

**MONT 112G: Economic growth and disparity**  
**Syllabus**  
**Prof. Miles Cahill**  
**Fall 2012**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Course meeting time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 01: 9:30-10:45, 02: 11-12:15, Stein 118A

**Office Hours:** Mon.: 10-11, 1-3; Tues. 12:30-1:30; Wed.: 9-11; Thurs. 12:30-1:30; Fri.:10-11, 1-3. Check Moodle for changes.

**Course management system:**

**Moodle:** <https://lms.holycross.edu/hcmoodle/course/view.php?id=1772>; *login:* your Novell  
login ID and password

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**Exam and project dates, points**

Class participation: Every day, 75 points, (15%)

Midterm: Tues., October 23, in class, 100 points (20%)

Final Exam: During finals period, 150 points (30%)

Short papers/quiz mean: Several, TBA, 100 points (20%)

Final country report: Written report due Thurs., Nov 27, 9:00 a.m. via Moodle, 75 points (15%)

Grade includes presentations on November 29 and Dec. 4

**Common events**

Tues. September 18, 7 pm: World Symposium

Thurs., November 15: Hunger banquet

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

Average annual income in the U.S. is over \$40,000 a person. In some African counties, income per person is less than \$800 a year. In 1900, the U.S. and Argentina had about the same level of average income, and today U.S. income is more than triple Argentina's. What forces have led to such growth and disparity around the world? This course will look into these questions as well as discuss how economic well-being may be measured. Along the way, you will develop economic and quantitative tools that can be used to understand the global economy and society. This course covers the material taught in the first half of a traditional principles of macroeconomics course. After the spring semester, you will have taken the equivalent of *Principles of Macroeconomics*, Econ 111. Make sure not to take it twice!

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Required materials**

**Books:** order these from your favorite on-line retailer or find online for free!

Rittenberg, Libby and Timothy Tregarthen (2011), *Principles of Macroeconomics* (v. 1.1), Flat World Knowledge.

This textbook is free online or you can buy copies in multiple formats – it's up to you how you want to read it! The publisher makes available an "All Access Pass" for \$35 that allows you to read it on multiple formats, or you can read it online for free. All options are available at <http://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1049905>

Bakewell, Sarah (2010), *How to Live, or, A Life of Montaigne: In One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer*, New York: Other Press.

This is the first-year common reading distributed to you to read over the summer



- Graff, Gerald and Birkenstein (2010), *They Say I Say, Second Edition*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Diamond, Jared (1997), *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, New York: W.W. Norton. (various formats, including Kindle).
- Stiglitz, Joseph E., Amartya Sen and Jen-Paul Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring Our Lives: Why GDP Doesn't Add Up: The Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, New York: The New World Press (various formats, including Kindle) A version of the report can also be found here: [http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport\\_anglais.pdf](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf)
- Jaschik, Scott (2005), "Guns, Germs, and Steel Reconsidered," *Inside Higher Ed*, (August 3), <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/08/03/ggs#.UDpdeB6S7gI.email>, accessed August 26, 2012.

Newspaper: *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* or *Economist* (print or on-line). Feel free to use the copies available around campus and through the library.

Additional articles: Posted on Moodle

Homework problem sets: Throughout the year, homework (usually in the form of problem sets) will be posted on Moodle. These assignments will vary between discussion questions for class and textbook questions to gauge your learning. Some I will collect for a grade, some I will ask you to post on Moodle forums, and some I will not collect at all. Your class participation grade partly depends on your completing these assignments.

e-mail: It is your responsibility to regularly check e-mails and respond as appropriate.

## **GRADING**

**Attendance and participation**: Attendance at each class is mandatory. If you have a serious problem that forces you to miss class, it is your responsibility to let me know ahead of time if possible, or if not as soon as possible afterward. Furthermore, I reserve the right to request a note from the class dean or other authority to excuse an absence. If you miss a quiz or midterm due to an excused absence, your final score will be re-weighted except in extreme circumstances. You will be expected to arrive at class ready to discuss the day's material and having read the assignment. You will be expected to discuss the days reading and material. You are also expected to contribute to Moodle forums as directed.

**Midterm**: The midterm exam will cover the course material in the first half of class. The specific coverage of the exam will be provided a week before the exam. It will be a combination of multiple choice(ish), short answer, problems and essays.

**Final exam**: The final exam will be a cumulative for the semester, including the textbook material and other readings. The material tested on the readings will be based on class discussion, short papers and homework assignments

**Short papers and quizzes**: I will assign various short papers throughout the semester. We will also have some in-class quizzes on readings and material covered in class. Quizzes will be announced one class ahead of time. Your grade will be based on your average grade for these assignments. Most of your papers will be used again in your country report, below. This gives you an opportunity to revise your papers for the report.



**Final country report:** You were assigned a country as part of the *World Symposium* group project. Throughout the semester, you will be given assignments to find out various aspects of the country. These assignments will be handed in and graded or discussed in class. The assignments will be combined to form a country report. You are required to revise your earlier assignments to put them into the report as directed. Details on the report will be provided later in the semester.

**Distribution of grades:** The grade distribution for each assignment will be provided when assignments are turned back to you. Your mid-semester cumulative point and grade total will be provided when the exam are turned back to you. The scale may be “looser” than the straight scale (A=95%, A-=90%, B+=87%), etc., but you are guaranteed at least the “straight scale.”

**Academic dishonesty:** The College policy on academic dishonesty is clear and spelled out in the *College Catalog*. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams and assignments (by using or providing prohibited materials) and plagiarism, which includes the deliberate *or unintentional* use of another’s ideas or language without proper attribution. I will make it clear when it is ok to rely on your group mates from your group project and when you should not. See the assignment handouts and *They Say I Say* for specific guidelines on avoiding plagiarism; we will use a parenthetical documentation style. I am required to report any act of plagiarism (intentional or not) that results in any grade reduction to your Class Dean for academic dishonesty disciplinary proceedings as described in the *Catalog*.



## **COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

The course is divided into three units. The approximate time we will spend on each unit is given in parentheses. The chapter readings refer to Rittenberg and Treegarten text. The readings on writing are for the whole unit; be prepared to discuss the readings as directed in class.

### **Introduction to economics, inequality and research (4 weeks)**

Overview of economics and social science research	Ch. 1
“Question everything”	Blakewell Ch. 7
Scarcity and opportunity cost	Ch. 2
International trade	Ch. 2.3 (comparative advantage), Ch. 15.1 (first two sections)
Supply and demand	Ch. 3-4

### **What is macroeconomic prosperity? (3 weeks)**

Overview of macroeconomics	Ch. 5
GDP and related measures	Ch. 6
Criticisms of GDP	Stiglitz et al (2010)
Economic growth theory	Ch. 8
World disparity	Ch. 19

### **Long history of world disparity and economic growth (4 weeks) Diamond (1997)**

Examples from history (Chatham Islands, Cajamarca)	Ch. 2&3
Agriculture endowment	
Plants	Ch. 5-8
Animals	Ch. 9
Geography	Ch. 10
Disease	Ch. 11
Technology	Ch. 13
Government	Ch. 14
Criticism of hypothesis	(Jaschik 2005 reading and others TBA)

### **At the same time**

Throughout the course we will discuss academic writing and employ concepts through assignments.

- Graff and Birkenstein *They Say I Say*
- Blakewell *How to Live* Ch. 2, 13, 17, 18