



JOUR 469: Money, Markets and Media
4 Units

Fall 2019 – Tue./Thurs. – 9-10:50 a.m.

Section: 21300R

Location: ANN L116

Instructor: Prof. Gabriel Kahn

Office: ASC 227C

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs., 1-3 p.m. or by appointment.

(Note: Office hours sometimes held in Media Center.)

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I. Course Description

The economy is big news. But how many people understand how it works? This course equips students who have little or no background in the field with the tools to understand the modern-day economy. Though this is a journalism course, all students are welcome. The class avoids jargon and formulas. Instead, it approaches economics through case studies, historical examples and the day's headlines. The class places an emphasis on how economics and economic decision-making influence public policy, businesses and personal choices. It pulls in guest speakers to give students direct exposure to government officials charged with budgetary decisions and business professionals who need to understand the economy to make investments and other plans. Much of the class is devoted to understanding the major economic events playing out right now.

This class will also examine economic inequality and how that has played out in politics and policy. What we learn this semester will aid in our understanding of the political mood of the nation. No small part of that stems from the lingering effects of the financial crisis. We will be analyzing and writing about the elements that led to the crisis and understanding how businesses and government responded.

The class is part of Annenberg's Media, Economics and Entrepreneurship initiative. It is designed with the belief that a sound understanding of economics is essential in order to thrive in many professions, particularly media. The course stresses critical thinking and analysis in examining choices of business leaders and economic policy makers.

The course moves from the macro to the micro, beginning with a study of components that make up the U.S. economy. It then covers fiscal and monetary policy, with an emphasis on how the Federal Reserve and Treasury Department responded to the economic crisis. Students will study and write about the importance of international trade, currency fluctuations and corporate finance. The reading consists of long-form narrative business journalism, business news and economic research.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

Economics offers a powerful lens for understanding how our world works and how people make decisions about their lives. Students who take this course should emerge with a proficiency in economics and should possess a base of knowledge that will increase their ability to discuss, write about and apply business and economic principles. Students are also encouraged to weave their understanding of economics into their other coursework and assignments. This course is also designed to lay the groundwork for further pursuit of economic thinking and writing.

III. Description of Assignments

Students are required to complete all of the readings listed on the syllabus ahead of class. Additional readings – usually consisting of recent news articles – will also be emailed to students or handed out in class. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss readings and assignments and to lead discussions. There will be several pop quizzes throughout the semester. Regular [attendance is required. If you must miss a class because of an emergency or illness, please email before class begins.](#) Late papers are not accepted unless there is a serious extenuating circumstance.

Blogging: Producing a minimum of four posts for the classroom blog on various economic issues, as well as writing comments about classmates' posts.

Presentations: Students will produce two presentations and lead a brief class discussion. The first presentation will be on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor. The second presentation should be based upon either the first or second writing project. No need to come up with an entirely new theme for the second presentation.

Quizzes: There will be four quizzes during the semester that will cover assigned reading and lectures given in class. Students are expected to be current with the reading and able to answer questions about the principal concepts we address in class.

Project #1: An examination of how different economic forces are active in a current situation. Examples: How are certain regions or industries reacting to increased competition from abroad or changes in factors such as the value of the dollar? Does the price of oil change the game for an industry, or a region? How has hyperinflation impacted places like Venezuela? What is the impact of raising the minimum wage on workers and the businesses that employ them? The project should include interviews and make use of economic data. The project can be in the form of a 1,500-word paper. Other formats, such as a video, audio, or interactive slideshow are also welcome, however, please obtain the assent of your instructor first.

Please think of this as a journalistic inquiry, not a term paper. Remember: You get more credit for quality than quantity. Use of multimedia in addition to or other than text is encouraged. At the least, please include a photo or a graph. Projects will be judged on insight, clarity and synthesis of material.

Students are encouraged to write in a journalistic style, though all source material must be clearly identified.

Project #1 Revision: Every student will go through an edit to revise and resubmit the initial project.

Second In-Class Presentation: This is an individual presentation lasting 12 minutes, followed by a few minutes for questions. The topic can be based on your first or second project or a blog post.

Final Project #2: Examine, analyze or report on a company, industry or market situation. Examples: Can American Apparel afford to continue manufacturing in the U.S. while its competitors have decamped to lower-cost production centers? How do state mandates to increase production of renewable energy impact the state’s economy? How does Starbucks handle a sharp rise in global coffee prices? Remember travel agents? They used to be everywhere, but have all but disappeared because of the Internet. How do the last remaining ones stay afloat?

This project should include interviews, company data and industry research. It can be in the form of a 2,000-word paper. However, use of multimedia in addition to or other than print are encouraged. Students are encouraged to write in a journalistic style, though all source material must be clearly identified.

V. Grading

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	15	15%
Quizzes	15	15%
Blogging Assignment	15	15%
Class Presentations	10	10%
Project #1	15	15%
Project #1 Revision	15	15%
Final Project	15	15%
Total	100	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Journalism

You will be graded primarily on three criteria:

Depth: Are you presenting a thoughtful perspective? Are you bringing an original point of view? Have you thoroughly considered the issue you are presenting and its implications.

Research: Have you adequately and accurately researched the topic, considered the appropriate data and reviewed it sufficiently? Have read up on how others have approached this same topic?

Clarity and Execution: Are you expressing yourself powerfully and succinctly? Is your writing clear, your grammar and syntax flawless? Are any charts or graphs you are using accurate and do they convey the point you want to make?

An “A” Project is written in exceptionally clear prose with no errors of punctuation or grammar. It is very thorough and thoughtful though not overly long and takes into account a range of views, though it has a strong point of its own to make. It is accurate and engaging and makes strong use of any appropriate visual elements.

A “B” Project is written clearly and has only minor issues of syntax or grammar. It is thorough and contains some original thinking while making appropriate use of other points of view. Any visual elements help reinforce the central argument.

A “C” Project has issues of clarity in the writing. The ideas presented need to be more thoroughly examined and more sources must be brought to bear. Visual elements are either not relevant or add little to the argument.

A “D” Project means that this will require excessive rewriting and reworking to improve the language. The central argument is either unclear or perhaps invalid and there is insufficient evidence to support it. Graphic elements are either absent or irrelevant to the piece.

An “F” signifies that this project has failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, is late, has numerous errors or all of the above.

The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

- Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.
- Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.
- Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.

- Missing a deadline.

V. Assignment Submission Policy

All written assignments will be submitted via the class blog.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Assigned texts that must be purchased:

Greg Ip, *The Little Book of Economics*, (Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), ISBN-978-0-470-92940-7, 250 pages

Tim Harford, *The Undercover Economist* (Random House, 2007), ISBN-10: 0345494016, 288 pages.

Assigned Film:

Inside Job, Sony Pictures Classics, 2010.

Texts to be made available through ARES, the Leavey Library Reserve System

These texts will be available for free at reserves.usc.edu. Students must first register for the system.

David Wessel, *In Fed We Trust* (Crown, 2009). ISBN-10: 0307459691

Terri Thompson, *Writing About Business* (Columbia University Press, 2001), ISBN-10: 023111835X, 480 pages.

Bruce Greenwald, Judd Kahn, "All Strategy Is Local," (*Harvard Business Review*, September 2005).

Michael Lewis, "Wall Street on the Tundra," (*Vanity Fair*, April 2009).

Michael Lewis, "The End," (*Portfolio*, Nov. 11, 2008)

Atul Gawande, "The Hot Spotters," *The New Yorker*, 2011

John Cassidy, "The Demand Doctor," *The New Yorker*, Oct. 10, 2011.

Greenwald and Kahn, *Globalization*, (Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009).

VII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/26/19 – 12/6/19)

Friday, September 13: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 13: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, September 17: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, October 11: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, October 11: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, November 15: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 8/27	Discussion and dissection of the state of the U.S. economy. What we talk about when we talk about economics.	None	
8/29	What does the data say and where does it come from? How to read economic indicators.	Higgins, <i>The Twilight Economy</i> ; lp, chaps. 1-2, (pgs. 1-36)	
Week 2 9/3 The Treasury and the Fed	The Federal Budget How big is it? What’s in it? How does it get made?	lp, chaps. 3-4 (pgs. 37-52); Thompson, chap. 4 (pgs. 34-40); recent research report on the U.S. economy	First blog post on economic indicators.
9/5 The Federal Reserve and Money Supply	The origins of the Federal Reserve and a history of the dollar. How the Fed operates and who pulls the levers. Play the Fed Game.	Thompson, chap. 5 (pgs. 41-54); lp, chap. 9 (141-154); chap. 13 (pgs. 201-218).	
Week 3 9/10 Tax Cuts vs. Spending Cuts and Managing the Economy	Bernanke’s Big Moment: QE2 What has this wrought? Was it a good idea? Guest Speaker: Alan Bernstein , member of the pension board for the County of Los Angeles.	Harford (pages 3-55), Wessel, chap. 2. Plus, article TBA from the news of the day.	

9/12	A look at state and local budgets.	lp, chaps. 10-11 (pgs. 155-186), article on Japan's helicopter money.	First Quiz
Week 4 9/17 The Great Debate –Deficit vs. Stimulus	NO CLASS!	Wessel, chap. 3 (pgs. 50-66); Harford (pgs. 56-73)	
9/19 The Great Debate –Deficit vs. Stimulus	The historical perspective from Keynes and Hayek	lp, chap. 8 (pgs. 123-140); “ <u>The Demand Doctor</u> ,” John Cassidy, <i>The New Yorker</i> .	
Week 5 9/24 The Euro/Healthcare	The Euro: A history of the euro, its ambition and its problems	lp, chap. 12 (pgs. 187-200).	
9/26	Guest speaker: Erica Phillips , Wall Street Journal reporter covering logistics and shipping.	lp, chap. 14 (pgs. 219-236);	Second blog post due
Week 6 10/1 Trade	Container ships: The Engine of Global Trade	lp, chap. 6 (pgs. 93-110)	One-paragraph discussion of topic for Project #1.
10/3	History of theories on trade Adam Smith, David Ricardo and the repeal of the Corn Law in 1843	lp, chap. 5 (pgs. 71-92); Harford (pgs. 105-145). WSJ article on trash with China (handed out in class); recent article (TBA) on trash trade with China.	
Week 7 10/8 The Rise of China, Global Trade,	Economic Inequality: Causes and Effects	Harford (pgs. 146-188). Additional readings TBA	

Currencies, Exchange Rates			
10/10 China and the Rise of Emerging Markets	What does the rise of China mean for the U.S.? Guest Speaker: Clay Dube, director, U.S-China Institute.	<u>"20 Facts About Economic Inequality,"</u> Stanford Center of Poverty and Inequality. Joseph Stiglitz on <u>economic inequality.</u>	
Week 8 10/15	Trip to Port of LA	Harford (pgs. 189-240) Chap title "How the Rich Grew Rich."	First Project Due, 10/10, 5 p.m.
10/17	Mid-semester break	No class	
Week 9 10/22 The Housing Crisis	The Origins: What created this mess: cheap money, mortgage securitization, government policy?	Lewis, <i>Wall Street on the Tundra</i> ; Vanity Fair	In-class quiz.
10/24	The Bubble bursts: The spread of foreclosures, the ripple through the banking system and the economy.	Ip, chap. 7, (pgs. 111-122) <u>Article</u> on one writer's 10-year attempt to sell his home.	
Week 10 10/29 The Financial Crisis	The bust on Main Street.	WSJ article on housing in Corona.	
10/31	Moral Hazards Bear Stearns gets "rescued," Lehman Emergency Reaction The Fed and the Treasury try to stay ahead of the crisis. In-class viewing: Frontline documentary on the Great Panic.	Ip, chap. 14 (pgs. 211-226); Michael Lewis on the meltdown, Portfolio, article to be handed out in class.	
Week 11 11/5 Financial Crisis	In-class viewing: "Inside Job"	Articles to be handed out in class, Lewis,	In-class quiz.

	<p>How did Greece get into such a mess?</p> <p>A review of the timeline: What policy remedies were put in place to deal with the immediate crisis? What are the financial, economic and political costs both now and in the future?</p>	<i>Beware of Greeks Bearing Bonds</i>	
11/7	<p>Guest Speaker: Prof. Jonathan Taplin Monopolizing the Internet</p>	Taplin, "Move Fast and Break Things," chap. 6.	
Week 12 11/12 Economics of the Firm	Jane Oates on the future of work	<u>George Soros</u> on the future of the euro	Third blog post due. Lauren, Juliet.
11/14	<p>Earnings statements. Time permitting: Equity Markets and the Cost of Capital Working our way through the stock market and how to read it.</p>	Earnings statement and earnings report, to be handed out in class	
Week 13 11/19 Raising money in the Marketplace	Guest Speaker: Jane Ross, to discuss the financial crisis	lp, chaps. 15 (pgs. 237-256) Disney earnings articles.	Topic paragraph for Final Project
11/21	<p>Debt Markets What's a bond? What's a bond spread? How much debt is too much? What happens when you can't pay?</p>	Articles on bankruptcy to be handed out in class.	
Week 14 11/26 Can Economics Save the Planet?	Unlocking the Key to Renewable Energy.	Articles to be handed out in class.	Final Blog Post Due

11/28	No Class – Thanksgiving Break		
Week 15 12/3	Topic Chosen by Class	Readings chosen by class	Fourth quiz
12/5	Final Class: Review		
Final Exam Period 12/12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	Summative experience		Final Project Due on 12/10, Midnight

IX. Policies and Procedures

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct (<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>).

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

X. About Your Instructor

Gabriel Kahn has worked as a newspaper correspondent and editor for two decades, including 10 years at *The Wall Street Journal*, where he served as Los Angeles bureau chief, deputy Hong Kong bureau chief and deputy Southern Europe bureau chief, based in Rome. He has reported from more than a dozen countries. In 1998, Kahn launched *Italy Daily*, a joint venture of the *International Herald Tribune* and *Corriere della Sera*, based in Milan, Italy. He has covered the U.S. Congress for the Washington, D.C.,-based *Roll Call*, and served as an editor and writer at *The Forward*, in New York City.

Kahn studies the business and economic models of the news industry and consults with startups and news organizations about improving monetization of content.