



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

AEC 6323 Applied Regional Economics, Distance Education
Summer 2013

“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it.”
Henry Ford, 1929

“For learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner. No change, no learning.”
L. Dee Fink, 2003

Table with 2 columns: Category (Credit Hours, Prerequisites, Class meetings, Instructor, Communication, Required, Recommended, Purpose of Higher Education, Honor Code) and Description.

**Course Goals:** Students will apply the economic way of thinking consistently and appropriately.  
Students will competently understand and apply basic tools of regional economic analysis.  
Students will be able to identify poor economic development analysis.  
Students will improve in their ability to think critically and in their use of critical thinking in their professional, personal, and social lives.  
Students will improve in the following areas: following directions, leadership, interpersonal skills, ethics, oral and written communication skills, character, tolerance, the ability to work with others, the ability to adapt to change, and the ability to work hard.  
Students will improve in becoming skilled learners. A skilled learner is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective.  
Students will improve in the intellectual virtues. The intellectual virtues include intellectual humility, intellectual curiosity, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, confidence in reason, and fair-mindedness.

**Course Catalogue Description:** Economic analysis and effects of regional resources and development potentials, economic factors affecting industrial location decisions, planning and organization of industrial development.

**Course Content:** The disciplinary content of this course is consistent with the goals and objectives developed by the Department of Agricultural Economics. This course will introduce you to the basic tools of regional economic analysis which support community development decisions on growth strategies including opportunity costs; benefit-cost analysis; data collection and interpretation; multipliers; trade areas; location quotients; shift-share; feasibility studies; and economic impact studies. This course will give student the opportunity to apply the material to local communities in Mississippi to deliver a relevant and accessible resource for local decision-makers.

**Assessment:** *Please remember that your grade in this course is not a prediction of your success after graduation, nor is it an evaluation of your worth as a person.*

Your grade is based on your performance on the following:

- Participation (40%)
  - Quality of the number of the following: on-line posts; reflections on readings; participation in conference calls and webinars; and weekly peer evaluation of projects
- Project (60%)
  - Students will choose a local county, complete a socio-economic profile including regional economic analysis measures, and suggest a development plan. The intended audience is educated local community decision-makers interested in economic development but without a background in economics. Students will listen to local economic development professionals, carry out the research, revise after receiving feedback, and present the analysis to the local community decision-makers using a slide show.

**Participation:** In order to fulfill the purpose of higher education, this class needs to be a participatory community. You are expected to be “present” in class so that we can make the most of this learning opportunity. You are encouraged to ask questions about the material as you are learning it. If you have a question, many others are likely to have the same one, *so ask it!* In order to achieve our educational goals and to encourage the expression, testing, understanding, and the creation of a variety of ideas and opinions, respect must be shown to all.

In addition, whining and complaining are discouraged. Good grades and good recommendations come with good attitudes—people taking responsibility for their choices.

**Innovative Instruction Methods:** This course will use pre- and post-reading, small group and large group discussion, lecture, guest lectures, team based learning, homework, cases, research papers, and written and oral communication. You will need to continually engage your mind. The class will use peer and instructor evaluation.

Dr. Smith will be a general resource and **a facilitator that enables you to maximize your learning and will not be doing your learning or thinking for you.** Critical thinking is like lifting weights. Teaching critical thinking is like a fitness trainer showing someone who wants to get in better shape how to do it. If the fitness trainer does all the lifting, then the student does not become more fit. Likewise, if the instructor is the one doing all the thinking, then the student’s critical thinking skills are not improved. The trainer develops a program, meets with the client regularly, and provides encouragement and feedback, but the client benefits in direct proportion to how much effort he/she puts into the process. Likewise, the instructor of this class will provide a plan for achieving the Course Goals, will keep the students accountable for their progress, and will provide encouragement and feedback. However, the gain in a student’s ability to think critically is directly related to how much effort the student puts into preparing and practicing.

Please sign and date on the line below if you understand the above Innovative Instruction Methods and agree to do my part: *I understand that I am responsible for my own learning and I do not expect the instructor to "spoon feed" me:*

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**Instructor Pledge:** I pledge to give my best, honest effort in developing a plan to achieve the course goals, to structure the class in a way that maximizes learning, engages students and consistently provides opportunities for student growth, replies to student emails in a timely manner, and provides feedback and encouragement.



Rebecca Campbell Smith

**Technology Help:**

Information Technology Services, Allen Hall, room 117, [www.its.msstate.edu](http://www.its.msstate.edu), 662-325-0631

**Support Services:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Student Support Services is available to assist in determining classroom accommodations that are most appropriate for students with disabilities based on documentation of their disability. Examples of classroom accommodations are varied, but may include: Adapted testing arrangements, extended time on tests, assistance with ordering recorded texts, and access to special equipment. The Student Support Services Website is <http://www.sss.msstate.edu>.

**Counseling:**

Student Counseling Services, [www.health.msstate.edu](http://www.health.msstate.edu), 101 Lee Hall, 325-2091

### Rubric for Peer Evaluation of Written Works

	<b>Level 3 (6)</b>	<b>Level 2 (4)</b>	<b>Level 1 (2)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory 0 points</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	There are no errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar & spelling.	There are a few errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation & spelling.	There are many errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.	
<b>Writing Style</b>	The writer consistently uses a variety of sentences. The writing is natural and flows smoothly. Sentences begin with a variety of words.	Writer uses simple sentences. Some sentences are choppy or awkward, but most are smooth and clear. Sentences tend to begin the same.	There is little or no variety in sentences. Some of the sentences are unclear. Paper is difficult to read.	
<b>Accuracy</b>	Material is accurate.	Material is mostly accurate.	Material is mostly inaccurate.	
<b>Clarity</b>	Material is understandable on the first read through.	Material is understandable with little effort.	Material is not understandable or understandable only with much effort.	
<b>Precision</b>	Material is presented with concision and efficiency (fewer words rather than more).	Material is presented with concision and/or efficiency (fewer words rather than more).	Material is presented with neither concision nor efficiency (fewer words rather than more).	
<b>Relevance</b>	All material supports the main purpose in logical order	All material supports the main purpose.	There is extraneous material.	
<b>Depth</b>	Significant factors are addressed and explained thoroughly.	Significant factors are addressed and explained.	Significant factors are not addressed and/or not explained.	
<b>Breadth</b>	Nothing relevant is left out. Topic is covered thoroughly.	Nothing relevant is left out. Topic is mostly covered.	Relevant information is left out.	
<b>Logic</b>	All material makes sense and is consistent.	Most material makes sense and is consistent.	Most material does not makes sense and/or is not consistent.	

### Rubric for Class Participation

	<b>Strong Work 3 points</b>	<b>Some Improvement Needed 2 points</b>	<b>Much Improvement Needed 1 point</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory 0 points</b>
<b>Preparation</b>	Arrives fully prepared with completed assignments	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation	Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about class material	No preparation
<b>Listening</b>	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor	Sometimes lacks interest in comments of others	Generally shows lack of interest in others and can be disrespectful	Disrespectful
<b>Quality of Questions</b>	Questions are thoughtful and challenging	Questions are sometimes thoughtful and challenging	Questions reflect little understanding of material or other student remarks	No questions
<b>Frequency of Participation</b>	Actively participates at appropriate times	Sometimes participates but other times is "tuned out"	Seldom participates and is generally not engaged	No participation
<b>Quality of On-line Posts</b>	Comments are relevant and reflective of: assigned readings, previous remarks of other students,	Comments sometimes relevant and sometimes irrelevant	Comments reflect little understanding of material or other student remarks	No posts
<b>Quality of On-line Posts/Reflections on Readings</b>	Comments are relevant; show material was understood well; and applied consistently	Comments are relevant; show material was understood well; and applied inconsistently	Some comments are relevant; show some understanding; and applied inconsistently	No posts
<b>Quality of Peer Evaluations</b>	Consistently provides appropriate constructive criticism in a positive way	Inconsistently provides appropriate constructive criticism in a positive way	Consistently provides only positive comments and does not show any signs of using judgment	No peer evaluations

## Grade Profiles

**The Grade of A.** A-level work demonstrates real achievement in grasping what economic thinking is, along with clear development of a range of specific economic thinking skills or abilities. The work at the end of the course is consistently clear, precise, and well-reasoned. In A-level work, economic terms and distinctions are used effectively. The work demonstrates a mind beginning to take charge of its own ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. The A-level student consistently analyzes economic issues clearly and precisely, consistently formulates economic information accurately, consistently distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, consistently recognizes key questionable assumptions, consistently clarifies key economic concepts effectively, consistently uses economic language in keeping with professional usage, consistently identifies relevant competing economic points of view, and shows a general tendency to reason carefully from clearly stated premises, as well as noticeable sensitivity to important implications and consequences. A-level work displays excellent economic reasoning and problem-solving skills. The A student's work is consistently at a high level of intellectual excellence.

**The Grade of B.** B-level work represents demonstrable achievement in grasping what economic thinking is, along with the clear demonstration of a range of specific economic thinking skills or abilities. B-level work at the end of the course is clear, precise, and well-reasoned, though with occasional lapses into weak reasoning. On the whole, economic terms and distinctions are used effectively. The work demonstrates a mind beginning to take charge of its own ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. The student often analyzes economic issues clearly and precisely, often recognizes economic information accurately, usually distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, often recognizes key questionable assumptions, usually clarifies key economic concepts effectively, typically uses economic language in keeping with established professional usage, frequently identifies relevant economic competing points of view, and shows a general tendency to reason carefully from clearly stated premises, as well as noticeable sensitivity to important implication and consequences. B-level work displays good economic reasoning and problem-solving skills.

**The Grade of C.** C-level work illustrates some but inconsistent achievement in grasping what economic thinking is, along with the development of modest economic thinking skills or abilities. C-level work at the end of the course shows some emerging economic thinking skills, but also pronounced weaknesses as well. Though some assignments are reasonably well done, others are poorly done, or, at best, are mediocre. There are more than occasional lapses in reasoning. Though economic thinking in terms and distinctions are sometimes used effectively, sometimes they are used quite ineffectively. Only on occasion does C-level work display a mind taking charge of its own ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. Only occasionally does C-level work display intellectual discipline and clarity. The C-level student only occasionally analyzes economic issues clearly and precisely, formulates economic information accurately, distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, recognizes key questionable assumptions, clarifies key economic concepts effectively, uses economic language in keeping with established professional usage, identifies relevant economic competing points of view, and reasons carefully from clearly stated premises, or recognizes important economic implications and consequences. Sometimes the C-level student seems to be simply going through the motions of the assignment, carrying out the form without getting into the spirit of it. On the whole, C-level work shows only modest and inconsistent economic reasoning and problem-solving skills and sometimes displays weak reasoning and problem-solving skills.

**The Grade of D.** D-level work shows only a minimal level understanding of what economic thinking is, along with the development of some, but very little, economic thinking skills or abilities. D work at the end of the course, on the whole, shows only occasional economic thinking skills, but frequent uncritical economic reasoning. Most assignments are poorly done. There is little evidence that the student is "reasoning" through the assignment. Often the student seems to be merely going through the motions of the assignment, carrying out the form without getting into the spirit of it. D work rarely shows any effort to take charge of ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. In general, D-level thinking lacks discipline and clarity. In D-level work, the student rarely analyzes economic issues clearly and precisely, almost never formulates economic information accurately, rarely distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, rarely recognizes key questionable assumptions, almost never clarifies key economic concepts effectively, frequently fails to use economic language in keeping with established professional usage, only rarely identifies relevant competing economic points of view, and almost never reasons carefully from clearly stated premises, or recognizes important implications and consequences. D-level work does not show good economic reasoning and problem-solving skills and frequently displays poor reasoning and problem-solving skills.

**The Grade of F.** F-level work fails to display an understanding of the basic nature of economic thinking, and in any case does not display the economic thinking skills and abilities which are at the heart of this course. The work at the end of the course is as vague, imprecise, and unreasoned as it was in the beginning. There is little evidence that the student genuinely engaged in the task of taking charge of his or her economic thinking. Many assignments appear to have been done "pro forma" where the student goes through the motions without really putting any significant effort into thinking his or her way through them. Consequently, the student is not analyzing economic issues clearly, not formulating economic information accurately, not distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, not identifying key economic assumptions, not clarifying key economic concepts, not identifying relevant economic competing points of view, not reasoning carefully from clearly state premises, or tracing economic implications and consequences. The student's work does not display discernible economic reasoning and problem-solving skills.