

Heterodox Economics
Vienna University of Economics and Business
Winter Semester 2020-2021
PI 1751

Instructor: Alyssa Schneebaum, PhD
hendrik.theine@wu.ac.at
Office hours online by appointment only

Course Description:

This course introduces students to heterodox economics. Along with addressing core conceptual issues in defining heterodox economics, we will cover in some detail five heterodox traditions in economics: Marxian Economics, Institutional Economics, Post-Keynesian Economics, Feminist Economics, and Ecological Economics. In the first class meeting, we discuss the structure and goals of the course, as well as the expectations and requirements from the students. In addition, we will discuss the concept of heterodoxy in economics, along with discussing the concepts and key issues in mainstream and neoclassical economics.

Each of the following five units is dedicated to one specific heterodox approach. For each of the five approaches, we will discuss the core theory and ideas of the approach. Moreover, for each approach, we will discuss how this particular school of thought approaches or understands economic inequality. During these discussions, students are encouraged to compare each heterodox approach with the others, as well as with the contemporary mainstream.

By the end of the semester, students should have a clear idea about what heterodox economics is, as well as deeper knowledge on the five schools of thought we will cover as a group. They should be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of all discussed schools of thought, as well as those of contemporary mainstream economics.

Assignments and Assessment:

There are three portions to students' grades: class participation (30%), a group presentation (30%), and an individual or group paper (you get to choose!) (40%).

Attendance and participation are a very important part of the class – 30% of the grade. Students are thus strongly encouraged to come to class prepared (having read the assigned reading for the week and watched the video) and ready to discuss them. You may miss one class without penalty, but each additional class missed will result in the loss of ten points.

Each week, there will be a **group presentation**. The group presentations should present and discuss how the particular school of thought approaches or understands economic inequality and in how far this differs from mainstream economics. One core reading will be provided, but the group presentations are expected to draw on various other academic readings. The group should also plan to build some group discussion into their presentation. In total, presentations should not exceed 30 minutes.

At the end of the semester, students will write a **final paper**, either alone, or in groups of up to three people. Final papers are required to draw upon the literature assigned in the class, as well

as students' own experiences in economics thus far and any additional readings they would find useful. Papers should be double-spaced, 12-point font, 12-15 pages long and use correct citation for academic literature, including a full bibliography. Instead of answering each of the questions individually, the papers should be structured according to your main arguments. The papers are due by midnight on 7th of February 2021 and should be uploaded to learn.

Grading rubric:

1: 90+ points

2: 75-89 points

3: 65-74 points

4: 50-64 points

5: 0-49 points

Schedule of topics covered and mandatory readings/videos:

1 December: Introduction to the class and to heterodox economics, mainstream economics and neoclassical economics.

Video by Alyssa Schneebaum and Hendrik Theine on heterodox economics, mainstream economics and neoclassical economics

Video by Ha-Joon Chang: Economics for Everyone (RSA Animate):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9EzXHVYCI>

15 December: Marxian Economics

Fine, B., & Saad Filho, A. (2018). Marxist Economics. In L. Fischer et al. (Eds.), *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 19-32). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Video by Alyssa Schneebaum and Hendrik Theine on Marxian Economics

22 December: Institutional Economics

Hodgson, G.M. (2018). Institutional Economics. In L. Fischer et al. (Eds.), *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 45-59). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Video by Alyssa Schneebaum and Hendrik Theine on Institutional Economics

12 January: Post-Keynesian Economics

Stockhammer, E. (2018). Post-Keynesian economics. In L. Fischer et al. (Eds.), *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 6-18). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Interview with Miriam Rehm on Post-Keynesian Economics

19 January: Feminist Economics

Himmelweit, S. (2018). Feminist economics. In L. Fischer et al. (Eds.), *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 60-75). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Video by Alyssa Schneebaum on Feminist Economics

26 January: Ecological Economics

Spash, C.L. & Asara, V. (2018). Ecological economics. In L. Fischer et al. (Eds.), *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 120-132). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Video by Alyssa Schneebaum and Hendrik Theine on Ecological Economics

Core readings for group presentations:

Marxian Economics and economic inequality

- Fessler, P. & Schürz, M. (2017). “The functions of wealth: renters, owners, and capitalist across Europe and the United States.” OeNB Working paper 223.

Institutional Economics and economic inequality

- Brown, C. (2005). “Is there an institutional theory of distribution?” *Journal of Economic Issues* 39(4): 915-931.

Post-Keynesian Economics and economic inequality

- Goda, T., Onaran, O. & Stockhammer, E. (2017). “Income inequality and wealth concentration in the recent crisis.” *Development and Change* 48(1): 3-27.

Feminist Economics and economic inequality

- Perrons, D. (2015). “Gendering the inequality debate.” *Gender & Development* 23(2): 207-222.

Ecological Economics and economic inequality

- Jorgenson, A., Schor, J., & Huang, X. (2017). “Income inequality and carbon emissions in the United States: a state-level analysis, 1997–2012.” *Ecological Economics* 134: 40-48.

Further suggested readings on neoclassical, mainstream and heterodox economics:

Fischer, L. et al. (2018). Introduction. In *Rethinking economics: An introduction to pluralist economics* (pp. 1-5). Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Harvey, J. T. (2015). Economics as a scientific discipline. In *Contending perspectives in economics: A guide to contemporary schools of thought* (pp. 6-37). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Jo, T.H. & Todorova, Z. (2017). Social provisioning process: a heterodox view of the economy. In: T. H. Jo, L. Chester, and Z. Todorova (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Heterodox Economics* (pp. 29-40). New York: Routledge.

Morgan, J. (2015). Introduction. In J. Morgan (ed.), *What is neoclassical economics? Debating the origins, meaning and significance* (pp. 1-29). New York: Routledge

Morgan, J. & Embery, J. (2017). Heterodox economics as a living body of knowledge: community, (in)commensurability, critical engagement, and pluralism. In T. H. Jo, L. Chester, & Z. Todorova (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Heterodox Economics* (pp. 515-533). New York: Routledge.