

Course Syllabus: Intermediate English for Economics

Professor: Nasser Elahi

Semester: Fall 2024

Course Level: Graduate Level

1. Introduction and Objectives

This course is designed to enhance your understanding of economic concepts through the lens of cultural economics, using Virgil Storr's *Understanding the Culture of Markets* as our primary text. This book provides a unique perspective on how culture influences economic behavior, offering a rich interdisciplinary approach that will deepen your comprehension of both economics and cultural studies.

Throughout this course, we will explore various dimensions of cultural economics, including historical, geographical, social, and symbolic aspects. By engaging with the material, you will develop a nuanced understanding of how cultural narratives shape market dynamics and economic policies.

This course aims to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between culture and economics, preparing you for advanced studies and professional work in the field. I look forward to our journey together in exploring these fascinating topics.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **Understand the Role of Culture in Economics:** Explain why culture is a crucial factor in economic analysis and how it influences market behavior.
- **Analyze Historical Contexts:** Discuss the historical neglect of culture in economics and the arguments for its inclusion.
- **Identify and Critique Misconceptions:** Identify common misconceptions about the relationship between culture and markets and critique existing economic models.
- **Explore Cultural Narratives:** Analyze how cultural narratives and symbols impact economic activities and consumer behavior.
- **Integrate Cultural Factors:** Suggest ways to integrate cultural factors into economic models and policies.
- **Evaluate Case Studies:** Provide examples of how culture has influenced specific markets and economic decisions.

- **Develop Critical Thinking:** Engage in critical thinking about traditional economic theories and the role of culture.
- **Enhance Language Skills:** Improve your English proficiency in an economic context, learning to use specialized terminology effectively.
- **Participate in Discussions:** Actively participate in discussions, sharing insights and asking questions about the readings.
- **Write Analytical Essays:** Write concise, analytical essays on various topics related to cultural economics, demonstrating your understanding of the material.

2. Prerequisites

To ensure students are well-prepared for the advanced topics in this course, the following prerequisites are required:

- **General English Language Proficiency:** Students should have a solid understanding of English to engage with the course material effectively.
- **Acquaintance with the Austrian School of Economics and Its Criticisms:** Familiarity with the principles of the Austrian school and its critiques will be beneficial for understanding the cultural and economic discussions in Virgil Storr's *Understanding the Culture of Markets*.

3. Professor:

- [Nasser Elahi](#) will support your learning journey, helping you master the intricacies of Intermediate English for Economics.

4. Readings:

- **Primary Reading:**
 - *Understanding the Culture of Markets* by Virgil H. Storr
- **Complimentary Readings:**
 - *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* by Karl Polanyi
 - *Cultural Considerations within Austrian Economics* by Virgil Storr and Arielle John

5. Course Schedule

The course will span 16 weeks. Check out the tentative schedule of topics and readings for each session from the main source:

Week 1: Course Outline and Introduction

Week 2: Introduction to the Book and Preface

Week 3: Historical neglect of culture in economics

Week 4: Case studies highlighting cultural impacts on markets

Week 5: Common misconceptions about culture in economics

Week 6: The complex interplay between culture and market behavior

Week 7: Critiques of existing economic models regarding culture

Week 8: Midterm Exam and Discussion

Week 9: Cultural narratives and their influence on economic activities

Week 10: The role of cultural symbols in market dynamics

Week 11: Examples of cultural influences on entrepreneurial behavior

Week 12: Integrating cultural analysis with traditional economic theories

Week 13: Methodological approaches to studying culture in economics

Week 14: Benefits of a culturally informed economic analysis

Week 15: Culture as a toolkit for economic actors

Week 16: Cultural constraints and opportunities in markets

6. Student Requirements

Please take note of the following guidelines for the course:

- **Attendance and Participation:** It is required to attend all classes and actively participate in discussions. (1 out of 20)
- **Reading assignments:** Please make sure to read the relevant sections of the primary text based on the course schedule. Additionally, read alternative points of view in the criticism to be prepared for discussions and exchange of opinions. The first week will be focused on introducing the lesson. (4 out of 20)
- **Weekly essays:** Starting from the second week until the sixteenth week, you are expected to write an essay of 170 to 200 words each week on topics related to culture and the market system. Please email the essays to elahi.mofid@gmail.com at least one day before the class, with the subject "IEFE03" (3 out of 20):

1. **The Role of Culture in Economic Analysis:** Discuss why culture is important in understanding markets.
 2. **Dimensions of Cultural Economics:** Explore various dimensions such as historical, geographical, social, and symbolic aspects of cultural economics.
 3. **Historical Neglect of Culture in Economics:** Analyze why economists have historically overlooked culture.
 4. **Arguments for Cultural Consideration in Economics:** Present the main arguments for why economists should study culture.
 5. **The Role of Tradition in Economic Decisions:** Explain how traditions influence economic decisions in different cultures.
 6. **Cultural Economics vs. Traditional Economics:** Compare and contrast cultural economics with traditional economic theories.
 7. **The Interdisciplinary Nature of Cultural Economics:** Discuss how cultural economics intersects with other social sciences.
 8. **Challenges in Studying Culture in Economics:** Identify and explain the challenges economists face when incorporating culture into their analyses.
 9. **Common Misconceptions About Culture in Economics:** Describe some common misunderstandings economists have about culture.
 10. **The Complex Interplay Between Culture and Markets:** Explain how culture and markets influence each other.
 11. **Critiques of Existing Economic Models:** Critique how current economic models fail to account for cultural factors.
 12. **The Impact of Cultural Misunderstandings on Policy:** Analyze how misunderstandings of culture can affect economic policy.
 13. **The Role of Cultural Symbols in Economics:** Discuss the importance of cultural symbols in economic behavior.
 14. **Cultural Diversity and Market Dynamics:** Discuss how cultural diversity impacts market dynamics.
 15. **Cultural Adaptation in Global Markets:** Discuss how businesses adapt to cultural differences in global markets.
- **Midterm Exam:** This exam will be held on Tuesday, Aban 22 (November 12). (5 out of 20)
 - **Final Exam:** This exam will be held on Saturday, Day 29 (January 12). (7 out of 20)

7. Communication with Students

All communication with graduate students will be conducted via email. Please use the following email address for all course-related inquiries:
elahi.mofid@gmail.com.

When sending an email, ensure that the subject line includes **IEFE031** to help me identify and prioritize your message. I am committed to responding to your emails within one week.

Additionally, my office hours are for one-on-one counseling with graduate students on **Sundays from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm**.