

ECON 385-002: International Economic Policy

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Exploratory Hall (formerly Science and Tech II) L111 — 03:00 PM - 04:15 PM TR

This course introduces economic way of thinking on trade and international finance, and presents historical and current information on consequences of trade and protectionism.

1 Course Description

The course aims to introduce students to economic ways of thinking as applied in trade theory, international finance, and development. The goal is to equip students with both the tools of economic analysis and a deeper understanding of the global economy. Economists across the political spectrum broadly agree on trade policy, yet there remains significant political polarization on issues like work visas, tariffs, and international tax policy. Over the course of this semester, we will explore the reasons why public opinion, government policies, and economists' proclamations are often at odds. By the end of this class, you should be able to read a news article on topics like globalization or foreign aid, understand the players and their incentives, and make sound economic judgments regarding the issues at hand.

2 Materials

Before the first day of class: you will need to have read both the first chapter of Thomas Sowell's *Basic Economics* and the introduction and first three sections (The Broken Window, the Demobilization, and Taxes) of Frédéric Bastiat's essay "What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen". You should have all the readings for each week done before that first lecture of that week. All of the texts listed should be available for purchase with the Mason bookstore (though you might get a better deal if you search online). If not, let me know as soon as possible and I will provide an alternative link. I will send links or PDFs of other texts we will read outside the required books for this class. **The required readings come out of 3 separate books that have been chosen to give you authors from different ends of the political spectrum. While reading the entire book can be beneficial, if you choose to read only the required chapters, the school bookstore will let you rent the book out for a semester.**

2.1 Required Texts

- *Basic Economics* by Thomas Sowell
- *Pop Internationalism* by Paul Krugman
- *From Subsistence to Exchange* by Peter Bauer

2.2 Recommended Readings

- *Globalization* by Donald Boudreaux
- *The Elusive Quest for Growth* by William Easterly

3 Schedule (*subject to change*)

Please visit the [Registrar's website](#) to see the full University schedule.

Week of	Subject	Required Readings
Aug 24	Thinking Like an Economist	Bastiat "What is Seen..." Sowell Ch 1
Aug 31	How Do Markets Work?	Sowell Ch 2 Marginal Revolution University videos
Sep 7	History of Trade Theory	Hume "Of the Balance of Trade" Smith on Mercantilism videos
Sep 14	Institutions, Development, and Growth	Krugman Ch 4 Bauer Ch 3
Sep 21	Colonialism and Imperialism	Acemoglu, et al. "Colonial Origins..." Bauer Ch 6
Sep 28	Political Economy	North, et al. "Violence and the Rise of Open-Access Orders"
Oct 5	Foreign Aid and Remittances	Sowell Ch 22 Bauer Ch 5
Oct 12	Midterm	
Oct 19	Free Trade, Tariffs, and Quotas	Krugman Ch 3 Sowell Ch 21
Oct 26	Politics of Trade Agreements	Krugman Ch 5
Nov 2	Immigration	
Nov 9	Environmentalism	Coase "The Problem of Social Cost"
Nov 16	War and Foreign Intervention	Duncan and Coyne "The Origins of the Permanent..." Barro "Why the War Against Terror Will Boost..."
Nov 23	Bonus Lecture and Thanksgiving	Op-ed Assignment DUE
Nov 30	Bonus Lectures and Review	Final Exam Study Session
Dec 7	Reading days and Final Exam (Dec 9)	

3.1 Important Dates

- Last day to **add classes**: August 30
- Last day to **drop with 100% tuition refund**: September 7 and **50% refund**: September 14
- October 12th: We do not meet (Fall break) and your midterm will be sent out the 14th over email. I will host a study session either over Zoom or in-person that week before the exam.
- October 28th: I will have to leave for a conference, so class will not be held in-person. I will be recording a lecture and posting it to Blackboard. If you are not able to access Blackboard, let me know and I will email you the lecture.
- November 23rd: I will be hosting the bonus lecture over Zoom instead of an in-person lecture.

4 Grading

Grading for this course will follow a standard ten-point scale. Your course grade will comprise of a Midterm Exam (30%), a Final Exam (40%), an Op-ed assignment (20%), and Participation (10%) in class discussion.

4.1 Midterm and Final Exams

The Midterm and Final will be open note, short answer style exams. I will provide a list of potential questions about a week before each exam so that you can spend time studying effectively, rather than trying to cram every word of the readings or PowerPoints. Students who show up late will only be given to the end of the exam time to complete the exam.

- The Midterm Exam will be a take-home exam given October 14th, due on October 16th at 11:59 PM.
- The Final Exam will be an in-person exam on Thursday, December 9th, between 1:30 PM - 4:15 PM.

Grade	Percent
A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96.9
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	73 - 76.9
C-	70 - 72.9
D	60 - 69.9
F	0 - 59.9

4.2 Op-ed assignment

You will write a short (750 words) opinion editorial on a recent international economic policy of your choice. You must have a topic chosen by the Midterm, subject to my approval. Your Op-ed assignment will be due on November 23rd at 11:59 pm.

4.3 Late Policy

Every day an assignment is late will drop its grade by two degrees on the above chart. For example, a paper or exam that is of A- quality will receive a B if it is turned in a day late. Exceptions will only be made for emergencies approved in accordance with University policy.

4.4 Participation

While you will not be graded on attendance, you are responsible for the readings and lecture material for that class. I encourage all students to speak up every week and comment on or ask questions about the readings. This class will be a space for respectful and open discussion.

5 Office Hours

I will be available for office hours over Zoom on Mondays from 3:00 PM - 4:45 PM. If you would like to meet during these hours, send me an email to set up an appointment. If those hours do not work for your schedule, please [email me](#) and we can try to arrange something else. NOTE: You must use your Mason email account for all University communications. I will not respond to emails from non-Mason email addresses.

6 Electronic Devices

Phones and Laptops are permitted for note-taking or accessing class materials. Use of these devices for other purposes is prohibited and may negatively affect your participation grade. Recording of the lectures is permitted, unless any student objects.

7 Honor Code

The George Mason University Honor Code is as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

I expect each of you to abide by this code. Any student suspected of any violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please visit their [website](#) for more information.

8 Disability Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email:ods@gmu.edu — Phone: (703) 993-2474