Kyle Yamada
E-mail: yamada@4j.lane.edu
Telephone: (541) 790-8030
Blog: http://blogs.4j.lane.edu/yamada
Office hours: By appointment

Rationale: Why Economics?

- When will my mom be able to find new job?
- Should fast food workers make at least $15 an hour?
- How can we stop global warming?
- 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 efficient 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. This course will appear on your transcript as an IB-level course regardless of whether you decide to take the IB test or not, so all students will be responsible for learning the same concepts.

Academic Policies

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

Day-to-day homework – Mainly exercises from the textbook 20%
Current events commentaries – Analytical essays based on news 20%
Other large assignments – Research papers, creative projects 20%
Tests and quizzes – In-class essays, reading quizzes 20%
Participation and citizenship – Discussion and respect for others 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.

**Homework Grading Policy**
This year I will be experimenting with a new grading policy for the day-to-day homework assignments. These are exercises that I assign from the textbook, and their purpose is to build your skills for more challenging essays and tests. However, some students may be able to master the concepts and perform well on the harder work without completing the small assignments. Under this new policy, students who decide to do the little assignments will still be rewarded with completion credit that boosts their overall grades. On the other hand, students who are confident enough to skip the daily exercises will not be punished with zeroes in the grade book. The assignments will be treated as “excused,” placing more weight on the bigger assessments. In short, the day-to-day homework counts for you if you do it, but doesn’t count against you if you don’t do it. If you have doubts about which path to follow, I recommend doing all of the assigned work. This is an especially good idea if you are the type of learner who needs frequent practice to master new concepts or if you struggle with tests and essays and need points in other categories to balance out relatively lower scores.

**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 too uncomfortable 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 confident in sharing their views.

**Electronic Devices**
Students may not use smart phones, iPods, tablets or any electronic devices that distract from the business of class unless I give explicit approval for educational use. A student using one of these devices in class without my permission 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 will not accept late day-to-day homework. 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 trimester.

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 on 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. This page will tell you what homework is due for the next class and will also give a brief description of what we did in class that day. You will 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 in your assigned seat 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 visit during common time before classes begin for the day, during instructional access time on Wednesdays 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.

Food and Drink
You may bring food and beverages to class as long as you clean up after yourself. 4J district policy does not allow soft drinks.

Bathroom
One person at a time may briefly leave class for personal reasons. Please 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 the year ahead!

*Appropriate accommodations will be made for special needs students.*