

# ECON 1220B Contemporary Economic Thinking

Mon 12:30-3:15pm YIA LT7

Instructor: Vinci Chow ([vincichow@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:vincichow@cuhk.edu.hk))

Office hours: Monday 4-5pm in ELB 1004

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## Purpose of this Course

This course mainly explores the way contemporary economists analyze current social problems/issues. Through reading and discussing the current issues and related works of contemporary economists, important economic theories will be highlighted and major current issues will be exposed. The aim of this course is to provide students with a preliminary overview of economic theories and applied concepts.

## Grading

Book Reports - 40%

Book Presentation - 20%

Midterm Exam - 25%

Class Participation - 15%

### *Book Reports*

Each student will need to submit two individual book reports at the end of the term.

### *Make up exam*

A student who does not show up in an exam will be given a zero for that exam. Except in an emergency, I *do not* want to give make-up exams.

### *Re-grades*

If you feel that an error has been made in the grading of the question on an examination you can submit the exam in question for a regrade. Regrade requests have to be submitted no more than one week after the examination in question was returned to you. Please note that the entire exam will be reviewed for accuracy.

## Books

Your book presentation will be assigned out of the following books. You will also need to write book reports for *two* of them:

- Steven Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. [\*Freakonomics\*](#).
- Richard Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein. [\*Nudge\*](#).
- Richard Thaler. [\*Misbehaving\*](#).
- Richard Thaler. [\*The Winner's Curse\*](#).
- George Akerlof and Robert Shiller. [\*Animal Spirits\*](#).
- Ray Fisman and Edward Miguel. [\*Economic Gangsters\*](#).
- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. [\*Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty\*](#).
- Thomas Piketty. [\*Capital in the Twenty-First Century\*](#).

## Students with Disability

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify me by no later than the second week of class. We will do our best to accommodate you in any way.

## Tentative Class Schedule

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Activities</b>       |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1           | 7-Jan       | Introduction            |
| 2           | 14-Jan      | Lecture                 |
| 3           | 21-Jan      | Lecture                 |
| 4           | 28-Jan      | Lecture                 |
| 5           | 4-Feb       | Holiday                 |
| 6           | 11-Feb      | Lecture                 |
| 7           | 18-Feb      | Lecture                 |
| 8           | 25-Feb      | Lecture                 |
| 9           | 4-Mar       | Lecture                 |
| 10          | 11-Mar      | Individual presentation |
| 11          | 18-Mar      | Individual presentation |
| 12          | 25-Mar      | Individual presentation |
| 13          | 1-Apr       | Holiday, reading week   |
| 14          | 8-Apr       | Individual presentation |
| 15          | 15-Apr      | Midterm                 |

## Academic Honesty

The University has a zero-tolerance policy on cheating and plagiarism. Violations can lead to disciplinary actions including the termination of studies at the University. Please refer to the University's online guide on academic honesty for further information: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>