

William & Mary
ECON 102-02: Principles of Macroeconomics
Prof. B. Abegaz
(Fall 2024)

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Lectures: T, Th: 12:30 - 1:50 PM
Classroom: Washington 201
Office Hours: Mondays: 9:30-10:30 AM, 2-3 PM, or by appointment

OVERVIEW

This is the second course in the introductory economics sequence at the College of William & Mary, which introduces the basic tools of economic analysis. The first course in the sequence, ECON 101: **Microeconomics**, examines microscopic economic behavior and outcomes at the level of individuals, households, governments, firms, and other organizations. The basic decision-making units of microeconomics engage in myriad interactions, mainly through markets. However, what is true of the individual unit is not necessarily true of the totality of the group, known generally as the Fallacy of Composition.

Macroeconomics, the subject matter of ECON 102, is the branch of economics that deals with the economy's behavior as a whole. This is a very exhilarating time to learn macroeconomics—the fallout of the 2007 financial crisis, the aftermaths of the Pandemic, and the ongoing deglobalization have produced novel historical experiments and unprecedented risks.

Macroeconomic topics (GDP, Inflation, Unemployment, Deficits, Debt, and Policies) may be viewed through two lenses: what factors determine the size of the national economy (long-term growth) and what factors drive the fluctuations of the economy (short-term business cycles). Topics covered in this course include level and changes in the economy's total output of goods and services; unemployment and inflation, the distribution of income; how trade and finance affect the domestic economy; the role of fiscal, monetary, and incomes policies in stabilizing the economy and enhancing its growth performance.

OBJECTIVES

Econ 101 is a prerequisite for Econ 102. Many students find introductory courses in economics rather dry, and the economic way of thinking is fascinating but counterintuitive. This is because (a) as social science, Economics employs a rigorous theoretical framework

to explain and predict economic behavior; (b) to do this, it needs to use precise language—often subverting everyday words (such as demand and supply) by giving them very specific meanings; and (c) the application of this new language and way of thinking about the world pays off when you take intermediate and advanced courses. The pain is front-loaded while the gain is backloaded.

You will be able to take away the following ideas and core competencies from this course on the core principles of macroeconomics:

1. An intuitive understanding of the economists' way of thinking, including its power and pitfalls.
2. A framework for understanding the drivers of prosperity and inequality.
3. How to use basic macroeconomic cause-effect models to analyze the economic impact of exogenous shocks on the economy.
4. An understanding of the macroeconomic linkages between different economies.
5. The ability to analyze fiscal policies, i.e., spending and taxes.
6. An understanding of the Federal Reserve System and how its monetary policy affects economic activity.

There are no robust laws in macroeconomics, but you will leave this class appreciating the power of economic ideas, such as:

1. *Brawn vs. Brain*: Why the level and quality of investment, by enhancing productivity, is key to rapid and shared growth.
2. *The paradox of Thrift*: Why thriftiness is a virtue at the individual level but an economic problem at the aggregate level.
3. *Expenditure Multiplier*: Why does each dollar spent on newly produced goods and services stimulate the economy by more than a dollar?
4. *Underconsumption Paradox*: Why keeping wages down reduces costs but undermines sales by dampening purchasing power.
5. *Balanced-budget Paradox*: Why balancing the government budget annually can make balancing the budget almost impossible.
6. *Inflation-Unemployment Tradeoff*: Why high inflation may produce low joblessness, but the relationship occasionally breaks down.
7. *Globalization Paradox*: Why technological progress and economic globalization can create enormous wealth while pauperizing the old middle class.

TEXT AND COURSE MATERIALS

I approach the study of macroeconomics from global and historical perspectives because 80 percent of the \$130+ trillion global GDP in 2021 was produced outside the USA.

- The primary textbook for the course is ***Macroeconomics, 3rd edition*** (Pearson, 2022), by Daron Acemoglu, David Laibson, and John List [ALL]. I highly

recommend that you purchase/rent the MyLab version through the Bookstore or directly from Pearson.

- **eText + access to MyLab Economics:**

The MyLab package includes learning aids and chapter-specific non-graded practice problems: Learning Aids – Including ‘Help me solve this;’ Digital Interactives – Engaging simulations that promote critical thinking about core principles; Study Plan – Provides recommendations for the sections or objectives that they need to practice; Dynamic Study Modules – Helps students check and improve their knowledge of course concepts; and Multimedia Library – Multimedia resources available by chapter.

This textbook stands out in the market by addressing the most essential questions in economics: How did 1 billion of the 8 billion people of the world become so rich, while the bottom 3 billion remain so poor? And why are demand-constrained capitalist economies so vulnerable to frequent macroeconomic volatility and crises? The first one-third of the course deals with the drivers of economic prosperity or growth. The remainder focuses on short-term macroeconomic stability and policies to fully utilize existing economic capacity. I follow the textbook's organization but add (in the lecture notes) important details or techniques not adequately treated in the chapters.

Please note that the otherwise excellent textbook neglects some fundamental concepts and analytical techniques, which are rectified in the PPP lecture slides. In other words, I will not walk you through the textbook, although I will follow the order of topics. My approach is to provide coherence for seemingly disparate concepts, which means consistent attendance is key to a good grade.

Active learning is key to success in Economics. A good study habit is to scan the assigned chapter(s) before each lecture and read them closely after the lecture. In taking notes, focus on ideas or connections not well explained in the book, and edit your notes after the lecture for later review. Check your retention by doing the online MyLab exercises and my review notes before each test. Kseniya Rozhkova, our able TA, and I are ready to support you with one-on-one help.

The **Glossary** at the end of the textbook and the Economist are your best friends because they define key terms concisely and precisely. ChatGPT and YouTube videos can help clarify some ideas but do not over-rely on them.

The second book is a NYT bestseller that applies economic principles to answer some of the most critical questions in Economics. Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson, ***Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty***, Crown Business, 2012. [AR] Purchase the cheap paperback, for which you will be given a bonus quiz toward the end of the semester.

For those interested in a different take on macroeconomics is the free textbook, *The Economy*, by a group of unorthodox economists who call themselves *The Core Team*. Download and peruse the following macro-relevant chapters. If you have the time or the curiosity to explore: <https://core-econ.org/the-economy/book/text/o-3-contents.html>. Recommended macro chapters: 1, 10, 13, 15, 16, and 17.

GRADING

Your final grade will be determined as follows: a midterm exam (30%), two tri-weekly tests (15% each), and a cumulative final exam (40%). MyLab exercises/videos linked to each chapter and End-of-chapter problems are invaluable in assessing your comprehension and retention. The pedagogical notes posted in BB summarize the core principles of macroeconomics for you.

Additional practice problems and tips tailored to each test will also be provided along with review sessions. See the Reading Assignments and the chapter-synchronized PP Lecture slides for the material covered in each test. An optional bonus test will be offered as a review of *Why Nations Fail* toward the end of the semester.

All tests will be taken online unless otherwise instructed. I will determine the letter grades (including discretionary pluses and minuses) after inspecting the distribution of the raw scores on the totality of the graded work after the final exam.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance, besides being the most crucial ingredient of success, is required. The Undergraduate Catalog, the most authoritative source for academic policies, says the following about attendance and exams:

“Attendance is expected per the College Catalog rules and it is the best thing you can do for your grade. Except for reasonable cause, students are expected to be present at all regularly scheduled class meetings. Students whose attendance becomes unsatisfactory to the extent that their course performance is affected adversely should be so informed by their instructor and reported to the Dean of Students by completing a care report. Each student is responsible for notifying professors of absences. In view of the Honor Code, a student’s explanation of class absence is expected to be truthful and, therefore, should be sufficient in most instances. Students who will miss classes due to personal difficulties or family emergencies should contact the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible.”

MISSED-EXAM POLICY

Students facing extenuating circumstances must give advance notice to the Dean of Students and the Instructor to be considered for accommodation. An unexcused absence from a test will result in a mark of zero for that test. The final exam is cumulative and mandatory. Make-up final exams will be available only in extraordinary circumstances and with documentation from the Dean of Students' office. There will not be opportunities for extra credit work on an individual basis.

THE W&M HONOR CODE, ELECTRONICS, AND HEALTHY TOGETHER

The use of any outside help when completing graded work is a serious violation of the College's Honor Code and carries serious consequences. You are also expected to comply, as applicable, with the terms of the University's Healthy Together Community Statement. ***No food or drink is allowed in class for health reasons, and NO distracting electronic devices are permitted--unless you are taking a test.***

Parts	Reading Assignments	Tests & Exams (roughly, every 3 weeks)
1	ALL: Part I (review of basic economic concepts) ALL: Part II, chs. 5 - 6	Test #1 (15%)
2	ALL: Part III, chs. 7-8, and 10	Midterm (30%)
3	ALL: Part IV-V, chs. 9, 11-13	Test #2 (15%)
4	ALL: Part V-VI, chs. 14-15 AR: Entire book (read along the way)	Final Exam (cumulative) (40%)
Final	<i>Must check the Registrar's website to confirm the final exam date.</i>	December 13

Very Useful Online Glossary from The ECONOMIST--The A to Z of Economics:
<https://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z>

See also my pedagogical notes, "The Core Principles of Economics," in Blackboard.
I reserve the right to make minor adjustments to this course syllabus.

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