

Econ 197: Special Topic Course

What's the economy for anyway?

The case for a solidarity economy and social wealth

A 3-credit **Online Course** offered by the **Center for Popular Economics**
(www.populareconomics.org/WTEF_Online_Course.html)

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Week One: June 2nd- June 6th

Topic 1: Course Overview, Economic Tools and Techniques

Topics covered-

- Course overview and navigating moodle
- Reading charts and graphs (MAC Ch.2, pp.1-7)
- What do economies do? Production, distribution and consumption (MAC Ch.3, pp.1-5)
- The Gross Domestic Product (MAC Ch.5, pp.6-9)
- How should we measure economic well-being? GDP versus alternative measures

Topic 2: There's capitalism and then there's capitalism

Topics covered-

- Historical overview
- Keynesianism
- Neoliberalism
- Keynesianism versus Neoliberalism
- What are markets?
- Markets versus "The Market"

Topic 3: Privatization

Topics covered-

- The Private and the Public Economy
- Conditions needed to make markets work
- Privatize It!
- Privatize It or Democratize It?
- Spending on social welfare and services
- Health and Prisons

Week Two: June 9th - June 13th

Topic 4: Deregulation

Topics covered-

- Privatization and Deregulation
- Why should the economy be regulated?
- Role of the state in regulating the private economy
- Neoliberalism and deregulation in the financial sector
- **Case Study:** Housing mortgage crisis of 2007

Topic 5: Race, Class & Gender

Topics covered-

- Capitalist accumulation and race, class and gender
- How unequal are we anyway? Growing income and wealth disparities under neoliberalism
- Race and earning, employment, educational and incarceration disparities
- Gender disparities
- **Case Study:** Race, Class, Gender and Katrina

Topic 6: Growth, inequality and the Environment

Topics covered-

- Political Economy of the Environment
- Ecological consequences of a growth-based model of the economy
- The political economy of consumption
- **Case Study:** The Environmental Justice Movement

Week Three: June 16th- June 20th

Topic 7: Introduction to the solidarity economy

Topics covered

1. What is the Solidarity Economy?
2. Framework and principles
3. Historical context, Neoliberal Capitalism economy versus solidarity economy
4. Growing global movement: WSF, RIPESS
5. Elements
6. Theoretical contributions: boundaries, social economy vs solidarity economy

Topic 8: Economic democracy

Topics covered-

- What is economic democracy?
- What is undemocratic about capitalism? Class and exploitation
- The components of Economic Democracy

Topic 9: Workplace Democracy

Topics covered-

1. What is workplace democracy?
2. Worker cooperatives: why is a co-op different from a regular workplace?
3. Co-op statistics and history
4. Case Studies: Mondragón Cooperative Corporation, Third Italy (Emilia Romagna)

Week Four: June 23rd - June 27th

Topic 10: MIDTERM EXAM- June 23rd

Topic 11: Sustainability and Local economy

Topics covered-

- Locality and Sustainability
- Global Trade and the costs of distancing and externalities
- Sustainable architecture and ecological models
- Community economic development
- **Case Studies:** Community Supported Agriculture, Community Development Councils

Topic 12: Money, Social investment and finance

Topics covered-

- Complementary currencies
- Micro-credit & CDFIs
- Socially responsible investment (SRI)
- Solidarity Finance: Bank of the South

Week Five: June 30th- July 4th

Topic 13: The State and the solidarity economy

Topics covered-

- The relationship between the state and solidarity practices
- Participatory budgeting and governance
- The Fair Trade movement and the Solidarity Economy
- **Case Study:** Venezuela's solidarity economy policies

Topic 14: The Market, the State and the Commons

Topics covered-

- Types of property rights regimes (private, public, common, open-access)
- Community property rights and the Commons
- Types of Commons or types of wealth that communities possess
- **Case Study:** Brazil's Extractive Reserves

Week Six: July 7th- July 10th

Topic 15: The Care Commons

Topics covered-

- What are the care commons?
- The Care Penalty: Market versus non-market (family and community) work
- Making the State and the market care about the care commons
- Harnessing the care commons for building economic alternatives

Topic 16: Our Ecological and Knowledge Commons

Topics covered-

- What are the Ecological Commons?
- Global Climate Change and the atmospheric commons
- Community resource management as an alternative to corporate resource use
- What are the knowledge commons?
- Knowledge commons and intellectual property rights
- **Case Study:** Open Source Economics

Topic 17: Concluding Remarks

Topics covered-

- Challenging Neoliberalism by using social wealth to build a Solidarity Economy
- Course Evaluation Form (To be made available Wednesday July 9th)