“Try not to have a good time. This is supposed to be educational.”
Lucy, “Peanuts”

“It’s simple economics, son. I don’t understand it at all. But, god, I love it.”
Stan’s Dad, “Southpark”

“Economics is everything, and everything is economics.”
Me

Office: 219D, Friday Building
E-mail: costiven@uncc.edu (Indicate your name and class section in your e-mail)
Office Hours: Mon: 11:30 – 1:15pm
Wed: 1:00 – 2:15pm
and by appointment as needed

Course Website: All course materials are available on Canvas
Required Book (cheap online)
Title: The Good Society: The Humane Agenda, 1997
Author: John Kenneth Galbraith

Course Description: Senior Seminar. An integrative capstone course for the Economics major that should normally be taken during the student’s last semester of study. The primary objective is to provide a framework in which Senior Economics majors can review and solidify their understanding of economic concepts by applying those concepts to specific economic issues. Topics vary. Analytical ability and written and oral communication skills are assessed.

Course Policies
Academic Integrity:
Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. (This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a
judgment that the student’s work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases, the course grade is reduced to F. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

Final Exam: TBD

Calculating the grade:
Grades are simple. To earn an A, be there, turn in quality work on time, be an equal member of a quality group presentation, and be fully engaged in class discussion. It’s really not that tough.

Attendance: Everyone begins the semester with perfect attendance. You have three cost-free non-group days, starting from the second class day of the semester. You can miss these classes for any reason (I recommend saving them for sick days, but it’s your call). After your three free days, each non-group class period missed will cost you 3⅓ points off of your final grade. In other words, every 3 days missed will lower your final grade by 10 points, or one letter.

Attendance will usually be taken with a daily sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to put your signature on the sheet. It is a violation of academic integrity for someone other than you to write your name on the sheet. Both the present and the absent student will be charged with the academic integrity violation, resulting in a failing grade in the course. Don’t risk it. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late for class, I will count you present or absent at my discretion. If you leave before class is over, unless you have cleared it with me in advance, you will not get credit for the day. As you can see, I am taking attendance seriously this semester. Be there.

Every member of the class is required to attend all presentations. It is unacceptable, unprofessional, and downright rude to show up for your own presentation and blow off those of your classmates. Presentations will be scheduled on a first come first served basis, then randomly. All presentations will occur in consecutive class meetings (if possible). ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR ALL STUDENTS ON ALL PRESENTATION DAYS. EACH PRESENTATION DAY MISSED WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF ONE LETTER GRADE FROM THE FINAL COURSE GRADE.

When missing class, you will be responsible for all information and materials presented in class, and are expected to obtain class notes or assignments from other students in the class. In other words, your primary source of information is the classroom – if something is announced in class I am under no obligation to also post that information online or notify the class via e-mail.

Participation/Engagement (35): The Participation/Engagement grade begins at zero for everyone, and constitutes 35 points of the final grade. This portion of the grade includes written assignments you are asked to turn in. You will work your way up the points ladder by being engaged in class, asking and answering questions without being asked, giving cogent opinions using appropriate terminology when necessary, respecting comments made by others (disagree, don’t disparage or criticize), paying attention to others (and me) as they speak. This is the squishiest part of the grade. How will I know when you have met the standard? To quote Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart when asked to define pornography – “I know it when I see it.”

You will be given a name sign to bring to class every day to help me give credit where credit is due. I know many of your names by now, but I am very, very old and cannot be trusted to remember much. If you forget your sign, you need to make another one so I can see your name when you speak.

Neglecting to turn in a written assignment will cost 5 points off the final grade. I will take assignments early, not late.
Participation does NOT include repeating what someone else says, or simply agreeing with another comment. It means showing that you are engaged in the discussion, have prepared for the discussion when possible (to the extent that you knew what we were going to discuss), and have commentary other than simply repeating commonly used rhetoric.

**Group Presentations (35)**: As of right now there are 20 students registered for the class, so we are looking at ten groups of two each. Topics must either be chosen from the list I provided or, if you choose something different that is not on my list, pre-approved by me before the topics deadline. Member names and topic choices must be decided and emailed or turned in to me by Sunday, September 1 at 10pm. The earlier the better. Run original topics by me soon enough for adjustments to be made if I don’t approve your first idea. Only one group will be allowed to do each topic. See Canvas for topics that have already been chosen. (I will present some of the topics that you don’t choose).

Each group presentation will occupy an entire 75 minute class period, including a visual/oral presentation followed by discussion/Q&A. Use PowerPoint and/or any other tools you choose (video, handouts, class participation, Krispy Kreme, whatever). Be as innovative as you want.

The groups will turn in the PowerPoint slides and copies of any relevant material other than slides. Presentation slides are due in my email by Monday, September so, at 10pm, no matter when your group’s presentation is scheduled. The entire group will be docked 10 group grade points for late submissions.

Presentations will be reviewed by each class member. These scores will be considered when grading the group project. Each group member will complete a form I will give you describing the extent to which all members contributed to the project. Grades will be based partially on your fellow group members’ evaluation of you.

Each group member will turn in a minimum 5-page typed paper reflecting what you learned about this topic while working on the presentation and why it matters (don’t just repeat the presentation). Papers should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 11-point, with one inch margins all around. The grade on this paper will be reflected in your group presentation grade. Papers are due in my hand in class on Monday, November 25, AND in my email by the end of the day (you can turn them in earlier, not later). The papers should be the work of each individual, not the group.

**Miscellaneous Assignments (so far)**

Notes prepared for class discussions can be handwritten or typed, whichever is best for you. I’m not looking for style, neatness, spelling or form, I just want to know that you did the prep work. Not someone else. You.

1. **Evaluation of Heritage Foundation Study**
   - Article is on Canvas.
   - I have numbered the paragraphs in this paper. Use those paragraph numbers to reference your comments written (or typed) on separate sheets of paper. The point is to use critical thinking to evaluate the arguments made by the authors. Whether you agree with their conclusions or not, do they support their conclusions adequately? This kind of critical evaluation is an important skill - for example, if you agree with me that marijuana should be legal for recreational consumption, am I making a convincing argument for legalization by citing surveys showing most people think marijuana should be legal? The point is not whether you agree with the authors’ basic premise. Maybe you do, maybe you don’t. But do their arguments support their conclusions. (hint: some do, some don’t.)
   - You should highlight and discuss a minimum of 5 statements or passages. Do not feel the need to comment on every statement in the article. If you find yourself making the same comment about multiple highlighted sections, refer all of those statements to one comment.
   - Hand your notes to me at the beginning of class, Wednesday September 25. Take a picture or make a copy of your comments before handing it to me so you can reference it during our discussion. DO YOUR OWN WORK. I need to be able to tell you read and evaluated the article, and noted at least five comment-worthy passages. You will need a copy of the article to follow me as I cite paragraph numbers and pages.
2. **The Good Society** (You may read it all but I am going to concentrate only on chapters 1 thru 9, and 18)

Sometimes it can seem intimidating to discuss a book or article, particularly one written by a world renowned economist (who in my opinion was robbed of a Nobel Prize). However, part of this exercise is to explore the fact that even though the authors are highly qualified, they are still advancing an argument. In this book, Galbraith’s aim is to persuade us that his arguments for what constitutes a “good society” – not great, not perfect – are valid and possible in the context of economic theory. The goal is NOT to disagree with him as much as you can. We also are not looking for flaws. We are evaluating his suggestions as useful, workable, realistic, etc. – Assume his economic theory is valid. He is, after all, John Kenneth Galbraith.

- Choose three areas covered by Galbraith in three separate chapters and comment on whether you think his approach makes sense. Explain. Hand it to me at the start of class. Keep a copy for your reference in the discussion.
- NOTE: The first chapter may be a tough read for some of you. Push through it. Once you get past the beginning of the book it becomes a MUCH easier read. I promise.
- I will present an outline of the chapters with important points for discussion on November 18 and 20. Be prepared to discuss the book on those days.

3. Others as assigned

**Cell phones:** Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices before class begins. If you are expecting a life-or-death phone call, let me know. Otherwise, NO PHONES! It is very distracting for me and for those around you. As you will soon see, I am easily distracted, and if I get off topic, we may never get back.

**Diversity:** The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.