

GEX1010/GET1023- Thinking Like an Economist

FASStrack 2026

Schedule: 2pm – 5pm; Singapore time

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

Course Description

The field of economics has generated a powerful set of insights which have fundamentally shaped the modern world. This module aims to bring up the most interesting ideas and explain these big economics ideas, without a heavy stress on math. We will discuss what it means to think like an economist in the following real-life questions: Why would someone cheat? Why do people give out money to benefit others? Which factors cause crime rates to go down? Why do countries fail sometimes?

We use texts that popularize economic concepts to illustrate how different social phenomena can be understood by applying the tools of economic analysis. However, we also discuss possible limitations of the economic approach to social issues. In this course we review, challenge, and debate on firmly established ideas we all have about the world, our society, and ourselves.

After this class, you will have understood how economists view the world and how to analyze different social phenomena from the perspective of economics. You will also be introduced to some of the major debates the world economy faces today and learn how to formulate arguments using the logic from economics.

Preclusion/ Prerequisite

Nil

Lecturer

Dr. Tingting Wu

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Course Assessment

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
In-class Participation	15%	During Lectures
In-class Quizzes	30%	Quiz 1: 7 July Quiz 2: 14 July
Group Presentation	30%	17 July
Individual Essay	25%	21 July
Total for CA:	100%	

- **In-class participation (15%):** Students will be assessed based on their participation in class discussions and in-class polls.
- **In-class quizzes (30%):** In-class quizzes will be during lectures to check students' understanding of relevant theories and concepts introduced in the lectures.
- **Group Presentation (30%):** Students will work in groups to deliver a 20-minute in-class presentation, in which they will present and discuss an assigned article. Each group must submit their presentation slides on Canvas before the lecture. Further details regarding the articles and submission deadline will be announced during the lectures.
- **Individual Essay (25%):** The Individual Essay is an independent task. Students will analyze a phenomenon using class concepts. They may choose from pre-selected topics by the lecturer or select their own. The essay (max 3,000 words) must be submitted on Canvas by the deadline.

Course Topics

Week	Day	Topic	Session Activities
1	Tuesday, 30 th June	Thinking Like an Economist	Lecture + Discussion
	Wednesday, 1 st July	The Rational Economics	Lecture + Discussion
	Thursday, 2 nd July	The Irrational Us	Lecture + Discussion
	Friday, 3 rd July	The Beauty of the Market	Lecture + Discussion
2	Tuesday, 7 th July	Are you happy?	In-class Quiz 1; Lecture + Discussion
	Wednesday, 8 th July	Love in Economics	Lecture + Discussion
	Thursday, 9 th July	The Altruistic Man	Lecture + Discussion
	Friday, 10 th July	The World of Crime	Lecture + Discussion
3	Tuesday, 14 th July	A Manual Guide to Get Rich	In-class Quiz 2; Lecture + Discussion
	Wednesday, 15 th July	Rich and Poor in an Unequal World	Lecture + Discussion
	Thursday, 16 th July	Artificial Intelligence and Economics	Lecture + Discussion
	Friday, 17 th July	What can we do then?	Group Presentation

- Minor adjustments might be made.

Reference and selected Reading List

Students do not need to purchase any textbooks. Reading materials, such as journal articles and excerpts from economics books, will be posted on Canvas.

Sample readings include, but are not limited to, selected chapters from the following books and journal articles:

The Armchair Economist, Simon and Schuster, Landsburg, S. E. (2012).

The Undercover Economist, Oxford University Press, Harford, T. (2006).

Freakonomics, Harper Perennial, Levitt, S. D., & Dubner, S. J. (2005).

Thinking, Fast and Slow, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kahneman, D. (2011).

Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness, Yale University Press, Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein (2008)

Poor Economics, A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty, PublicAffairs, Adhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo (2011)

The Logic of Life: The Rational Economics of an Irrational World. Random House. Harford, T. (2008).

Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty. New York: Crown Business, Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. A. (2012).

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases: Biases in judgments reveal some heuristics of thinking under uncertainty". *science*, 185(4157), 1124-1131.

Acemoglu, David; Laibson, David; List, John. "Do companies like Uber make use of the invisible hand?" *Microeconomics*, 2nd edition, 2018. pp. 157-160.