Economics 154-326A ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS
Fall 2019 Syllabus

Class Times: Tues. Thurs. 1:05 -2:25
RPHYS 114

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In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Students are required to understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct. Students can submit written work in English or French. If you have a disability - confirmed by a professional - that might affect your academic work, Professor Naylor will find a reasonable accommodation to help meet your needs while respecting the structure and timetable of the course.

COURSE RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES: Ecological (AKA Biophysical) economics differs from mainstream formal economics. Environmental economics, for example, focuses mainly on micro-level “optimization;” while the primary job of macro economics is understanding, maintaining, and if possible accelerating “growth” at the economy-wide level. Biophysical economics studies economic activity in terms of its relationship not just to “markets” or “resources” but to the biosphere as a whole. The fundamental question of biophysical economics is not how much can be produced and consumed, but how much damage it is possible for ecosystems on which the economy and human society itself depends can tolerate before catastrophic breakdown(s) occurs.

    Course prerequisites: six credits of university level economics, both micro and macro. You can’t understand limitations of mainstream economics unless you know what it is.

    Core material comes from lectures and other sources via MyCourses. Lecture contents are available only in lectures NOT on MyCourses.

    Some knowledge of ecology is critical. Students lacking background can check an introductory ecology book or follow the 12 unit (about 10-12 minutes each) crash course: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=crash+course+ecology. Each unit ends with a list of core concepts, many of them essential for your course performance, including your term test in early October.

READINGS

Each “module” in MyCourses (except the first) relates to a particular class topic. All methodological and empirical material on MyCourses is selected to complement and supplement lectures. Each module contains several items of reading material; but in general the early ones are particularly significant; the rest give more details and help to clarify or extend different elements raised in the first few. Those early articles plus lecture material are most relevant for the 25% test. The more of the articles you look at the better your grounding in the particular topic. They also contain key concepts required for all your written and oral work.
In Module “Energetics and Systems” the third item “KeenAyresStandishEnergyInProduction” ought to be studied carefully in its FIRST FIVE PAGES; or look at another version https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAjN6bG7XzM. Or both. Any test questions will focus on the concepts up to equations 1-10. This is not a math exercise; it is to ensure your understanding of core ideas and their importance in real world economics.

**Marking** is done in four 25% units: (SEE MARKING MODULE ON MY COURSES)

- A **Class Test** on core concepts from early modules
- A **“briefing note”** 350 word (max) fully explained on MyCourses
- A **Case Study** (see MyCourses) max 5 pages including references
- A **Group Debate** (topics given below)

**THE DEBATE TOPICS FOR THIS YEAR ARE:**

| Topic | Resolution (THBT…)
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<tr>
<td>Environmental trends as a global security threat</td>
<td>…in the future, <em>climate change</em> will be a greater threat to humankind than conflict of any scale.</td>
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<td>A liveable environment is a human right</td>
<td>…the current framework of international human rights must be replaced by a framework acknowledging the inherent rights of the biosphere</td>
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<td>Alternative International Financial Institutions</td>
<td>…a primary feature of the contemporary ID narrative is exporting environmental externalities to poorer nations in the guise of economic prosperity.</td>
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<td>Conservation Cons…</td>
<td>…the current model of nature preservation inherently creates an unequal distribution of access to “nature”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course for change</td>
<td>…the re-embedding of the economy within the biosphere requires a wholesale re-organisation of said economy.</td>
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These five topics reflect major themes of the course, and test how well members of a debate team have assimilated the material sufficiently to be able to use it critically.

1. Final Mark *(non-negotiable)* can incorporate
   - **-5% per day** for late material submitted
   - **-5%** for on time but poorly done outlines
   - **+5%** for excellent general performance