

## SYLLABUS – Economics 230

Discipline: Econ  
Course and section: 230-01  
Title of the Course: History of Innovation and Economic Growth

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### Textbooks:

*Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World.* McCloskey. University of Chicago Press, 2010.

*Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies.* Diamond. W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Brief additional readings may be assigned during the semester.

### A. **Catalog Entry**

ECON 230. History of Innovation and Economic Growth

Three hours lecture.

Prerequisites: None.

This course fulfills the Innovation Requirement for economics majors.

### B. **Detailed Description of Content of the Course**

This course reviews the historical impact of inventions and innovation on economic activity, from pre-historic times to the modern age. The source of key transitions in our economy's history is always based on innovation – the development of new ideas, technologies and strategies which increase how efficiently we use our scarce resources to produce goods and services. These innovations have changed the core productive activities in the economy. As the economic base of society changes, the institutions which serve the economy also change. We will discuss these changes and their implications for humanity in the past, today, and in the future.

### **Topic Outline**

1. Introduction to the History of Economic Growth
2. Ultimate and Proximate Factors
3. Growth and Innovation from Prehistory to the 1800s
4. Invention or Innovation?
5. Traditional Explanations of Growth
6. Non-traditional Explanations of Growth
7. Growth and Innovation from the 1800s
8. Rhetoric and the Triumph of the Poor

### C. **Description of Conduct of the Course**

The following teaching strategies may be employed: lectures, video and/or audio presentations, discussions, weekly assignments, and in-class engagement activities.

**D. Goals and Objectives of the Course**

This course fulfills the following COBE BBA learning outcomes:

Logical Decision Making: Students will identify the problem/issue/opportunity, organize information, and recommend relevant options in a given situation.

Innovation: Students will be able to identify, apply and interpret the results of innovative thinking to recommend action or guide decision making that improves business performance.

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key historical events (turning points, revolutions, etc.) in economic history.
- Describe the general impact of innovation on markets and on the economy.
- Describe the innovation process in modern business.
- Evaluate how changes in technology have produced changes in standards of living over time
- Connect important institutions to economic growth & prosperity.

**E. Assessment Measures**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 or less

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Participation	10%
Homework	30%
Tests	30%
Presentations	30%

Week	Date	Topic	Chapter	Assignments
1		Innovation and Economic Growth		
2		Yali's question	GGS preface	Assignment #1
3		Collision at Cajamarca,	GGS Ch. 3, 4	Assignment #2
4		To Farm or Not to Farm,	GGS Ch. 6, 8	Assignment #3
5		Spacious Skies and Tilted Axes	GGS Ch. 10	Assignment #4
6		Necessity's Mother	GGS Ch. 13	<b>Midterm</b>
7		Guns, Germs and Steel	Ch. 3,4,6,8,10,13	
8		The Modern World...	BD Ch. 1	Problem Set #5
9		Liberal Ideas Caused...	BD Ch. 2, 3	<b>Presentation #1</b>
10		Many Other Plausible Stories...	BD Ch. 4, 6	Problem Set #6
11		Nor Was It Accumulation...	BD Ch. 19	Problem Set #7
12		Nor Geography, nor Natural...	BD Ch. 21	Problem Set #8
13				<b>Presentation #2</b>
14		<b><i>Presentations</i></b>		
15	Finals Week	<b><i>Final Exam TBA</i></b>		

### **Assignments:**

Homework. Each reading assignment is complemented by a summary assignment to be completed on D2L.

Tests. These will be take home tests. For each test, students answer three out of six questions related to the readings. Answers should be in the 250-350 word range for each question.

PowerPoint Presentations. Students will prepare 5-10 slide presentations on these topics:

- (1) An innovation from any time in the past that has contributed to economic growth.
- (2) A possible innovation from the 21<sup>st</sup> century that may contribute to future economic growth.

Participation. Students will use the Packback Questions platform for online discussion about class topics. Students should submit the following each week (by Monday at 9am) starting Week 3:

- 1 open-ended question
- 2 responses

#### **F. Technical Assistance**

The Technology Assistance Center provides a number of options for students to find answers to common questions and request assistance.

- Find common answers or submit an online support request: [www.radford.edu/itonestop](http://www.radford.edu/itonestop)
- Phone: (540) 831-7500; Mon-Thursday 8am – Midnight, Friday 8am - 5pm
- Walk-in (Appointment Recommended)

#### **G. Other Course Information**

- All students are expected to attend class regularly. Frequent absences may jeopardize grades.
- All students are expected to attend class **on time** and **remain in class** for the entire class.
- All students are expected to address any technology related problems in a timely fashion.
- Please **turn off all cell phones** during class.
- During the first week of class, student athletes must provide the instructor with paper copies of their season schedule, disclosing the dates of anticipated absences.
- Students who have a documented disability and require special assistance through the Center for Accessibility Services must inform the instructor by 5pm Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

If you are seeking academic accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act at Radford University, you are required to register with the Center for Accessibility Services (CAS). To receive academic accommodations, please submit your documentation to CAS by fax to 540-831-6525 or by email to [cas@radford.edu](mailto:cas@radford.edu). For more information and/or for documentation guidelines, visit <http://www.radford.edu/content/cas/home.html> or call 540-831-6350.

#### **HONOR SYSTEM:**

THE COLLEGE HONOR SYSTEM WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. ANY STUDENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE IF THEY ARE CAUGHT CHEATING. FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING THE HONOR SYSTEM, PLEASE REFER TO THE RADFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENT HANDBOOK OR DEAN OF STUDENTS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.RADFORD.EDU/DOS-WEB/ACADEMICINTEGRITY.HTM](http://www.radford.edu/dos-web/academicintegrity.htm)