

Markets, Government, & Social Justice

ECO 173 · Section 1 · 3 Credit Hours · Magis Core

Tuesday & Thursday · 2:00–3:15 PM · Harper Center, Room 3018

Fall 2026 · August 18 – December 12, 2026

INSTRUCTOR

Instructor	Jedediah T. Pida-Reese, Ph.D. Resident Assistant Professor of Economics Faculty Fellow, Menard Center for Economic Inquiry
Office	Harper Center 4045B
Office Hours	Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 – 2:00 PM Or by appointment · open-door policy
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Website	jedediahpida-reese.com
Prerequisites	None · 3 credit hours = 2.5 hours of class time plus 6–9 hours of study time per week

MISSION & DESCRIPTION

HEIDER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS MISSION

Guided by our Jesuit Heritage, we form leaders who promote justice and use their business education to improve the world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the basics of economic exchange and efficiency for non-business majors with a focus on standard microeconomic models and their application to contemporary real-world problems. Market outcomes as well as government intervention are evaluated as to their efficiency, social welfare implications, as well as social justice concerns.

FIT TO MAGIS CORE AND UNIVERSITY MISSION

This course combines an introduction to the standard analysis of incentives, information, and welfare outcomes from economics with a basic discussion of different theories of justice and Catholic social teaching to help students develop a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives on economic processes and their justice implications. The course is directed at non-business majors who are unlikely to take any additional economics courses. It fills an important niche in the Magis Core Curriculum by exposing non-business students to the economic way of thinking, to help them better understand the intricacies of economic exchange, market outcomes, and the interactions between markets and governments. The course intentionally combines an introduction to standard microeconomic theory with real world examples and analysis that challenge students to think beyond the theory and to begin thinking about the broader implications of economic systems, structure, and policy for the world. The goal is to help students develop a sound foundation and understanding of the basic functioning of economic systems such that they can better understand the trade-offs between different institutional forms and their effects on the poor and marginalized, equipping them with some of the knowledge necessary to become effective change agents in society.

MAGIS CORE OBJECTIVES

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| 2.I.1 | Students will demonstrate the basic skills of information literacy, including critically evaluating information from sources and appropriately using and citing information. |
| 3E.I.1 | Students will explain the concepts of “service,” “social justice,” and “human dignity,” as they are understood within the Catholic and Jesuit traditions, and how they are influenced by systems of social differentiation and by relative power and privilege. |
| 6.R.1 | Students will identify their own social locations and conditions and analyze a controversial issue by discussing their own values and perspectives and those of an unfamiliar community. |
| 6.R.2 | Students will evaluate and critique the way systems of relative power and privilege are reinforced. |
| 4.I.2 | Students will effectively deliver a formal oral extemporaneous presentation of at least 5 minutes in length that is appropriate for a specific audience, in terms of content, organization, and delivery. |
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COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Wheelan, Charles, *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science* (Fully Revised and Updated), New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Sandel, Michael, *Justice: What's the Right Thing To Do*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

READINGS ON BLUELINE

Required readings run between 20 and 50 pages per week and are drawn from the two required books or posted as PDFs on the BlueLine course page (Freakonomics, *The Choice*, *How Innovation Works*, *Rerum Novarum*, *The Alternative*, and others). Check BlueLine regularly—each week’s module lists that week’s reading, quiz, and discussion assignments.

TEACHING METHOD & CLASS FORMAT

Lecture on Tuesdays; moderated Socratic-circle discussion on Thursdays.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments	Points
Reading Quizzes (13 weeks, drop 3)	10
BlueLine Discussion Board (13 weeks, up to 3 per week)	30
Socratic In-Class Discussion (8 weeks, up to 5 per week)	30
Op-Ed Assignment	20
Oral Presentation	10
Total	100

READING QUIZZES (10 POINTS)

Each week, you are asked to read between 20 and 50 pages of academic articles or book chapters by Monday night. There will be a short reading quiz at the start of class each Tuesday to appropriately incentivize your reading. **Quizzes are taken and submitted on BlueLine during class**, so bring a connected device on Tuesdays. **Week 1 is the exception: Reading Quiz 1 is a full-credit online practice quiz on Freakonomics Chapter 1, due on BlueLine by the start of Thursday’s class**

(August 20, 2:00 PM)—it exists so you learn the BlueLine quiz mechanics before the graded in-class quizzes begin. I will drop your three lowest quiz scores, which includes any you missed. The quizzes are closed notes and closed AI: during a quiz, your device is for the BlueLine quiz page and nothing else.

DISCUSSION BOARD ON BLUELINE (30 POINTS)

Prior to each moderated roundtable discussion on Thursday, you will be prompted to contribute to an online pre-discussion about the readings on BlueLine *if you are in the inner circle* (participating in discussion) that week. Pre-discussion posts are due by **Wednesday at 11:59 PM**. If you are in the outer circle (observing discussion), you will instead contribute a post-discussion response on BlueLine by **Friday at 11:59 PM**. Find out whether you are participating or observing each week from the roster posted at the top of the BlueLine course page.

Generative AI is permitted in preparing these posts as a research aid. If a topic in the week's reading stuck out to you, use an AI tool to dig deeper before you post, and verify what it tells you against a source you can name: these tools state falsehoods with confidence, and what you type into them may not stay private. The post itself must be your own thinking in your own words.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION (30 POINTS)

In weeks 1–13 of the semester, the Thursday meeting of each week is devoted to a moderated roundtable discussion in a Socratic Circles format, covering that week's readings and lecture content. Each week, only 15–16 students participate in the discussion (inner circle); the remaining students (outer circle) are in the room listening to the conversation to prepare their written response—to one of their classmates or to the conversation as a whole—due by Friday at 11:59 PM. The roster for the inner and outer circles is posted on BlueLine—double check that you are assigned **eight** unique dates in the inner circle. Your contribution is graded on how well it engages the reading, responds to the discussion in class, and responds to the week's prompt. There are no right or wrong answers: you are asked to take a position and defend it, and you will be graded on the coherence and persuasiveness of your argument.

OP-ED ASSIGNMENT (20 POINTS)

You will write two op-eds over the semester, each developed through a first draft, structured peer feedback, a revised draft, and a final draft—the deadlines are listed in the schedule below. For the full description, rubrics, annotated examples, and writing resources, see the “Op-Ed Assignment Information” section of the BlueLine course page.

Generative AI is permitted at one step of this assignment: the revision. Write the first draft yourself, without AI; the drafting is the writing instruction. Write your feedback on your classmates' drafts yourself as well, because giving useful feedback is one of the skills this assignment trains. When you revise, you may ask an AI tool to critique your draft alongside your peers' comments, and you may revise with both in hand. Disclose in the final draft which tools you used and what you used them for, following the APA's format (see [How to Cite ChatGPT](#)); writing “no AI was used” is also a disclosure, and I will take you at your word. Concealing or understating AI use is a violation of the University and College academic misconduct policies and will result in disciplinary action.

ORAL PRESENTATION (10 POINTS)

Each student will present the main arguments of one of their op-eds in a 5-minute presentation during the last week of class (December 1 and 3). If you would like to use slides, email the file to jedpidareese@creighton.edu no later than **Monday, November 30**. If you use AI to prepare your slides, disclose it on the final slide, in the same format as on the op-eds.

GRADING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The discussion board and in-class discussions are graded in a way that allows you to miss a couple of opportunities to earn credit without serious consequences for your grade; there are therefore no make-ups for missed discussion credit. Students

who miss a paper deadline as a result of a sudden and unpredictable health event or family emergency will receive an extension upon request—contact me within 48 hours. A deadline missed for any other reason costs 0.5 points per hour the assignment is late. If you find an error in the way you have been graded, type up a written request for my consideration and return it to me together with the assignment in question; changes to discussion board grades must be requested **before the last day of class**.

PLAGIARISM & CHEATING

As a general rule, all assignments should be the result of your own efforts. Assignments are not group projects and should not be completed with the help of others. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz or your paper you will receive an automatic F on the given assignment, and the matter will be turned over to the dean for further evaluation. Penalties for violations of academic honesty include suspension and expulsion from the university. See also the University policies at the end of this syllabus.

EXTRA CREDIT

You can obtain one point of extra credit for each MCEI “Food for Thought” seminar you attend. The Menard Center for Economic Inquiry (MCEI) will be hosting three “Food for Thought” seminars with guest speakers this fall, all on Thursdays at 4:00 PM in Harper Center 2057–58:

Aug 27 · Dr. James Bailey (Providence College) · *States vs Healthcare*

Sep 17 · Mrs. Susannah Petitt (University of Notre Dame) · *How Families Shape Economic Opportunity*

Sep 24 · Dr. David Skarbek (Brown University) · *The Social Order of the Underworld: How Prison Gangs Govern the California Penal System*

To get the extra credit you must write a 250–300-word (12 pt. Times New Roman font; single or double spaced; in a Word or Google doc) summary of your thoughts on the talk, or just a summary of the talk itself. **This summary must be written in your own words; use of AI will not be permitted.** If you attend all three seminars during the semester, you will obtain an additional extra credit point on top of the three points earned, for a total of four possible points.

USE OF ELECTRONICS IN CLASS

Use of laptops and tablets for notetaking is permitted, provided you are not causing a nuisance to other students in the classroom. **Use of phones is not.**

GRADE SCALE

I will update all grades on BlueLine, and I expect you to check your grades weekly to ensure any issues or missed assignments are addressed promptly. If you think that there is a mistake in your grade, send me an email as soon as possible. The course is graded out of 100 points, so points and percentages coincide.

Grade	Interpretation (per Creighton University Catalog)	Points
A	Outstanding	94–100
A–	Outstanding	90–93
B+	Good	87–89
B	Good	84–86
B–	Good	80–83
C+	Satisfactory	77–79
C	Satisfactory	74–76
C–	Inferior, but passing	70–73
D	Inferior, but passing	60–69
F	Failure	59 and below

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

KEY UNIVERSITY DATES—FALL 2026

Mon Aug 24 · Last day for registration and adding courses
 Thu Aug 27 · Last day to drop individual courses
 Mon Sep 7 · Labor Day Holiday—no classes
 Mon Sep 14 · Last day to apply for P/NP status
 Sun–Sun Oct 11–18 · Fall Recess—no classes
 Thu Nov 5 · Last day to withdraw with a grade of “W”
 Wed–Sun Nov 25–29 · Thanksgiving Recess—no classes
 Mon–Sat Dec 7–12 · Final semester examinations

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Each week: reading done by Monday night · quiz on BlueLine at the start of Tuesday’s class · lecture Tuesday · inner-circle posts due Wednesday 11:59 PM · Socratic circle Thursday · outer-circle responses due Friday 11:59 PM.

Week	Dates	Topic	Reading
1	Aug 18, 20	Incentives Matter <i>Tue: introduction & syllabus, then a short lecture; Thu: first Socratic circle; quiz 1 online (practice), due Thu 2:00 PM</i>	Levitt & Dubner, <i>Freakonomics</i> , Ch 1 (BlueLine)
2	Aug 25, 27	The Power of Markets	Wheelan, Ch 1
3	Sep 1, 3	Doing the Right Thing	Sandel, Ch 1
4	Sep 8, 10	Efficiency, Exchange, and Comparative Advantage	Roberts, <i>The Choice</i> , Ch 1–4 (BlueLine)
5	Sep 15, 17	Competition and Entrepreneurship	Ridley, <i>How Innovation Works</i> , Ch 11 (BlueLine)
6	Sep 22, 24	Markets & Morals	Sandel, Ch 4
7	Sep 29, Oct 1	The Industrial Revolution and the Church	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> (BlueLine)
8	Oct 6, 8	Government and the Economy	Wheelan, Ch 3–4
— Fall Recess, October 11–18: no classes —			
9	Oct 20, 22	Justice and Redistribution	Miller, <i>The Alternative</i> , Ch 5–6 + Planet Money episode (BlueLine)
10	Oct 27, 29	The Power of Organized Interests	Wheelan, Ch 8
11	Nov 3, 5	Affirmative Action	Sandel, Ch 7
12	Nov 10, 12	Dilemmas of Loyalty	Sandel, Ch 9
13	Nov 17, 19	Justice and the Common Good	Sandel, Ch 10
	Nov 24, 26	<i>No class — Jed at the Southern Economic Association Conference; Thanksgiving Recess</i>	
14	Dec 1, 3	Oral presentations (slides emailed by Mon Nov 30)	—

There is no final exam in this course.

OP-ED DEADLINES

All op-ed deadlines fall at **11:59 PM**.

Op-Ed 1	Due	Op-Ed 2	Due
First draft	Fri 09/11	First draft	Fri 10/23
Peer feedback	Fri 09/18	Peer feedback	Fri 10/30
Revised draft	Fri 09/25	Revised draft	Fri 11/06
Final draft	Fri 10/09	Final draft	Fri 12/04

Please note—The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus as time and circumstances dictate. Necessary changes will be announced in class and a copy of the revised syllabus will be posted on BlueLine.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

CREIGHTON FORCE MAJEURE POLICY

Creighton University may modify, suspend, or postpone any and all activities and services immediately and without notice because of force majeure causes beyond Creighton's control and occurring without its fault or negligence including, but not limited to, acts of god, fire, war, governmental action, terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, weather, national emergencies, or other threats to the safety of students or staff. Creighton may, at its option, alter the academic schedule or provide alternate instruction modalities to meet course objectives and competencies and program outcomes, including, but not limited to, distance or remote learning, until such time as Creighton determines normal operations may resume safely.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students who believe they may qualify or have questions regarding academic accommodations in class are encouraged to visit the [Student Accessibility Services website](#) or contact Student Accessibility Services at SAS@creighton.edu. Accommodations are not applied retroactively. Once accommodations are granted from Student Accessibility Services, students are responsible for informing their professors of approved academic accommodations. Accommodation letters are generated and shared with faculty via ClockWork, an accommodation software system. Unless approved by the instructor with written permission, students with accommodations who take exams in the testing center should make every effort to schedule their exams for the same day/time as the in-class exam. Students taking an exam during an alternate day/time should receive approval from the instructor to do so.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The Heider College of Business, in alignment with the University mission, seeks to prepare its students to be knowledgeable, forthright, and honest. We expect members of the College to act with integrity in all academic pursuits. Further, we expect all faculty, staff, and students to work collectively to uphold a culture of integrity and eliminate conditions that may give rise to misconduct. For these reasons, the College has established an Academic Misconduct Policy in accordance with the University's regulation on [academic misconduct](#) and disciplinary procedures, which are found in the University Catalog and Student Handbook. The Heider College's policy is posted [here](#). Creighton University's revised academic misconduct policy treats the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence as cheating. You may always use AI tools for your own learning, to explain a concept or to test your understanding, just as you may study with your peers; the rules governing AI on the work you submit are stated with each graded component under Grading & Assignments above.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT WELLBEING

All members of Creighton University recognize that you, as students, may experience stressors that can impact both your aca-

demic experience and personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. For other concerns, Creighton University offers many resources including Student Counseling Services, The Student Success Center, Student Accessibility Services, Student Health Education and Compliance, The Office for Student and Family Support, The Financial Aid Office, The Creighton Cupboard, The Student Leadership and Involvement Center, The VIP Center, The Creighton Intercultural Center, and so many more. All can be found on Creighton University's website or you can just ask.

It is the intent of the faculty and staff to support you. In the event I suspect you need additional support I will express my concerns and the reasons for them and share resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be going on, but simply to let you know I am concerned and that help, if needed, is available.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

All course materials posted on BlueLine—handouts, problem sets and their solutions, slides, videos, and recordings—are copyrighted and are for the use of students enrolled in this class, for the purposes of fulfilling the course objectives. Only the instructor may record class sessions, and only the instructor may distribute recorded materials, including individual student discussion posts. Sharing these materials outside the course is misuse of academic resources under the Creighton University Student Handbook, an act of academic misconduct for which students may be penalized, up to and including failure of the course.

****Congrats on making it to the end of the syllabus! If you made it here, please send me an email with a picture of a cute cat or dog (can be yours or anyone else's) for 1 whole point of extra credit!*** (This offer is only available until 11:59 PM on Sunday, 08/23.)*