

ECON 241:10

Canadian Economic Prospects and Challenges

St Francis Xavier University

Department of Economics

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Fall 2020

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Classes: Tuesdays 11:15-12:30PM, Fridays 12:45-2:00PM, in MULH 3034

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:45-3:30, Thursday 2:00-4:00, online by appointment

Course Description:

Covers policy issues and problems in the Canadian economy. Topics include: employment and unemployment; poverty and income distribution; productivity, higher education; health care and the social welfare safety net; crime and punishment; inflation and the value of money the economics of sport; insurance; labor economics and discrimination. Topics that reflect strong student interest and/or new issues may be added.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- (1) To introduce students to the breadth and scope of issues impacting the Canadian economy and the policy challenges they present
- (2) To examine the effects of possible policy prescriptions on the Canadian economy and public and private life
- (3) To introduce the tools of economic analysis used by policymakers and economists in addressing potential issues facing the Canadian economy.

Prerequisites:

Econ 101 and Econ 102

Textbook:

There is no required textbook for this course- readings will be posted on Moodle to accompany course lectures.

Optional:

The following texts may be beneficial for students as a supplemental reference:

Luciani, Patrick. *Economic Myths: Making Sense of Canadian Policy Issues*. Fourth edition. 2004.

Fellows, Flanagan and Shedd. *Economic Issues: A Canadian Perspective*. 2007.

Course Format and Attendance: Students are expected to attend **ALL** classes- there is no substitute for class attendance in the learning process. As there is no required textbook for the course, most of the background material and economic theory will come from class lectures, making class attendance extremely important. For each topic, I will provide some light background readings, posted on Moodle, that students are expected to read **prior** to class. Class time will be spent on class discussions and providing economic theory as a reference to examine the topics covered. As such, class participation is **HIGHLY** encouraged. Students will be responsible for ALL material presented during lectures. Exam questions will typically consist of short answer questions and will require critical analysis of policy issues using economic theory, as we will do during class.

Evaluation:

The course grade will be based on three methods of evaluation:

Article Summaries.....	10%
In-Class Debate.....	25%
Midterm Exam.....	25%
Final Exam.....	40%

Article Summaries

Before beginning each new topic, you will be assigned 1-2 articles to read and review, due before the beginning of the designated class. These are newspaper articles relevant to the topic to be discussed, generally from mainstream media outlets and designed to introduce you to the subject matter at hand. The articles will be posted on the Econ 241 Moodle page. The article reviews **MUST** be completed and submitted on Moodle before the deadline, or you will receive a mark of zero for that assignment. For each review, you will be asked to (1) summarize the subject matter addressed in the article and (2) critique the article in your own words, focusing on elements you agree with, those you do not, and elements that may be overlooked in the article. Reviews are expected to be a **minimum of 500 words**, with at least 2/3 devoted to your critique. This is designed to begin your critical thinking process, before we address the theory behind the topics covered.

In-Class Debates

As this course is designed to examine issues in Canadian policy, you will have the opportunity to investigate and debate policy options amongst the class. Each student will actively participate in a pre-determined policy issue debate during ONE of TWO separate occasions during the semester.

For each debate, students will be randomly assigned into teams of approximately 3 students to prepare one side of a policy issue for presentation to the class. Two teams will present their arguments, and two other teams will be assigned to evaluate and critique the teams presenting. The remainder of the class will observe and decide the results of each debate.

Grading will be allocated as follows:

The debate grade will account for a total of 25% of the student's final grade- 10% will come from the individual debate write-up and self-evaluation, 5% will come from the evaluation of another group's debate presentation and 10% will come from the professor based on the in-class debate performance.

Students are required to be present in-class for their scheduled debate days. If a student misses their debate with a valid, documented absence, the weight from that debate will be re-allocated evenly across the remaining course grades.

[*Note: If courses move online, these debates will be changed to written papers]

Midterm Exam

The midterm is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27. Students missing a midterm exam due to illness, unexpected emergencies or other conflicts must notify the professor immediately, with a valid reason for their absence, in order to be considered for a make-up exam, as outlined in Section 3.9 of the Academic Calendar.

Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative and will cover the breadth of topics covered during the entire course. The time and date will be determined by the Registrar.

Course Topics

A variety of topics will be covered, including but not limited to the following:

- Unemployment
- Crime
- Minimum Wage
- The Business of Sports and Recreation
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Discrimination
- Social Security and Retirement
- Higher Education
- Voting
- Money and Inflation

Note: The ordering of the topics covered may be determined by the preferences of the students

Important Dates

Tues, Sept 15- First day of Fall classes

Tues, Sept 22- Last day to change first-term or full-year courses

Tues, Oct 27- **Midterm Exam**

Fri, Nov 13- Last day to drop first-term three-credit courses

Mon, Nov 11- Remembrance Day- NO CLASSES

Tues, Nov 17, 24, Dec 1 - **Debate Days**

Wed, Dec 2- Last day of Fall classes

Sat, Dec 5- Exam period begins

Statement on Equitable Learning

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

Please feel free to talk with me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the STFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. Please note that a Human Rights and Equity Advisor will soon be appointed. In the meantime, students, faculty, or staff may also contact the Director of Human Resources at hr@stfx.ca or the Office of the AVP&P

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