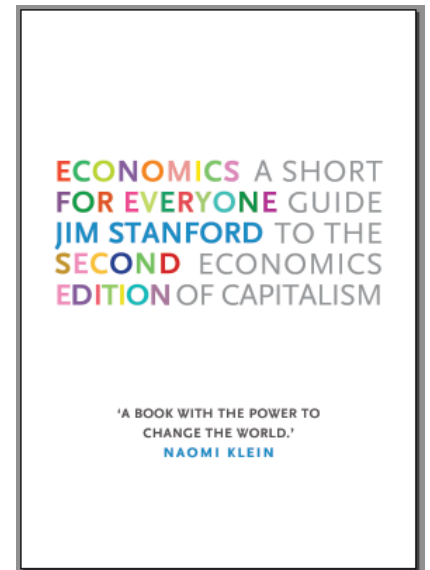


A 13-PART COURSE IN POPULAR ECONOMICS

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

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This is a sample outline for a simple 13-session course in economics (organized around the content of *Economics for Everyone*) which could be taught by trade unions and community organizations. The course could also be used in high schools and introductory programs in economics or related subjects in colleges and universities.

Each session of the course covers the material presented in 2-3 chapters of the book. Thus, each session will require the student to complete 1-2 hours of reading. The course instructor may wish to assign additional reading material utilizing local sources or issue-specific resources.

Instructors are encouraged to vary the order of the course, and/or to spend more or less time on particular topics, in line with the interests of course participants. Supplementing the material in *Economics for Everyone* with local materials or resources will help students to relate the material in this course more directly to their own experience (in their workplace, their family, or their community). These supplemental materials could include newspaper articles on economic trends or problems; local or national economic statistics (from government agencies or research organizations); financial statements or other corporate documents; community economic reports and profiles; or campaign materials prepared by local economic and social justice movements.

The “key terms” introduced in each session are covered in the relevant chapters of the book, and most are also defined in the on-line glossary available from the Resources section of the www.economicsforeveryone.com website.

Please send your feedback on the use of this course to author@economicsforeveryone.com.

Session 1: The Economy and Economics

Readings: Chapters 1 and 2 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

The economy
The purpose of the economy
The economy and economics
How we measure the economy
Characteristics of a *good* economy
Capitalism
Capitalism and markets

Key Terms Introduced:

goods services work consumption investment finance environment GDP
economic growth prosperity security innovation choice equality sustainability
democracy accountability capitalism production for profit wage labour

Session 2: A Little History

Readings: Chapters 3 and 4 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Economic evolution through history
The origins of capitalism
Changes in capitalism
The origins of neoliberalism
Types of capitalism
The history of economic thought
The links between economics and politics

Key Terms Introduced:

class slavery feudalism capitalism neoliberalism surplus distribution
Great Depression Golden Age mercantilists physiocrats classical economists
Karl Marx exploitation equilibrium preferences John Maynard Keynes
supply-constrained demand-constrained effective demand Michal Kalecki
Milton Friedman monetarists Post-Keynesians structuralists heterodox

Session 3: Work and Tools

Readings: Chapters 5 and 6 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Work and production
Different kinds of work
Work and employment
Paid and unpaid work
Working with tools
Technology and tools
Defining capital

Key Terms Introduced:

work production value value-added employment paid work unpaid work
labour theory of value productivity subsistence tools capital physical capital
fixed capital technique of production technology skills

Session 4: Class: Bosses, Owners, and Workers

Readings: Chapters 7 and 8 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

How companies are organized
The ownership of companies
How companies behave
The logic of profit
Labour as a commodity
How labour is different from other commodities
Labour extraction under capitalism
Employment and conflict
Unions and collective bargaining

Key Terms Introduced:

corporation capitalist class stock market return on equity depreciation interest
top managers major owners private costs and benefits social costs and benefits
retained earnings capital gain commodity full employment unemployment
labour extraction labour discipline labour intensity labour market segmentation
unit labour cost cost of job loss unions collective bargaining

Session 5: Reproduction and Gender; Closing the Circle

Readings: Chapters 9 and 10 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

“Producing” and maintaining workers
Paid and unpaid labour in the home
Reproduction, work, and gender
The economic importance of households
Closing the “little” circle of capitalism
Income and expenditure

Key Terms Introduced:

reproduction household consumption labour supply discrimination sexism
labour market segmentation income expenditure

Session 6: Competition, Investment, and Growth

Readings: Chapters 11 and 12 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Competition under capitalism
Real-world competition and “perfect competition”
The consequences of competition
The effects of investment
The determinants of investment
The location of investment
Investment performance under neoliberalism

Key Terms Introduced:

competition perfect competition product differentiation economies of scale
diminishing returns private equity externalities poaching battle costs
dislocation costs investment fixed capital structures machinery & equipment
working capital transformation infrastructure capacity utilization accelerator

Session 7: Employment and Distribution

Readings: Chapters 13-15 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

The labour market
Labour demand and labour supply
Employment and unemployment
Unemployment and wages
Income distribution across classes
Income distribution across individuals
Measuring inequality and poverty
Inequality, poverty, and labour market segmentation
Causes and consequences of racism
Multiple oppression

Key Terms Introduced:

full employment unemployment participation rate unemployment rate
employment rate wage-led economy natural rate of unemployment
non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment capital substitution
factors of production distribution labour share transfer payments Gini coefficient
inequality absolute poverty relative poverty racialized workers racism

Session 8: Capitalism and the Environment

Readings: Chapter 16 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Nature's role in the economy
Ecological benefits and human well-being
Sustainability
Environmental inequality
The environment and markets
Climate change and the limits to growth

Key Terms Introduced:

environment natural resources ecological benefits pollution sustainability
climate change greenhouse gases imperfection externality carbon tax

Session 9: The Paper Economy and the Real Economy: Money, Banking, and Finance

Readings: Chapters 17-19 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Money and prices
Inflation, its causes, and its consequences
The private banking industry
Central banks and monetary policy
Corporate finance and stock markets
Financial instability and fragility
Pensions and how to fund them

Key Terms Introduced:

money currency deposits credit means of payment unit of account
store of value barter credit squeeze banking cycle central bank fractional reserve
capital adequacy inflation monetary policy relative prices price level deflation
real wage nominal wage consumer price index GDP deflator hyper-inflation
Milton Friedman monetarism quasi-monetarism monetary targeting
corporate finance bonds shares stock market speculation financialization
financial fragility derivatives pensions pre-funded pension pay-as-you-go pension
defined contribution defined benefit

Session 10: Government and the Economy

Readings: Chapters 20 and 21 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

The historic role of government in capitalism
The economic functions of government today
Class interests, class conflict, and government
Government's "toolkit": policy levers and instruments
Types and effects of government spending
Types and effects of government taxing

Key Terms Introduced:

democracy public goods natural monopoly regulation redistribution
monetary policy fiscal policy social policy industrial policy public ownership
program spending transfer payments government production public consumption
public investment income tax sales tax progressive tax flat-rate tax payroll tax
wealth tax user fees environmental tax deficit surplus balanced budget debt debt
burden public-private partnership income security market income

Session 11: Globalization and Development

Readings: Chapters 22 and 23 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Forms of globalization

The history of globalization

Free trade agreements and international economic institutions

What's wrong with free trade?

Global inequality

The nature of economic development

Barriers to economic development

Industrial structure: "mix matters"

Key Terms Introduced:

World Trade Organization exports imports globalization services trade
free trade agreements investor-state disputes multinational corporation
foreign direct investment International Monetary Fund World Bank
Bank for International Settlements exchange rate foreign exchange migration
comparative advantage David Ricardo terms of trade extreme poverty
development formal sector informal sector Millenium Development Goals
underdevelopment colonialism primary products uneven development
base industry industrial policy

Session 12: Stability and Instability in Capitalism

Readings: Chapters 24-26 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Closing the "big circle" of capitalism

Injections and leakages; surpluses and deficits

The multiplier effect

Capitalism's endless roller-coaster

Recessions and how to stop them

Long waves in the history of capitalism

Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09

Key Terms Introduced:

income expenditure surplus deficit injection leakage multiplier effect
recession depression recovery consumer sentiment supply shocks
capital flight counter-cyclical policies discretionary fiscal policy
automatic stabilizers balanced budget laws long waves austerity

Session 13: Challenging Capitalism

Readings: Chapters 27-29 of *Economics for Everyone*.

Topics:

Giving capitalism a report card

Is capitalism vulnerable?

Improving capitalism

How to pay for reforms

Capitalism and socialism

Capitalism and human nature

Key Terms Introduced:

systemic instability financial fragility global imbalance environmental limits

investment stagnation worker compliance social democracy socialism

reforms high-investment sustainable economy public ownership economic planning

market socialism benefit corporation

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