

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



ECON3550 Critical Analysis of Market Economies

[30h] 3.5 credits

This two-yearly course is taught in 2007-2008, 2009-2010,...

Teacher(s): Christian Arnsperger
Language: English
Level: Third cycle

Aims

This course belongs to the group of critical courses aiming at complementing the technical education offered to our graduate students with a more philosophical, methodological and historical reflection. It should help students to get a broader perspective in an age of specialization and emphasis on technical skills.

A student having taken the course should be able to discuss in a profound way on the conceptual bases of the notion of market, and on the advantages and drawbacks, both from the economic and ethical perspectives, of competition.

Main themes

The general topic of the course can be summarized in one question: Does a market economy promote or destroy freedom ? Starting from the libertarian point of view which -on the basis of a specific notion of negative freedom -unambiguously answers " yes ", we will then explore two alternative ethical positions: one which mitigates the libertarian enthusiasm by introducing an alternative notion of freedom (freedom to achieve) but still offers a qualified " yes " ; and one which moves towards a resolute " no " by advocating yet another notion of freedom (freedom from alienation or freedom from economic violence).

Our aim will be to arrive at a clear answer to the question, at least at a clear formulation of the precise content of the question; through the reading of texts and the collective discussion of their content in class. One key issue, of course, will be to decide which notion of freedom we want to advocate in the end, and how the notion we focus on determines the way we try to answer the question.

Content and teaching methods

Preliminary discussion: The connection between " market " and " capitalism "

1. The libertarian approach : Freedom from encroachment
2. The " freedom to achieve " challenge: An ambiguous acceptance of the market logic
3. The marxist denunciation : The market as a tool of entrenched injustice

The course will be organized as a seminar in which the instructors interact with the students in a lively discussion. This does not mean, of course, that the reading list is optional. The requirement is to read all the texts scheduled for each session and to be able to summarize their content as well as to participate very actively in the discussion.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Prerequisite : None

Evaluation : Based on a written essay. The essay will be defended orally, and this will be the opportunity to test the student's knowledge of the course material.

Support : Reading list.

Other credits in programs

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| ECGE3DS/AC | Diplôme d'études spécialisées en économie et gestion (Master (3.5 credits) in business administration) (audit et contrôle de gestion) | Mandatory |
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