With the rise of global capitalism, economic forces have come to play a defining role in our lives. Indeed, one might claim that no facet of our existence is free from economic demands. Despite the overwhelming importance of economic forces in our decisions and actions, our understanding of what constitutes an economy remains underdeveloped. By investigating the nature of economy, as well as some of the perennial questions of economics, we can perhaps come to a better understanding of ourselves and the world in which we live.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Walden, Henry David Thoreau.
The Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith.
Selected Writings, Karl Marx.
Introducing Liberation Theology, Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff.

VISUAL TEXTS

The Ad and the Ego
Advertising and the End of the World
Affluenza
Escape from Affluenza
Globalization and Human Rights
Frontline: The Global Crisis
The Debt Game: Who Owes Whom

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your success in this class will depend upon regular class attendance—which involves more than your physical presence—as well as keeping up on the assigned reading. However, while regular class attendance and sustained reading of the assigned material are necessary conditions for success, they are not sufficient conditions for your success. The material that we will engage is not something that can be mastered by oneself nor can it be learned without patient and sustained attention. Thus, listening attentively to lectures and videos, actively participating in the process of asking and answering questions—those of the authors we will read, those of your classmates, as well as your own—and taking the time to reflect upon what you have read and heard will also be required if your are to get the most out of this class and the material that will engage us.
Your progress in this class will be assessed in several ways. There will be two informal writing assignments. The first informal writing assignment will be to keep a journal throughout the semester of your personal economy. This will be done in the style of Henry David Thoreau. You will need to account for your incomes and outlays, as well as evaluate the sources and destinations of your funds. The quality of your work on this assignment will determine 15% of your final grade. The second informal writing assignment will be to write one page synopses (approximately 300 words) of the reading assignments for each week. You are responsible for writing each of the twelve assigned synopses. However, your two lowest scores will be dropped—meaning that your grade for this assignment will be determined by your performance on ten of these synopses. Your performance on these synopses will determine 15% of your final grade. There will be three formal writing assignments. The first formal writing assignment will involve writing an essay of 4-6 pages in which you transform a word into a concept. On the basis of this work, you will make a short presentation (5-10 minutes) to the class in order to share your findings. Your performance on this assignment (both written and oral) will determine 15% of your final grade. The second formal writing assignment will be to write a critical film essay of 5-7 pages, using the work of one (or more) of the assigned authors to explore the theme of economy as it functions in a film selected from a list of films that will be provided for you. 15% of your final grade will be determined by the quality of your work on this critical film essay. Your third formal writing assignment will be to interview three persons from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds on the role of the economy in their lives as well as their understanding of what economy is. On the basis of these interviews, you will write an analysis and evaluation. Your work on this project will determine 20% of your final grade. Finally, there will be one visual assignment in which you will construct a visual argument relating to some theme in the course. Your work on this visual assignment will determine 20% of your final grade.

More detailed instructions will be given for each of these assignments in the course of the semester. No late work will be accepted. Nor will there be an opportunity for extra credit.

NOTE

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).
## PROPOSED READING SCHEDULE

### Week One:
- **1. August 28**
  - *Introduction*
  - Thoreau: pp. 3-75
- **2. August 30**
  - *“Economy”*

### Week Two:
- **1. September 4**
  - Thoreau: pp. 3-75
- **2. September 6**
  - Thoreau: pp. 77-121
  - Meet in Library
  - Synopsis #1 Due

### Week Three:
- **1. September 11**
  - Thoreau: pp. 122-145
  - *“Affluenza”*
- **2. September 13**
  - Thoreau: pp. 146-163
  - Synopsis #2 Due

### Week Four:
- **1. September 18**
  - Thoreau: pp. 164-209
  - *“Escape From Affluenza”*
- **2. September 20**
  - Thoreau: pp. 210-240
  - Word to Concept Due
  - Synopsis #3 Due

### Week Five:
- **1. September 25**
  - Thoreau: pp. 241-299
  - *“The Gift”*
- **2. September 27**
  - Thoreau: pp. 300-312
  - Synopsis #4 Due

### Week Six:
- **1. October 2**
  - Smith: pp. 104-121
  - *“The Rise of Modernity”*
- **2. October 4**
  - Smith: pp. 121-132
  - Journal Update Due
  - Synopsis #5 Due

### Week Seven:
- **1. October 9**
  - Smith: pp. 133-166
  - *“The Ad and the Ego”*
- **2. October 11**
  - Smith: pp. 167-190
  - Visual Assignment Due
  - Synopsis #6 Due

### Week Eight:
- **1. October 16**
  - Irigaray: Women on the Market
  - *“Advertising and the End of the World”*
- **2. October 18**
  - Marx: pp. 83-95
  - Synopsis #7 Due
Week Nine:
1. October 23 Marx: pp. 95-104  “Globalization and Human Rights”  Synopsis #8 Due
2. October 25 Marx: pp. 175-195

Week Ten:
1. October 30 Marx: pp. 245-262  “Questions: The Communist Manifesto”  Film Selection Due
2. November 1 Marx: pp. 262-293  Synopsis #9 Due

Week Eleven:
2. November 8 Marx: pp. 472-482  Synopsis #10 Due

Week Twelve:
2. November 15 Boff and Boff: pp. 22-42

Week Thirteen:
1. November 27 Boff and Boff: pp. 43-65  “Hospitality”  Synopsis #12 Due
2. November 29 Boff and Boff: pp. 66-95

Week Fourteen:
1. December 4 Class Discussion  Personal Journals
2. December 6 Class Discussion  Film Reviews

Week Fifteen:
1. December 10 Class Discussion  Interviews  Portfolio Due
2. December 12 Class Discussion
Instructions for Reading Synopses

Each Thursday you are responsible for a synopsis of the reading for the week. One important goal of this synopsis is to aid in comprehension and retention of the text. Your synopsis should not be a topic by topic recounting of the reading—indeed, you may find that such a recounting would require more than the 300 word limit. Rather, you should attempt to summarize what you take to be the main point(s) of the reading. This should be done without the use of (extensive) quotation. Thus, you are to render in your own words what you take to be the important themes/ideas of the text.

Length:
* 300 words (use the word count function on your computer and list the length at the end of your essay);

Font and Size:
* Courier 10 point;

Style Sheet:
* You must, of course, type and double space your essay (not space-and-a-half);
* You may not right justify your essay.

Some General Advice:
* As you read, mark important passages, ideas, etc. in your book—it is quite difficult to find those passages, ideas, etc. later if you have not indicated where they are.
* As you read, keep a notebook of your reflections—this may help to locate the most important themes and should be of aid in future assignments.
* You must organize your essay into a coherent series of paragraphs;
* Do not confuse these often confused words: its is a third person possessive pronoun; it’s is the conjunction of it and is; its’ is not a word. Thus, the first says that something belongs to something else as in: “The idea of democracy has its force in its historical success.” The second says that something is, as in: “Plato hates democracy because it’s (i.e., it is) rule by the mob.” One way to avoid this problem, or temptation if you will, is never to write the conjunction it’s. You will always know you have the right word if you do this because you will never have an apostrophe;
* Attempt to make transitions from one set of ideas to another or to relate ideas in an argument or explication;
* You must indent each paragraph;
* You must not put a return between paragraphs;
* Avoid using contractions (do not use “don’t”);
* Proofread your essay. Do not go from the printer to my desk. Read your essay aloud to catch obvious errors. If possible, have a classroom mate read your essay. If you find mistakes after printing the final copy, then make corrections with a black pen.
Word to Concept Instructions

For this assignment you are to write an essay (of 4-6 pages) in which you transform a word into a concept. To do this, you will first turn to the Oxford English Dictionary. There you will find a detailed conceptual and historical analysis of the word you will be working to transform into a concept. You will supplement your findings from the OED by turning to two or three other well-respected sources from diverse disciplines. (One of the goals of this assignment is to help you think through the multiple perspectives people have on the word/concept you are investigating, and to think through why people have so many different perspectives.) Next, you will round out your transformation of word into concept by sharing your own considered reflections—these may include an evaluation of what you have learned, additional comments on the word/concept, a synopsis of your findings in which you illustrate the important similarities and differences across disciplines, etc. Finally, you will share these findings through an oral presentation of 5-10 minutes in length. For this presentation, you must have a well designed one page handout summarizing your findings for your listeners.

Your essay should be accompanied by a cover page with the following: a cool title, your name, the name of this class, due date, semester and year, my name.

Photo Essay Instructions

You are to construct a visual argument relating to one of the words/concepts from the previous formal writing assignment—it need not be the word/concept you worked with previously. To do this, you will create a photo essay. Thus, for this assignment you will need a camera (any kind will do—and don’t forget that black and white photography may be more appropriate for some or all of your project). After obtaining a camera, develop a plan—in terms of subject matter, possible photos, type of film, schedule for photographing and developing, etc.

Your photo essay must include between 7 and 10 photographs. Each photograph should be accompanied by a short paragraph which situates it in respect to other aspects of your essay. In addition to this, you must write an overall guide (of approximately 600 words) to your essay that will explain how you hope your viewers will view what you have created.

In terms of format, your overall guide should be placed at the beginning of your essay in order to introduce and direct the viewer/reader. Your photos should follow this guide and be arranged in such a way that each photo is accompanied by its explanatory paragraph. Unlike other assignments, all text for this assignment should be single spaced and right justified. You may use whatever font you deem appropriate.

Your photo essay should be accompanied by a cover page with the following: a cool title, your name, the name of this class, due date, semester and year, my name.
Films and Videos for Review

1. Roger and Me
2. The Big One
3. It's a Gift
4. Cabeza de Vaca
5. The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit
6. Fight Club
7. The Grapes of Wrath
8. My Fair Lady
9. Norma Rae
10. The Spitfire Grill
11. Modern Times
12. Ghandi
13. Dead Poets Society
14. The Mission
15. Antonio's Line
16. The New Age
17. The Organizer
18. The Whistle at Eaton Falls
19. The Money Tree
20. Clearcut
21. Wilhelm Reich

Relevant Web Sites

http://www.walden.org/society/  (The Thoreau Society)
http://www.newdream.org
http://www.slnet.com/default.asp  (Simple Living Network)
http://www.zmag.org  (Z Magazine)
http://www.adbusters.org  (Adbusters)
http://www.thismodernworld.com  (Tom Tomorrow)
http://www.economist.com  (The Economist)
http://www.forbes.com  (Forbes Magazine)
http://www.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/index.html  (Archive—History Economic Thought)
http://www.socialistworker.org  (Socialist Worker)
http://www.commercialalert.org  (Commercial Alert)
http://www.imf.org  (International Monetary Fund)
http://www.aig.org
http://www.worldbank.org  (World Bank)
http://www.worldbank.org/gender  (GenderNet)
http://www.whirledbank.org
http://www.worldbunk.org
http://www.un.org  (United Nations)
Instructions for Film Essays

Each student will be required to write an essay the subtitle of which (i.e., the title after the colon) is "Reflections on Economy After Viewing ___________" where the blank is filled with the title of the film you are using as the basis for your essay. The film must be one that is drawn from the list provided with your syllabus—or one that is pre-approved by the instructor. The film might not be explicitly concerned with economy or economics. However, you will use its references to and concern with economy as a point of departure on some theme(s) that relate(s) to our study of economy.

As our class progresses, we add finer detail to many of the themes that relate to the concept of economy. Each text we read answers for us questions about economy, while no doubt raising others we had not yet considered.

Your film essay will be based on your allowing some film to comment on economy and/or raise new issues in this respect. That is to say, as you watch the film take notes that reflect themes and issues relating to economy. With these themes and issues in hand, you will write an essay dealing with them. You will make reference to the way the film treats these issues, the way some one or more thinkers we have read treats them, and to the way you make sense of them.

The key to this essay is to make certain that you do not write a film review. You must refrain from writing at any length about the plot in a scene-by-scene way. You must write as if the reader will have seen the film and is interested in issues of economy (but is not in our class). Consequently, she wants to read to learn about economy. What you have to show her is how watching the film under discussion gives all of us a fruitful way to get at themes and issues relating to economy. Then you must, by quoting some text(s) we have read, give her a deeper understanding of economy that reflects your position.

Length:
* 1500-2000 words (use the word count function on your computer and list the length at the end of your essay);

Due Date:
* 6 December 2001;

Sources:
* The works we have read together (or have discussed in class);

Font and Size:
* Courier 10 point;

Cover Page:
* Cool title that has a colon (:) followed by a descriptive title I have provided, your name, the name of this class, due date, semester and year, my name;

Style Sheet:
* You must, of course, type and double space your essay (not space-and-a-half);
* You must underline titles of books and to show italics of any kind;
* You must use quotation marks for the titles of essays;
* You may not use bold or italics, even on the title page;
* You may not right justify your essay.

Some General Advice:

* You must organize your essay into a coherent series of paragraphs;
* Do not write class-specific or professor-specific essays. Make your essay one that appears as an academic essay and not a response to an assignment. That is to say, your audience is an educated general reader who stands to learn some details from you concerning economy. Thus, do not write sentences that begin: "As we discussed in class..." or "according to Professor Pluhacek...";
* Do not confuse these often confused words: its is a third person possessive pronoun; it's is the conjunction of it and is; its' is not a word. Thus, the first says that something belongs to something else as in: "The idea of democracy has its force in its historical success." The second says that something is, as in: "Plato hates democracy because it's (i.e., it is) rule by the mob." One way to avoid this problem, or temptation if you will, is never to write the conjunction it's. You will always know you have the right word if you do this because you will never have an apostrophe;
* Make certain you use transitions from one set of ideas to another or to relate ideas in an argument or explication;
* You must indent each paragraph;
* You must not put a return between paragraphs;
* Avoid using contractions (do not use "don't");
* Proofread your essay. Do not go from the printer to my desk. Read your essay aloud to catch obvious errors. If possible, have a classroom mate read your essay. If you find mistakes after printing the final copy, then make corrections with a black pen.

This is only a partial list. Remember that all the traditional rules of academic writing apply to this essay.