



## 2020-2021 COURSE SYLLABUS



### ECONOMICS

(5 credits/semester) SXS 203

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Term and Year: Spring 2021

Name of Instructor: Brett Williams

Office Number: C-304

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E-mail Address: [brett-williams@scusd.edu](mailto:brett-williams@scusd.edu)

Class Website: <https://sites.google.com/scusd.edu/economicswithwilliams/home>

### GENERAL COURSE OVERVIEW

The course will develop students personal finance knowledge and skills, as well as provide context for understanding micro and macroeconomic developments including understanding of U.S. fiscal and monetary policy. Most importantly, students will gain understanding of and appreciation for the central tenet of Economics: that life is a series of choices, and that each choice individuals and firms make have costs and benefits. Students who begin to think in economic terms will enjoy greater success throughout their life in financial, business, and social spheres.

### TEXTBOOKS AND/OR REQUIRED READING

O'Sullivan, Arthur; Sheffrin, Steven M. Economics: Principles in Action, Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

### COURSE OUTLINE

Content Area	Chapters	Dates
1. Introduction to Economics	1-2	2/1-2/12
2. Supply, Demand, Prices, Market Structures*	4-7	2/15-3/5
3. Business and Labor	8-9	3/8-3/12
4. Measuring Economic Performance	12-13	3/15-3/26
5. Taxes, Fiscal, & Monetary Policy**	14-16	4/5-4/23
6. The Global Economy	17-18	5/6-5/18
7. Personal Finance	10-11	5/24-6/11

\*Partway through Unit 2 above we will be engaging in a one week unit called Operation Protect and Defend. It involves federal judges and attorneys coming in to speak with the students on that unit and culminates in students writing essays for the class and to potentially enter the OPD contest. Last year Kennedy students won \$3200 among 4 students.

\*\*At the end of Unit 5 above we will be spending one week on reviewing for the A.P. U.S. Government and Politics Exam. Once the exam is over we will be returning to Economics, and shortly after thereafter closing out the bulk of the coursework with the Final Exam. The last unit consists of two projects: Investment Portfolios, and the From Job to Career Project.

### GRADING

As the course will be reliant upon so many different styles of learning it is critical to pull these apart in the grading program to isolate specific strengths and challenges for each student.



Tests	MC Exams, Essays, Unit Presentations	30%
Quizzes	Quizzes (Oral, Fill-in, Short Answer, etc.)	15%
In Class Assignments	Close Readings, Worksheets, Smaller projects/presentations, Political Event Writeup	15%
Semester Projects	Mikva Challenge, Debate Project (?)	30%
Final Exam	60 Stimulus Based Multiple Choice Questions	10%

NOTE: This grading scale will likely change if 2<sup>nd</sup> semester is also distance learning.

## GRADING SCALE

A=89.5%+    B=79.5%+    C=69.5%+    D=59.5%+    F=59.4% or below

## CLASSWORK/HOMEWORK POLICIES (Read carefully here students)

We will cover all that we can in class, but there will be a fair amount of reading, researching and writing outside of class as well. The bulk of the homework will be reading from the text. The rest of the homework will be devoted towards preparing for your Mikva Challenge/Senior Project, smaller class debates and presentations, as well as various writing assignments.

Chapter notes will not be collected this semester, but can instead be counted as an insurance plan for your exams. If you do each set of chapter notes for a unit, and turn it in on the day of the test, assuming you scored less than 90%, you can receive up to a 10% bump on your total score. The thinking here is that we are not all test takers, but special recognition is only deserved for those who take special steps in effectively preparing.

We will be moving very quickly, so get all your work in on time. **Late work** will receive **zero credit**. I understand things come up though, so in the event that you are not able to turn something in on time, please make sure you attach the **Late/Incomplete Work form** to your assignment before submitting it. You can **find it on my website**, in the sidebar. Each student is able to use **three per semester**.

If you are absent, you have as many days as you were absent to make up the material. You are responsible for getting any assignments you missed. Please just ask me for the work. If you are turning in work late because you were absent, be sure to tell me so I can check it off rather than marking it late. I will not accept work on a unit of study after we have tested. You will also need to contact me if you are late on the day of a group presentation by phone or email and get clearance from attendance for illness, without these expect a 0. First and foremost though, please remember to communicate with me regarding your absences and/or inability to get work in on time. We need to work together this year, and the only way we can do that is if we are open and honest with each other.

\*Note, attendance will be strained over distance learning. I understand that. This will force me to flex on some of the parameters I have set above. But, what I ask of you is to please communicate with me when attendance or meeting deadlines poses challenges. College professors will expect the same, and I think you will find both them and me flexible in many instances.

## PROJECTS

### Mikva Challenge/Senior Project

This project will begin in September and end in late May. This project has replaced my prior Civic Empowerment Project. Unlike that project, the assignments and course content will be weaved together throughout this course. It will require you to contact elected officials, do polls of your peers and those in the larger community, hold and participate in community forums (over Zoom during the quarantine), and a variety of other actions dependent up on the class and group focus. The specific components will be laid out in advance to provide students time to complete each step. This will be the Senior Project for all my students.



### **From Job to Career Project**

This project will wrap up the year. The goal is to take students from identifying their dream job to taking those initial steps towards that dream job. Guest speakers, research, resume building, applying for a job (simulated applications are accepted, cover letters, and a mock interview are all part of it.

Expect smaller projects throughout the semester as well. For these there will be more time to prepare in class. These smaller projects will not last more than 3-4 days.

All of these projects are group projects. These projects will require you to work as part of a diverse team. I am well aware of the challenges group work can pose, and will do what is in my power to mitigate some of those challenges on my end where I can. It's worth noting though that this is one of the primary areas many managers are saying is lacking among college graduates, according to an article in *Inside Higher Ed* in February 2018. More importantly, working as part of a team is what makes a democracy tick.

### **TESTS/QUIZZES/PRESENTATIONS**

Quizzes will usually be given at least once a week. These quizzes could take a variety of different forms, and combinations of students. Sometimes, they may be questions involving matching, and other times they may be an oral vocabulary quiz for a group. All quizzes though will place special emphasis on the vocabulary terms, so please ensure you stay on top of those each unit. The textbook will be your primary resource, but the chapter slides that can be found on my website can also be of great use. I have posted numerous resources on my website from Crash Course videos to presentation models. The quizzes, in most cases cannot be made up. In order to prevent losing quiz points you can turn in a Vocabulary Template on the assigned chapter by no later than Friday the week the quiz is given. Please label the Voc. Template clearly, so I can tell which quiz to exempt you for. The Voc. Templates must be handwritten, but you are welcome to copy and paste appropriate images from website for the picture column.

Tests will be given usually on Fridays. Tests also will range from multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, a combination of these, or even essays. The presentations will be done as a group in most cases. If you miss one of those make sure your group gets all of your prep work, and they make clear your part, or you will receive a 0 for that assessment. Sometimes, I may have you individually present your particular part if it is an excused absence.

Tests can be made up or retaken one day per unit. That day will be posted on the board and on my website calendar. Note that the teacher may use an alternate test.

If you score less than a 90% you may use the notes you submit on the day of that exam to lift your grade up to 10%. That will only occur if you have completed all the chapter notes for that unit.

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to be respectful, courteous, and civil at all times. The following are a few of the more notable expectations students will follow:

1. Be on time physically and mentally.
2. Treat others with respect at all times, especially when confronting ideas different than your own.
3. Be on task, and offer help to others if you finish early (when appropriate)
4. Keep your electronic devices hidden and silent unless the instructor approves use.
5. Adhere to the JFK expectations of academic integrity.\*

\*Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off the ideas, research, theories, or words of others as one's own" (College Board). There are however a number of assignments throughout the year where the teacher will encourage you to talk about your responses with your classmates, but note that your work is your work and should always remain in your possession unless the teacher is currently grading it. Plagiarizing any assignment will result in a 0 for that assignment.



Cheating on any quiz or exam will also immediately result in a zero for that assignment. Students caught cheating will not be able to make up the points lost on these assignments. Plagiarizing or cheating a second time will lead to an Unsatisfactory mark for Citizenship for the semester and a parent conference with the possibility of more severe consequences depending on the situation. The teacher and administration determine the degree of the severity of the consequence. In this class my ultimate goal is for you to develop YOUR VOICE. You may use the cited ideas and arguments of others to help support your arguments, but they still must be YOUR arguments. It's YOUR position that I want above all else in this class.

### **FINAL NOTE**

Please note that after teaching 17 years I have learned that every group of students is different. Moreover, starting school under the quarantine poses even more uncertainties. With that in mind, I reserve the right to change policies indicated above at any time during the semester. Before these changes occur though I will be sure to communicate those changes with the students in advance, and announce those changes using Google Classroom and where possible, on my website.

I want to end saying what an honor it is teaching you this year. Please consider me your advocate here at Kennedy High School. You have a support system here at Kennedy as well as at home. Remember that and it will be a good year.



## Economics Executive Summary

Please sign below to confirm you have downloaded, read and understand the syllabus provided for this class. The full Syllabus can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/economicswithmrwilliams/> By signing students and parents understand that...

- Participation is critical to your success. Be ready to make your mark.
- Vocabulary is critical, and succeeding means consistently reviewing the basic terms and concepts. Review tools for these, especially the Unit Plans which can be found on my website at: <https://sites.google.com/scusd.edu/economicswithwilliams/home>
- The homework will largely consist of reading the assigned chapters of the textbook, preparation for the Mikva Challenge/Sr. Project and the other smaller projects/presentations throughout the semester.
- These projects are group projects, so please be ready to work as part of a diverse team.
- I do not expect or want memorization for presentations; students instead are expected to present rather than read their main arguments/talking points. This conveys understanding, that the material is their own, and that they can inform the rest of the class on the issue they were assigned. Use brief speaker outlines of 3-4 main points.
- Quizzes will happen once a week and fall typically on Mondays.
- The chapter notes and the chapter slides can serve as resources. Please use them, and use them consistently.
- If you miss a quiz you can turn in a complete Vocabulary Template to exempt you from the quiz score.
- Unit or chapter tests will occur usually every two weeks on Fridays. They range from multiple choice and essays to presentations.
- If you score less than a 90% on a multiple-choice exam you can come to retake it on the same day others come to make it up. I take the latest score though, so make sure you try something new in your approach.
- You can retake or make up tests one day per unit. That day will be announced, and posted in class and on the website.
- Late work will not be accepted without a completed Late/Incomplete form attached. You get 3/semester.
- I frequently email and or post announcements so please make sure you check your school email regularly as well as your Google Class account for my class. I will also be using Remind to post class notices. Please ensure I have your primary contact information for these, not your parent's or your junk email accounts.
- Remember above all, that I am your advocate here, but in order to fight for you, I need you to be open with me about how I can best do that. We're part of a team.
- Be ready to take risks. We're all going to be wrong at some point this semester, and likely at multiple points. Let's grow from that.

Please contact me to provide me any information about your child that might be pertinent to his/her educational experience this semester in Economics (i.e., mental health concerns, unique experiences, etc.) or if you just have some questions.

I have read, understood, and will abide by all of the provisions of the entire Economics syllabus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and **return** the following page of the syllabus to Mr. Williams by **Wednesday, January 6th**.

