

Lin 101 A: Scarcity and choice: Pop Culture Econ, Fall 2015

Location: Comenius 105
Time: 10:20 – 11: 30 a.m.
Instructor: Dr. Sonia Aziz
Office: Comenius 204
Office Hours: 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. W
3:55 – 4:55 p.m. T, or by appointment
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Course Objectives: Our main objectives for the semester are to ensure that you as a student:

- Understand fundamental principles of both micro and macro economics using economic models, literature and popular media
- Develop an understanding of what guides preferences and outcomes
- Identify and investigate scarcity constrained behavior in developing countries as well as popular culture
- Study how societal norms, literature and popular media shape an infrastructure that drives poverty and inequality.
- Interpret literature and popular media in the context of preference formation/elicitation.

Catalog Description:

This course explores aspects of economics in literature and popular media through books, graphic novels, movies and music. In particular we will focus on the consequences of behavior that results from scarcity, and study economics as presented in literature and popular media. Key objectives include: 1. Identify and investigate scarcity constrained behavior in popular culture 2. Study how societal norms, literature and popular media shape an infrastructure that drives poverty and inequality. Instructor: Dr. Sonia Aziz

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, economics is a mathematical science so math will appear, in small doses, in two forms: graphs, elementary statistics and basic algebra. The lectures will occasionally discuss simple mathematical models that economists find helpful to describe some aspects of empirical data. The intuition behind these models will, however, always be made clear, and can be used as a substitute (for the purposes of your understanding, and when answering exam questions) for mathematics.

Course Materials:

Academic Writer: Brief Guide - 3rd edition, by [Lisa Ede](#)

Poor Economics (www.pooreconomics.com) - By Esther Dufflo and Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee

The Windup Girl (<http://windupstories.com/books/windup-girl/>) - By Paulo Bacigalupi, Publisher: Night Shade Books; Reissue edition (May 5, 2015)

Economics by Leeds, vonAllmen and Schiming, Pearson Addison Wesley, Publishers, 2006.

Various readings media and movie clips(readings posted on google drive or handed out in class)

Evaluation:

There will be four analytical papers and one final paper. Papers must be submitted on time. Late papers submitted within 24 hours of the due date will be reduced by one grade point. Papers submitted after this 24 hour period will receive a grade of zero. The class grade will be computed from grades on quizzes, participation in class discussions, in class assignments, papers and participation in extra curricular activities. Please note that you will be subject to a pop quiz frequently, the pop quiz will typically cover material from previous lecture, from the book on the current topic or from other materials used in class (such as music, television or movie clips which will be played in class on a regular basis). Moravian college policies regarding academic honesty will be enforced. **I endorse and strictly enforce the College's academic honesty policy. Cheating violations of any kind will result in failure for the semester, no exceptions. The academic honesty policy can be found in the college handbook. Make sure you have read it and understand it.**

Students are required to read scheduled chapters before coming to class. Additional readings may be distributed in class, or placed on reserve in the library. Homework and papers must be turned in on time for full credit. Regular attendance is expected. **Pop quizzes will happen.** Because contribution to the classroom community is counted as part of the class grade, regular attendance is necessary (but not sufficient) to receive full credit in this category. The use of cell phones in the classroom is not permitted. The use of laptops in the classroom (subject to need for individual accommodations - see below) is also not permitted. Your grade will be determined by the combination of quizzes, assignments, four exams including the final exam, and class participation. The intent of the quizzes is to create additional incentive to read the chapters and apply the material BEFORE you must do so in an exam setting. You should note that this course is analytical in nature, making satisfactory paper performance heavily dependent on utilizing methods and techniques discussed in class. Papers must be submitted on time for full credit. Late work will not be accepted.

Weights:	Short Paper 1	15 %
	Short Paper 2	15 %
	Short Paper 3	15 %
	Short Paper 4	15%
	Final Paper	20%
	Class Presentation	10%
	Participation*	10 %

* Based on extra curricular activities, attendance, participation (offering thoughtful answers on a regular basis), assignments, quizzes. **Attendance to extracurricular activities count as 5% of the class grade;** assignments, class participation and quizzes count for 5% of the class grade.

Paper Grading Policy:

Sometimes a student will disagree with a grade assigned to particular question. This is a legitimate concern and will be addressed in the following procedure. To have an answer reevaluated, the student must submit a *written* request for a reevaluation. This request should identify the question in dispute, provide a written explanation why the student feels the question was incorrectly evaluated, and propose a suggested remedy. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for a course.

Grading Scale:

A (92-100)	C (72-77.9)
A- (90-91.9)	C- (70-71.9)
B+ (88-89.9)	D+ (68-69.9)
B (82-87.9)	D (62-67.9)
B- (80-81.9)	D- (60-61.9)
C+ (78 – 79.9)	F (0-59.9)

Absences

You are allowed up to three absences without penalty. For your first three absences, you will not receive a zero for participation, and the grade will be computed by averaging the remaining scores.

Please note:

The reason for your absence has no effect on the 3 absence rule.

Subsequent absences will receive a score of '0', and lower your participation grade

Whether your absence is your first or your fourth you alone are responsible for any and all work from that day of class, and your responsibility to get information needed to complete the work on time.

Accommodation:

Should you have any individual concerns regarding disability please discuss this with me during the first week of class in person or via email. In addition, students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

General FYS Guidelines and Objectives

First-Year Seminar (FYS) introduces writing as a process that is central to college learning and to life. FYS focuses on college-level reading and writing, so students will begin to sharpen the critical reasoning skills needed for success in any academic discipline at Moravian College. The subject area focus of each section of FYS entails reading and discussing ideas and styles from various academic disciplines, but all sections are the same in their general approach: students will practice both speaking and writing and work collaboratively in workshop settings.

With regard to broad academic and writing skills, by the end of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate a process approach to writing.
- Use writing as a way to discover new information and insights—in short, to learn.
- Demonstrate competency in writing including framing questions, posing problems, and synthesizing information to write an academic paper.
- Write effectively for a variety of audiences.
- Gather information for assignments through the use of appropriate technology and evaluate the credibility of sources needed to write an academic paper.
- Read critically and comprehensively to integrate others' ideas with their own.

With regard to transition to college expectations, by the end of this course students will:

- Articulate an understanding of liberal education as it affects one's life now and prepares the individual for the future.
- Practice behaviors for successful learning including effective study habits, time management, goal setting and coping skills.
- Collaborate with faculty and student advisors and engage with the College community—students, faculty and staff—to promote the students' success at Moravian College.

Each student enrolled in FYS will complete several pieces of writing. You should expect to receive suggestions from their instructor or classmates or the College Writing Center as they develop writing assignments through multiple drafts, individual conferences, written comments, small group workshops.

Most of the writing assignments should involve substantial use of Reeves Library with the support of the Writing Center. The Writing Center, on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall¹, is there to support all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good, experienced writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could seek advice on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. You will develop information literacy as you learn to identify and investigate a research topic. By the time you complete First-Year Seminar, therefore, you should be proficient in the following “**basic competencies**” of information literacy:

- Define a research need
 - Formulate a research topic
 - Determine an information need
- Plan and execute a search for information
 - Identify key terms and concepts
 - Identify the most appropriate sources of information
 - Use Boolean operators and truncation where appropriate
 - Impose limiters (e.g., scholarly vs. popular, date, language)
 - Modify the search based on search results
- Know how and where to find the sources discovered in the search process
 - Determine which sources the library owns or provides access to and retrieve them
 - Request material not owned by the library on Interlibrary Loan
 - Locate material faculty may have put on reserve in the library
- Understand the obligation to credit sources and be able to do so in an appropriate citation style

¹ The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call [610-861-1592](tel:610-861-1592).

COURSE OUTLINE

Here is a tentative schedule and list of topics to be covered in class this semester. Schedule is revised as we go forward. Note that film and ad clips will be used throughout the semester. Depending on the background, interests and progress of the class we may cover more or less material or cover it in a different order:

Part I – Utility versus Demand

Week One (September 1, 3, 4)

Overview & Introduction

I got a feelin' ..– Black Eyed Peas

In class free writing exercise: Key Word/s: Energy

Neoclassical Choice Theory/ Utility

Ede, Ch. 1, Leeds, Ch.1, Ch. 7

Supplementary materials: Daughtry clip:

In-class exercise – Outline some of your major strengths, weaknesses and abilities: are these largely inherent or shaped by environment/culture? Identify the variables (stimuli) that shape outcomes you experience in your life (including the opportunity to attend college).

Student Affairs Session – Sex Signals

Week Two (September 8, 10, 11)

Choice, Scarcity, Belief

Dufflo, Chapter 1

Bacigalupi, Yellow Card Man

Notes Fields of Blood (handout)

Supplementary materials:

Stargate-SG1, Children of the Gods

General aid letter: http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/economics/14-73-the-challenge-of-world-poverty-spring-2011/lecture-notes/MIT14_73S11_General_lec1.pdf

Personalized aid letter: http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/economics/14-73-the-challenge-of-world-poverty-spring-2011/lecture-notes/MIT14_73S11_Rokia_lec1.pdf

In-class exercise – Letter for Rokia – Which of the two letters would be more effective. Why?

Scarcity, Choice, Free markets and incentives

Ede, Ch. 2, Leeds, Ch 4

Dufflo: Ch.2 19-40

Bacigalupi, Calorie Man

Supplementary materials: Movie clip – Star Trek: First Contact

Take Home Assignment (due September 15):

Explain the connection between Dufflo's Poor Economics and Bacigalupi's Calorie Man. What connects the two? Summarize and explain to the uninitiated (someone who has not done the readings)

Student Affairs session – Counseling Center

Week Three (September 15, 17, 18)

Utility versus Demand – the neoclassical model

Leeds, Ch. 4, Ch. 7, Handouts

Supplementary materials: Movie clip – Ex-machina

In-class exercise – What is the Turing test? Is there anything you want that you are not programmed for? Explain with examples.

Peer critique of in September 10 class exercise.

Demand & Elasticity

Ede, Ch. 3, Leeds, Ch. 4

Supplementary materials: Movie clip/s – Elysium/John Q

Peer critique of September 17 in class exercise

Student Affairs session – Academic Support

Week Four (September 22, 24, 25)

Scarcity and choice, poverty & inequality

Ede, Ch. 4, Notes

Submit and present questions to ask Karen Armstrong at Convocation

Submit and present questions to ask at “Voices of Diversity”

Please note immediately after this class you are to attend “Voices of Diversity: Moravian College Faculty and Staff speak” scheduled to meet from 11:45-12:45 at Prosser Auditorium.

2015-2016 Fall Convocation – Mandatory attendance, please meet in the ARC in Johnston Hall by 9:30

Student Affairs – International Studies

Week Five (September 29, October 1, 2)

Library Session, class meets at Reeves Library

Ede, Ch. 5

Paper discussions, Peer evaluations. End Utility versus Demand

First analytical paper due:

Topic: Utility versus demand

Bring a 2-3 page paper to class where you present YOUR ideas about the fundamental processes of utility versus demand. In your opinion, are humans more subject to innate preferences or external stimuli? Be specific, citing concrete evidence and examples (from your experience, and from science fiction and pop cultures ideas presented in class) whenever possible. Be prepared to read or present your ideas to the entire class in one or both class meetings this week. Bring a copy of your paper for your peer evaluator and myself.

Student Affairs – Career Center

Part II – Scarcity, Externalities, and Property Rights

Week Six (October 6, 8, 9)

Theory of Willingness to Pay

Leeds, Ch. 17, Bacigalupi, Pages 1 – 47
Ede, Ch. 6, “Writer’s Reference”

Supplementary materials: Movie clip “The Incredibles”

In class exercise: From an economic perspective, analyze/critique The Incredibles movie clip

Theory of Externalities

Student Affairs Session - Leadership

Week Seven (October 15, 16)

Non-market valuation, Efficiency

Leeds, Ch. 17, Bacigalupi: Notes

Consumer and Producer Surplus

Leeds, Ch. 6, Handouts

In class exercise – Analyzing consumer and producer surplus.

Peer critique of October 8 in class exercise

Week Eight (October 20, 22, 23)

“Hunting Endangered Species” and the Endangered Species Act Handouts, Adler article available at
<http://www.rff.org/blog/2008/perverse-incentives-and-endangered-species-act>

Class presentation, Ken Addison, Oxford

Consumer and Producer Surplus continued: The Kidney Market Case study

Supplemental materials: Clip from Dirty Pretty Things

In class exercise – Analyzing consumer and producer surplus.

Week Nine (October 27, 29, 30)

Global Health, Begin viewing Repo Men

Dufflo, Chapter 3

Film viewing of Repo Men continued

Discussion, Consumer and Producer Surplus, Health

Leeds, Ch. 6, Handouts

Second analytical paper due

Topic: Kidney Market

Analyze the idea of whether a kidney market should exist, outlining the pros and cons. You are to bring a 3-4 page paper to class where you present the idea of whether a kidney market should exist from an economist's point of view. Use your pros/cons argument to justify an alternate outcome for Senay Gelik in Dirty, Pretty Things and an alternate ending for Repo Men. Be prepared to read or present your ideas to the entire class in on or both class meetings this week. Bring a copy of your paper for your peer evaluator and myself.

Week Ten (October 3, 5, 6)

Special topics/writing

Readings TBA

Special topics/writing

Readings TBA

Editing Workshop, Wring Center Support, Bring a copy of your paper to edit (to share with me and your peer).

Part III – Game Theory/Strategic Behavior

Week Eleven (November 10, 12, 13)

Free rider exercise.

3rd analytical paper due.

Topic: Externalities

You must determine, describe and justify examples of externalities from three popular media sources. You are to bring a 3-4 page paper to class using sources that may be movies, television, graphic novels or other form of popular literature. Your paper must describe the externality, formulate the model and propose a policy solution. Bring a copy of your paper for your peer evaluator and myself.

Introduction to Game Theory

Leeds Ch. 12,

Supplementary Materials: Movie clip Batman Begins, Pride and Prejudice,

Michael Chwe Ch. 1: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/chwe/austen/introduction.pdf>

In Class Free Writing Exercise – Identify the strategic behavior you see in both movie clips.

Beeronomics, Market Structures Overview, Perfect Competition, Leeds, Ch. 8, 9, 10

Supplementary materials: Beer Wars, Anat Baron, Forrest Gump Clip

Take home Assignment (due November 12): Pick the market structure that you think fits the U.S. domestic beer industry best, and clearly justify your position in an essay no less than 500 words. Make sure you identify and justify each characteristic of the market structure you picked.

Week Twelve (November 17, 19, 20)

Monopoly

Supplementary materials: Equilibrium, Stargate,

Bacigalupi, Calorie man monopoly
Leeds Ch. 10

Game Theory, Matrix Games

Take home assignment (due November 3)

Notes, handouts

Special topics from Jane Austen, Game Theorist

Handouts

Week Thirteen (November 24)

Special topics, Dark Knight Rises: Handouts

In Class assignment, film review and discussion

Week Fourteen (December 1, 3, 4)

Self critique of free writing over the course of the semester.

Ede, Ch. 14

Individual Meetings with me.

4th analytical paper due.

Topic: Game Theory and the Dark Knight Rises

You are to bring a 3-4 page paper to class. Begin your paper by explaining the prisoner's dilemma in layman's terms. Use material from the Dark Knight Rises to identify an instance of the prisoner's dilemma. Construct a game tree to outline the strategic moves and associated outcomes. End your paper with a discussion of the takeaway from the prisoner's dilemma. What is the point of learning this hypothetical scenario?

Class Presentations

Class Presentations

Week Fifteen (December 8, 10, 11)

Class Presentations

Class Presentations

Summary Discussion & Review

Final Paper due:

Topic: Self-reflection and Global Challenges

Use this opportunity to reflect on self-identified strengths and weaknesses as outlined on the first day of class. How different are they from the problems that poor people face today? How does this affect the outcomes that you and they experience? How do you think this will affect outcomes experienced in the hypothetical dystopian futures we have considered in this course?"