

Hiram College
The financial crisis
Fall 2012

Class: MTWR 9:00 am – 12:00 pm., at Hinsdale 114.

Course Description: The current and evolving socioeconomic crisis, apparently rooted in the international financial sector, has affected and will continue to affect the wellbeing of millions of people the world over for a number of years to come. Historically, modern capitalist economies go through periods of expansions and contractions of various lengths and intensities. The length of time and the intensity of expansions and contractions could be affected not only by the way capitalist economies work but also by the way the financial system evolves during some of those expansions and contractions. We will study how expansions and contractions evolve and how the financial system affects the length and intensity of the evolution of the economic system to help us understand the roots of past, current and future socioeconomic crises.

Objectives: in this course we will discuss economic ideas and introduce analytical approaches to provide you with a set of tools to help you formulate critical and meaningful questions about some of the current economic events that may affect your life, such as the current and evolving socioeconomic crisis. These questions may generate deeper and more complex questions leading, hopefully, to deeper and more complex questions and so on. Within this methodological approach you will begin to understand and appreciate the deep complexities driving the evolution of social relations at the root of socioeconomic crises. This should provide you with an analytical approach to critically evaluate the merits of policies proposed by economic advisors, consultants, media editorials, political candidates, policymakers and institutions involved in political discussion, among many other social actors.

Grading scheme: there will be four graded activities that I will use to grade you in this course.

Group work: I believe that for this course each of you will greatly benefit from working in groups of either 2 or 3 people. This will help you complete the assignments and increase your involvement with the materials. There are four equally important components contributing to your grade: participation, media reports, documentary participation and final report. Each one is explained below.

Participation: this is not an ordinary course where I just lecture, I ask few questions and you take some notes. Your participation in class is fundamental. Participation means to be here on time, stay for the entire period and be active. There are will be a number of activities requiring your participation. I am trying to promote a learning environment. If you come to class, sit back, play with some electronic device and fail to be an active part of the group, you will discourage others from participating and being active learners and I will ask you to change your attitude or leave the classroom. Obviously this will also affect your grade because you must be here to earn your grade. This is a difficult and complex subject, and it requires a deep level of intellectual and personal commitment on your part.

Daily report on a news' piece: everyday, each group will present a news' report from some media outlet dealing with financial issues discussed in class. You must make an effort from the first report on to integrate the material we discuss in class with the media stories you bring to class. You presentation can

use multimedia. For example, you can bring a video, a podcast, an internet page, or anything you want, show it, explain it and then integrate that with current materials. I will provide you with guidelines during class as we move through the materials. Effort to integrate your presentation with the material, the presentation's substance, its overall quality, its aesthetics, all count towards earning a good grade.

Reading assignment: I have selected a series of reading assignments with a set of questions I prepared specifically for this course. You will get the assignments by email. Each group will work on those questions, and we will also discuss the answers during class. This is another important activity that will require a certain level of commitment to complete the assignments and to be ready to compare and contrast your answers with other people in class.

Documentaries: I have selected a series of insightful documentaries discussing the crisis. As we watch them together I will discuss some concepts and integrate them into the readings and current events. As we do that, I will ask you to participate. I will stop the videos and ask you questions. You will need to pay attention and participate. I do not expect great answers, the material is difficult. I expect a willingness to learn and contribute to the rest of us. We learn by asking questions and by genuinely attempting to integrate the readings and class' discussions into the formulations of ideas, questions and observations.

Final presentation: In this presentation each group will present a set of policies to deal with the evolving crises. The final presentation will take the form of a debate. I will be the moderator and each group will have to advocate for their policies and be ready to defend their proposals against the questions and criticisms from the other groups. The presentation can be supported with all type of media and I will grade them based on content, effort and aesthetics. More guidelines will be provided during lecture.

In sum: everything you do from the first day of class, your commitment, preparation, effort, attitude, substance of your work, all matter and all will affect your overall grade in my class.

Other important policies

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hiram College is committed to equality of opportunity and does not discriminate in its educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. The College will not tolerate harassment, prejudice, abuse, or discrimination by or of any of its students, faculty, or staff.

Communication with Parents

Hiram College encourages students to speak directly with faculty regarding course content and performance. Students are also encouraged to speak with their parent(s), particularly if the student remains dependent on parent(s) for financial support. Faculty may choose to speak with parents, but generally, faculty will require a written FERPA waiver to be signed by the student before speaking with a

student's parent. FERPA waivers may be found at the Registrar's Office in Teachout-Price, or online at <http://www.hiram.edu/current/offices/registrar/ferpa2.html>.

Disability Support Services for Students with Special Needs

To arrange for support services, a student must submit appropriate, current, detailed documentation to the Director of Counseling, Health and Disability Services (CHDS) together with the completed online service request form LINK. After verification and with the student's consent, the Director of CHDS will notify the student's faculty of the appropriate accommodation services. Faculty are not permitted to make accommodations without the authorization of the Director of CHDS. Hiram College adheres to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to provide requested services for disabled students as specified by the requirements contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy <http://www.hiram.edu/current/offices/registrar/ferpa2.html> guidelines. The Director CHDS is located in the Julia Church Health Center (330-569-5952) P.O. Box 67, Hiram OH 44234.

Academic Dishonesty

There are many forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, the giving or receiving of help in any form on an examination, the sale or purchase of papers and test materials, the abuse of computer privileges and regulations, the misuse or abuse of online or library resources, and any other action which debases the soundness of the educational process. Any student who violates the integrity of the academic process will be subject to punishment, including possible dismissal from the College.

Hiram College believes that the development of intellectual honesty is at the heart of a college education. The process of education is severely compromised if we cannot depend on the academic integrity of each member of the community. Moreover, the principles of academic honesty are aligned closely with the principles of good scholarship and research, principles of critical thinking and reasoning, and the standards of professional ethics. Thus, students who fail to practice academic honesty not only risk losing the trust of the academic community, they also fail to develop the most essential skills and abilities that characterize a college graduate.

Faculty members, librarians and staff are expected to report all instances of academic dishonesty to the Associate Dean of the College, who will provide advice on an appropriate action.

Grade Appeals

Academic performance is to be judged solely by individual faculty members. Grades are not subject to alteration based on the amount of effort exerted by, or past performance of, a student. Faculty are expected to provide performance criteria (such as attendance policies, deadlines, assignment expectations, etc.) as part of course syllabi or distributed assignments, but assessment of student performance in meeting said criteria is for the individual faculty member to determine. If a student believes that criteria were ignored, or that work submitted was not included, the student should consult the "Student Academic Responsibilities and Performance" section of the Hiram College Catalog at home.hiram.edu. Therein is provided the process for grade appeals. Please note that all grade appeals reside wholly with the professor alone until the official posting of grades by the Registrar.

Disclaimer: The information provided above does not constitute a contract and could be modified. However, if I choose to do so, I will alert you and provide you with all relevant and important information regarding the change.