

# Welcome to AC Economics

## Course content

*“Capitalism is not a success. It is not intelligent, it is not beautiful, it is not just, it is not virtuous, and it doesn’t deliver the goods. In short, we dislike it and we are beginning to despise it. But when we wonder what to put in its place, we are extremely perplexed”*

–Lord John Maynard Keynes

Economics is the discipline of the social sciences that most directly impacts our daily lives. As Keynes explained economics is an inescapable force organizing our lives and societies. Unfortunately, it is common to perceive economics as a barrier to realizing individual or societal goals. This course is designed to empower students to understand and participate in economic dialogue not dismiss it. This is critical in our increasingly economics driven globalized world. Reflecting on the role of economics in our lives is an expectation of the California senior economics framework: “In a one- semester economics course in economics, students should deepen their understanding of the economic problems and institutions of the nation and world in which they live. They should learn to make reasoned decisions on economic issues as citizens, workers, consumers, business owners, and members of civic groups”. This class is designed to prepare students for the rigor of coursework they will encounter during their years as a college student. Students will be explicitly taught to read, write, note take, and think critically at an undergraduate level. In addition, students will practice and develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship.

## Units of Study

This course attempts to answer the questions, What economic forces are at work in our world, where did they come from, and how did they affect my life? You will gain a general understanding of how economics works as well as sharpen your reading and writing skills. Our goal is to learn to look at the world through an economic lens and to use that lens to come up with solutions to problems affecting the world around us.

Unit 1 Introduction to economics: What are the basic economic principles? For example, how do markets, incentives, scarcity, and opportunity costs determine what gets produced and consumed within a society? How have these concepts developed chronologically throughout history?

Unit 2 Microeconomics Supply and Demand: What are supply and demand? How do supply and demand act as the invisible hand in a capitalist economy? How does advertising increase demand for particular products?

Unit 3 Questions: Microeconomics Market Failure: How should the government intervene to ensure the market operates efficiently in these situations?

Unit 4 Questions: Macroeconomics Monetary and Fiscal Policy: How does the banking system increase the money supply and act as the engine of economic growth? What role does the Fed play in determining monetary policy? How does this relate to our current economic situation?

Unit 5 Questions: Macroeconomics International Economics: What does the neoliberal model urge developing countries to implement as economic policy to achieve development? How accurate is this model?

## Required Texts

Current News Articles  
Economics Reader Provided Throughout Semester

## Course Goals and Major Student Outcomes

As you enter your final social studies class at Berkeley High you have an opportunity to gain critical skills required in college. The following set of skill and processes will be explicitly taught during the semester. Mastery of these skills will enable you to transition successfully to the more rigorous demands of undergraduate classes.

- 1) To demonstrate an increasing mastery of social science skills, such as map reading, note-taking, outlining, analyzing, evaluating, research, and critical thinking.
- 2) To demonstrate both descriptive and analytical ability in all writing assignments.
- 3) To ask historical questions, evaluate historical data, compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, and consider multiple perspectives.

## Grading Procedure

Each student's individual term grades will be based on the following:

Tests and Quizzes: 25%

Major Assignments: 30%

Homework: 15%

Participation and in class work: 30%

Assessed in part using random number system see explanation

*All quarter and semester grades will be based on the standard grading system:*

90-100%: A

80-89%: B

70-79%: C

60-69%: D

< 60%: F

**Absences:** The school policy on absences states that every five unexcused absences lower your grade by one letter. Every three tardies counts as an unexcused absence. It is the responsibility of the student to clear his/her absences in a timely fashion (within one week). If you are absent from school, you are still responsible for having the assigned homework ready on the due date.

Coming to class late is disrespectful to both myself and the classroom community. Please be mindful of your actions. I will hold you accountable for them.

*All assignment due dates will be posted on our Powerschool assignment calendar which can be accessed through the student or parent portal as well as our course website.*

### **Assignment Types Details**

Tests and quizzes are designed to check your understanding of course content. You will have at least one test and quiz during each unit.

Major assignments are designed to give you an opportunity to apply course concepts to your own areas of interest and to engage in economic analysis. I hope you will find these assignments challenging yet interesting and engaging. There will be at least five major assignments throughout the semester.

Your homework will primarily consist of reading the textbook and articles in conjunction with the material we are covering in class. To incentivize this necessary reading there will be frequent random reading quizzes designed to show that you have completed and understand the reading material. In addition, homework will consist of an ongoing assignment where you will connect economic concepts to current events. You can expect to complete one of these current event posts for each of the five units of the course.

We have limited class time over the course of the semester and it is critical that we maximize this time. To assess your in class performance and to incentive engagement I will be partially relying on a random number calling system. Be ready at any and all times for a question to come your way or to display your writing using our document camera. The random nature of this system demonstrates my commitment to transparency and fairness but creates accountability for you as students to engage with the class everyday and complete in class work. Another component of your in class performance will be based on your participation in several simulations and socratic seminar style debates.

### **Late Work Policy**

In short, homework assignments may not be turned in late. Homework is designed to prepare students to actively participate and understand each day's lesson. Therefore, all written assignments are due in class or to be posted on our website according to the due dates on our Powerschool assignment calendar. Major assignments will be deducted one letter grade each day they are late.

If an absence has been excused, a student has the same number of days as the length of the absence to make up missing assignments. It is the student's responsibility to hand in work promptly when returning from an absence - I will not remind you. If an absence has not been excused by the attendance office, work will NOT be accepted.

## **Online Learning**

In class learning will be complemented by an online course facilitated by the Course Management System Moodle. The site will provide students with materials organized by unit and interactive learning activities to connect work done outside of class to in class learning. Students will be required to participate in discussion boards as a way of engaging academically with peers and developing persuasive writing skills. Participation in this online course will allow students the opportunity to participate in and familiarize themselves with many of the tools of the emerging knowledge economy.

While engaging in online learning is a required aspect of this course I want to acknowledge that not every student has the same access to the internet. I understand this and will work with students to facilitate online learning opportunities. The library at Berkeley High, as well as the public library, have labs of computers with web access and is open every day before and after school. It is my expectation that every student will engage in online learning on a weekly basis.

## **Classroom Expectations and Rules**

I am committed to providing a quality education in a supportive environment for all my students. Students who are disruptive, chronically unprepared, rude to me or other students or disrespectful of the academic atmosphere of our classroom make it difficult to achieve a positive learning environment for all students. Therefore, these types of behaviors will not be tolerated. I'm happy to help you with any problems you're having in the class, and I expect you to do your part and follow these expectations every day.

*Classroom expectations and rules:*

1. Be in your desk and ready to work when the bell rings. Work on assigned tasks until the bell rings.
2. Be a scholar and a model of academic integrity. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a 0 for that assignment and risk having the colleges they are applying to contacted at the discretion of the AC VP.

3. Bring all required materials to class
4. Turn OFF and PUT AWAY cell phones and other electronic devices BEFORE class begins unless asked to use your cellphone in class. Otherwise they will be confiscated for the day.
5. Participate actively in class. Ask constructive questions, help others, don't waste time, and try your best!
6. Act respectfully toward every member of the class (both students and teachers). Follow instructions. Never put anyone, or their ideas, down. This also holds true on our course website.
7. No food or drinks. The one exception being water brought in a container with a top.

*The consequences for not meeting the expectations include:*

- In class verbal warning and/or after class discussion with teacher
- Phone call home
- Referral to OCI (note: extreme disruptive behavior or disrespect on any given day may result in jumping to this step immediately)
- Meeting with parents and Academic Choice administrators

***One Last Thing for Parents:***

Thank you for reading through this syllabus. If you ever have any questions or comments about the course or your student's progress throughout the year, please don't hesitate to contact me.

**Please complete the following and return this page with your student.  
Returning this page signed will be one of the first small graded assignments for the semester.**

Academic Choice Economics  
Fall 2010-2011

I have read the attached syllabus and understand the course requirements as stated.

Parent/Guardian Signature

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Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Contact Information:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Do You Have Internet Access at Home? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Questions:

Economics  
Mr. Sanoff

Email: [bsanoff@berkeley.k12.ca.us](mailto:bsanoff@berkeley.k12.ca.us)

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