options will be *very* limited.

Attendance:

Attendance is required and may be taken each class. Unexcused absences will count negatively towards your grade. Some of the exam material will be covered only in class. I reserve the right to distribute lecture power point slides and other supporting material only to those who attended and without any prior notice. I WILL do this if I see attendance going down.

Honor Code: Simply put, no cheating or plagiarism. When writing an essay, it is perfectly fine to incorporate writings by others, as long as it is referenced properly and as long as there is an analytical part written exclusively by you.

Disability Resource Center: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please notify me and contact the Disability Resource Center at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

University dates:

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall-2014/>

Schedule of Classes (may be amended throughout the course)

Date	Exams/Paper	Topics	Topics Amended
25-Aug	Lecture 1 Intro	Overview	
8-Sep	Lecture 2	Institutional Economics	
15-Sep	Lecture 3	Institutional Economics Cont.	
22-Sep	Lecture 4	Intro to International Markets/Globalization	

29-Sep	1st exam		
6-Oct	Lecture 5	International Markets/Economic Growth	
14-Oct *Tuesday	Lecture 6	Transition Economies/Topics in Economic History	
20-Oct	Lecture 7	Transition Economies: Russia and FSU	
27-Oct	Lecture 8	Transition Economies: Russia and FSU	
3-Nov	2nd exam		
10-Nov	Lecture 9	Transition Economies: Russia and FSU	
17-Nov	Lecture 10	Emerging Economies: Additional Topics	
24-Nov	Lecture 11	Emerging Economies: Additional Topics	
Thanksgiving Break, 26 Nov – Nov 30			
1-Dec		Additional Topics	
15-Dec	Final exam 4:30-7:15 p.m.		