

European Economics

Objectives

Requires students with maturity and intellectual curiosity. It is designed to encourage independence of thought. The goal is that the students will form their own opinions by integrating what they have read by a dialectic process of reasoning and hypothesis testing, rather than memorising from books. The essence of such a system is that the students take the initiative on the assigned topics and their own term paper. Its success depends on what the students understand, rather than on the efforts of the lecturer.

Description

discussion topics are:

- How do you think the terrorist attacks in New York will affect your countries and the world economy? Do you think it spells the end of an era in terms of political-economic hegemony of the rich countries?
- Do you think globalisation is a recent or the acceleration of a previous phenomenon? Is it good or bad for your country and the world's poorest countries? Who wins, who loses from globalisation? Or does everyone win?
- Why is it so difficult for Turkey to balance the budget or to reduce inflation?
- Europe and Asia's populations are ageing rapidly. What are the consequences for your generation and your children?
- Do you think privatisation is a good way of improving efficiency and getting more value for tax payers' money? Would you extend your views to health, education and prison services?

Each student will be assigned to a group presentation a topic (3-4 students per topic - preferably on a topic on which they have little background to be fixed on the first day!). Thus, each student would participate in a group presentation and a reflection on what are the main issues raised by the subject. A written exposé is not required - but a plan and summary of the main ideas. All other students would also participate in explaining what they understand from the exposé and whether they agree or disagree.

Four general topics are proposed:

Topic 1: What is the economic outlook for Europe in the medium to long-term? How will an ageing population change this outlook? How critical is this in the context of public finance constraints?

Topic 2: Is Keynesian economics dead in the Economic and Monetary Union? Why is unemployment so persistently high in Europe? Does the welfare state need to be reformed? How should it be done?

Topic 3: What are the sources of economic growth? Why do growth rates differ so

radically between countries? How important are institutions? Why have the transition countries (Russia vs China) (or Argentina and Chile) had such differing results? Does trade and economic growth inevitably lead to democratisation? How can economic growth be raised?

Topic 4: Economic growth in Emerging Market Economies (EMEs) and world poverty. Are free market economic policies, free trade, FDI and globalisation the solution to EMEs' problems ranging from Afghanistan to Zaire?