

FNCE 351: Finance and Society

Fall 2021

Professor Jules van Binsbergen

Course Website: Available on Canvas

TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary undergraduate course delves into the history of different economic and financial systems around the world. Students will analyze the economic and financial interactions between individuals, financial and non-financial corporations, governments, and the media under various systems and through the pre-modern, modern and postmodern eras. After theoretically exploring each system and their underlying philosophy, students critically evaluate them through data-driven analysis. In the process, the course offers students a rigorous introduction to the scientific method and its enlightenment origins, as well as the resulting empirical tools used in the social sciences. The course will be intellectually rigorous but not overly mathematical.

COURSE MATERIALS

- ***Full Reading List Below***
Each lecture will cover particular sections from the books in the reading list.
- ***Slides***
PDFs of lecture slides are available on Canvas.
- ***Additional Material***
Additional material will be made available on Canvas under Files.

ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION

Class attendance is mandatory. I also ask that you avoid disrupting class by leaving early. You are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings. **Class time is for discussing and applying principles, not regurgitating what you can read in a book.**

COURSE ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to respect the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity (http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html) and to behave with integrity in all aspects of the course. Students are encouraged to discuss the readings and other content of the course with each other. Final papers are individual.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROFESSOR

The best way to contact me outside of the classroom is via email. Please do not ask long, detailed questions about the course, or questions that (may) require a long, detailed response. I am happy to talk with students outside of the classroom so email one of us to schedule an appointment.

Please let me know of any difficulties you may be having with the course as soon as possible. These difficulties may arise from the course itself, or external forces (e.g., other courses, personal issues). Regardless of the source, let me know as soon as possible so we can work together to avoid larger problems later. Wharton and the University offer a wide range of support services that are geared towards helping students.

GRADING

There will be several short pop quizzes that test whether students did the readings for the class (25%). The final delivery for the class (75%) is a 7,500-10,000 word essay on a topic related to the class. The central thesis of the essay needs to be supported by data/empirical analysis following the rules and principles of the scientific method.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Class #	Topic
Tue Aug 31	1	Introduction and Definitions
Thu Sep 2	2	Economics and Finance in the Pre-Modern Era
Tue Sep 7	3	The French Revolution
Thu Sep 9	4	The Enlightenment, and the Scientific Method
Tue Sep 14	5	Capitalism and Financial Markets
Thu Sep 16	6	Marxism, Communism, and Socialism
Tue Sep 21	7	Economics and Finance in the Modern Era
Thu Sep 23	8	The Rise of (Central) Banking
Tue Sep 28	9	Postmodernism
Thu Sep 30	10	Left and Right-wing Collectivism and the Media in the Postmodern Era
Tue Oct 5	11	Morality, Freedom and Inequality in Marxist, Socialist and Capitalist Societies
Thu Oct 7	12	Project Presentations
Tue Oct 12	13	Project Presentations

Required and Optional Readings

Before Class 1 (Aug 31)

- **Orwell, G., *Animal Farm*, 1945, Secker and Warburg, London**
- Optional: Orwell, G., *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949, Secker and Warburg, London

Before Class 2 (Sep 2)

- **Ferguson, N., 2008, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, The Penguin Group, Chapters: Introduction, 1,2**
- Optional Ferguson, N., 2008, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, The Penguin Group, Chapters: 3

Before Class 3 (Sep 7)

- Reading Handouts from Class 2

Before Class 4 (Sep 9)

- **Pinker, S., *Enlightenment Now, The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, 2018, Allen Lane, an Imprint of Penguin Books
Chapters: 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,15**
- Optional: Pinker, S., *Enlightenment Now, The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, 2018, Allen Lane, an Imprint of Penguin Books
Chapters: Remaining chapters

Before Class 5 (Sep 14)

- **F.A. Hayek, 1948, *Individualism and Economic Order*, University of Chicago Press
Chapters 1,2,3,4,5 and 6**
- Optional: F.A. Hayek, 1948, *Individualism and Economic Order*, University of Chicago Press, Remaining Chapters

Before Class 6 (Sep 16)

- **Marx, K. and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848 (available online)**

Before Class 7 (Sep 21)

- Handouts from class

Before Class 8 (Sep 23)

- Handouts from class

Before Class 9 (Sep 28)

- **Hicks, S.R.C., 2011, *Explaining Postmodernism, Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, Expanded Edition, Ockham's Razor Publishing
Chapters: 1, 4 (pg. 84-104), 5,6**
- Optional: Hicks, S.R.C., 2011, *Explaining Postmodernism, Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, Expanded Edition, Ockham's Razor Publishing
Chapters: Remaining chapters

Before Class 10 (Sep 30)

- Handouts from class

Before Class 11 (Oct 5)

- Handouts from class

Full Reading List

- Admati, A. and Hellwig, M., 2013, *The Bankers' New Clothes, What's Wrong with Banking and What to Do about It*, Brilliance Audio
- Diamond, Jared, 1999, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, W.W. Norton
- Ferguson, N., 2008, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, The Penguin Group
- Friedman, M., 1962, *Capitalism and Freedom*, University of Chicago Press
- F.A. Hayek, 1948, *Individualism and Economic Order*, University of Chicago Press
- Hicks, S.R.C., 2011, *Explaining Postmodernism, Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, Expanded Edition, Ockham's Razor Publishing
- Jacobs, J.E., 1998, *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, Indiana University Press
- Keynes, J.M., 1936, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Marx, K., 1867, *Das Kapital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Verlag von Otto Meisner
- Marx, K. and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848
- Mill, J.S., *On Liberty*, 1859, United States
- Orwell, G., *Animal Farm*, 1945, Secker and Warburg, London
- Orwell, G., *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949, Secker and Warburg, London
- Piketty, T., *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 2014, The Belknap Press
- Pinker, S., *Enlightenment Now, The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, 2018, Allen Lane, an Imprint of Penguin Books
- Popkin, J. *A New World Begins: A History of the French Revolution*, 2019
- Popper, K., 1959, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Julius Springer, Hutchinson & Co
- Rand, Ayn, 1966, *Capitalism, The Unknown Ideal*, New American Library
- Rawls, J., 1971, *A Theory of Justice*, Belknap Press

- Sandel, M., 2012, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Sandel, M., 2009, *Justice: What is the Right Thing to Do?*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Smith, A., *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 1776, W. Strahan and T. Cadell, London
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1973, Éditions du Seuil