Rationale: Why Economics?

- When will my mom be able to find new job?
- Who is responsible for fighting global warming?
- Should Nike be punished for using overseas sweatshop labor?
- What is the best way to fight poverty in Bangladesh?
- What will you do with your life once you finish high school?

The study of economics can help us answer all of these questions and many more. In fact, almost every problem that we face in the world today, from what toothpaste we buy to the dangers of melting glaciers, has an economic component. Throughout this year you will learn how to think like an economist and apply the tools of the trade to problems affecting you and society as a whole.

Major Topics and Subjects

We will begin the year by establishing basic economic concepts and principles. We will then determine what these principles can tell us about the prices and availability of the goods and services that we buy. Once we have an idea of how economics works on a small scale, we will zoom out and grapple with the bigger-picture problem of how to divide up a country’s wealth in the most fair and effective manner. Finally, we will explore the challenges and opportunities that global trade poses and evaluate solutions for bringing the majority of the world’s population out of poverty.

This class is structured around the International Baccalaureate program’s standard level syllabus in Economics. You will need to take the IB Economics test (as well as five others) if you plan to pursue an IB diploma. (If you are unsure about the IB diploma or your college credit needs, sign up for an IB interview with a Eugene IHS junior teacher.) Whether you decide to take the IB test or not, this course will appear on your transcript as an IB-level course, so you will learn the same concepts and meet the same requirements as you would if you were taking the test.

Academic Policies

Grading Procedures
Your grade will be based on five major categories with their approximate percentage weight listed below:

- Day-to-day homework and reading quizzes: 10%
- Current events commentaries (2 per semester): 25%
- Other large assignments: 20%
- Tests and quizzes: 25%
- Class participation and citizenship: 20%
I will give final grades at the end of each semester according to the following grade scale:
A = 93-100%, A- = 89.5-92.99%, B+ = 87-89.49%, B = 83-86.99%, B- = 79.5-82.99%, C+ = 77-79.49%,
C = 73-76.99%, C- = 69.5-72.99%, D = 59.5-69.49%, F = 0 – 59.49%
I may make mistakes on occasion, so keep graded assignments for your records. They are your proof
that you have completed the work. Besides, these materials will help you study for the IB and in-class
tests.

Online Grades
You can check your grade online from my blog. Go to http://blogs.4j.lane.edu/yamada and click on
“check your grade with Basmati” under “Links” on the right hand side near the bottom. Follow the
instructions on the target page to view grades. Your login is your student number. Your either received a
password at registration or will receive one in class.

Academic Integrity
Naturally, I expect you to turn in your own work, as opposed to work copied from friends, the Internet, or
other sources. If I find that you have cheated or plagiarized on any part of an assignment or test, you will
receive zero credit for the work. There may also be other consequences depending on the seriousness of
the violation. This policy applies equally to those who help someone cheat/plagiarize. The objective is not
to punish, but to ensure that the vast majority of students who do exercise integrity are not put at an unfair
disadvantage.

Of course, there are exceptions for group projects and assignments on which I explicitly ask you to work
together. I also encourage you to work together on day-to-day homework, but if you do, make sure to
put all answers in your own words – otherwise, it’s plagiarism.

Participation and Citizenship
Spirited discussions of controversial issues are a vital part of learning in our class. To receive full credit in
the citizenship/participation category, you will need to jump into the arena and get your ideas out there on
a regular basis in a way that is respectful to others in the class. Expressing your brilliant ideas can be
counterproductive if you do it in a way that makes others afraid to speak up. I will not tolerate put-downs
or harassment of others in the class, and participation/citizenship grades will reflect this policy. The goal
is to make all students feel comfortable sharing their views.

Electronic Devices
Students may not use cell phones, iPods, blackberries or any electronic devices that distract from
the business of class. A student using one of these devices in class will forfeit it for the rest of the school
day. A parent will have to pick up the device after school each additional time the student uses it in class.
The purpose of this policy is to create an environment that allows everyone to concentrate on economics.
Research shows that the human brain cannot learn as effectively with distractions.

Absences, Tardies and Late Work
It’s important to show up on time so you can get credit for reading quizzes that we will take and
homework we will correct at the very beginning of class. Regular, timely attendance also contributes to
the participation/citizenship portion of your grade.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the period on the due date listed. I do not accept late work
on day-to-day assignments. Current events commentaries and other large assignments will lose up to ten
(10) points for each class they are late until only half credit is possible. I will accept late work only up to
one week before the end of each semester.

If you think you will be unable to turn in an assignment on time, the important thing is to talk to me
before the due date. The earlier you approach me, the more sympathetic I will be to your request for an
extension. I may also grant extensions when situations arise that you are unable to control and/or predict.
If I do grant an extension, you may still receive reduced credit for the assignment depending on how early you contacted me and the validity of the reason.

All work turned in past the original due date must have a completed “due date extension form” attached or it will not receive credit. These slips are available in the classroom and on the class blog.

**Assignment Blog**
If you are absent you are responsible for checking the class blog at http://blogs.4j.lane.edu/yamada/category/economics/. This page may tell you what homework is due for the next class and may also give a brief description of what we did in class that day. You may be able to download some handouts in Adobe Acrobat or MS-Word format, but not all handouts will be available online, so make sure you have your homework partner pick up copies of any materials you are missing.

**Homework Partner**
Find a person you can rely on to be your homework partner. Homework partners are responsible for providing each other with information about homework and missed lessons if one them is absent.

Homework partner: _____________________ Phone #:_______________ e-mail:_________________

Check the assignments page and ask your homework partner for any handouts you may have missed while gone before asking me. I will also make extra copies available in the classroom from time to time. See me only once you have exhausted these other options. This will save us valuable time in class.

**Day-to-Day Procedures**

**Beginning Class**
It’s important to be seated and ready to go when class starts, since you will frequently be showing me your homework for completion or taking a short quiz. **Right before class is not a good time to ask me questions**, as I will be focusing on the day’s activities. However, I’m more than happy to talk to your heart’s content if you show up a good 20 minutes early, visit during office hours, or make an appointment.

**Materials**
Your textbook is the *IB Diploma Programme Economics Course Companion*. You do not need to bring it to class each day. I do expect you to bring your own pens, pencils, paper and notebook.

**Seating**
I will assign a seating chart at the beginning of the year to help me learn your names. I find this helps students work with people they wouldn’t usually get a chance to interact with, and it also allows me to take attendance more quickly. If the class demonstrates a high level of maturity we will switch to student-selected seating charts that change once a month.

**Food and Drink**
You may bring food and beverages to class, but 4J district policy does not allow soft drinks. You are responsible for keeping your area clean. If there is garbage on or under your desk after you leave, it will jeopardize food/drink privileges for the whole class.

**Bathroom**
Take care of business before class. If you need to go during class wait until a group activity or a transition between activities in order to keep distractions to a minimum. Let me know you are leaving before you go so I don’t accidentally mark you absent.
End of Class
At the end of the period you will be responsible for copying down any assignments listed on the board and turning in any homework due that day that I didn’t collect at the beginning of class. I also expect you to help others who use our room by returning seats/desks to their original positions, putting away any materials that you use during class and cleaning up any messes you may have made.

I’m looking forward to a year of growth and development, chock-full of positive externalities!

Appropriate accommodations will be made for special needs students.