University of Colorado

ECONOMICS 4999, SECTION 3,
SPRING 2002

Global Issues for the Third
Millennium

Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 2:00 pm

Economics Bldg. Room 2

Professor John P. Powelson


It is suggested that each student prepare a folder in your word processing system plus a file folder in your filing cabinet for each of the following topics, in which to save articles and notes. Articles may be saved from the Internet
and put into your word-processing folder, and/or they may be clipped or Xeroxed and physically put into your filing cabinet. Please also keep files on the following countries or geographic areas: China, Japan, Russia, Nigeria, Argentina, Mexico, and the European Union. It is suggested that you file away your class notes in one or the other of these files.

Whenever the professor finds an article suitable as the focus for discussion in any meeting of the class, he will post that article on his web page, so that students may have read it before class and be ready with questions or comments. Please check the web page daily: http://spot.colorado.edu/~powelson, and click on the link, “Assignments.” Students are encouraged to select additional articles for discussion.

At the beginning of each class, the professor will give a background talk (approximately 20-30 minutes) on a topic that has been selected for the day’s discussion. It is suggested that you take notes and file them away.

You are on your own to discover the articles on each topic in addition to those selected by the professor. You will be asked to be prepared on any of the topics in the list below, whether or not an article has been discussed in class.

For the first examination, the professor will announce certain topics (from the following list, including the countries) on which you will be expected to be up-to-date. Up-to-date means that you should know the background and be able to converse or write intelligently on the topics selected. For the second examination, you will be expected to be up-to-date on all the topics for the first
examination, plus others that the professor will announce. For the final examination, you should be up-to-date on all the topics in the list.

The list is in alphabetical order. The order in which topics will be discussed depends on when they come up in the news.

- Corporations and Antitrust Action
- Economic impact of the September 11 tragedy
- Environment (global warming, and pollution of resources)
- Ethnic or gender or other bias, and affirmative action
- European Union and Monetary System
- Financial crises and the role of the International Monetary Fund
- Globalization of the economy
- Health care
- Pensions and social security
- Population growth, worldwide.
- Poverty (both worldwide and at home)
- Welfare
- World Trade, including the World Trade Organization.

In addition to topics in the list, you should be up-to-date on economic events in China, Japan, Russia, Nigeria, Argentina, Mexico, and the European Union.

Both the list of topics and the countries may be changed as world events unfold in the news.

Discussions

To obtain the special student rate, *The Economist* requires that all students in a given course receive their issues in one package sent
to the professor. Normally this will arrive each Monday, or – if the mail is late – by Wednesday. *The Washington Post Weekly* will come to you in the mail (details in class). You may either subscribe to *The New York Times* or get it on the web, details to be given in class. Subscription sheets for *The Wall Street Journal* will be handed out in class; once you subscribe, you will be entitled to see the Interactive (web) Edition at no cost. If you rely on the Interactive Edition alone, there will be a charge. Students will be expected to be up-to-date on any topics or country articles that have appeared in the periodicals indicated. (It’s up to you to find them). *Students who miss class without an excuse, or fail to do the reading on time, will be docked points from their final grades.*

Each student is expected to have an email address.

Students are encouraged to argue with the professor, taking different positions from his. In many issues there is no right or wrong answer; you are expected to think independently. In an examination, you will be graded on how well you know the facts and defend your position, not on whether you agree with the professor or not.

**Papers and Grades**

Two one-hour examinations will be held, the first on Wednesday, February 27 and the second on Monday, April 8, plus a two-hour final examination on Wednesday, May 9, at 7:30 am. University regulations provide that if you have three examinations on that date, and this is your last, you are entitled to reschedule it, provided arrangements are made with the instructor no later than Friday, February 23.
All examinations will consist of essay questions. Each student’s minimum grade will be the average of grades on the examinations. However, students who participate well in class, by asking original or innovative questions or offering fertile policy suggestions and arguing well on them, will be rewarded by increases in grades above their minimums. This is an asymmetrical proposition, since no student will ever be downgraded for anything said in the normal class discussion. ("There is no such thing as a stupid remark or question.") Therefore, all students are urged to participate in the discussion: you have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

The one exception: A student who does not attend class regularly or do the reading regularly may have points docked from the final grade. Irregular attendance is defined as one or more absences not cleared with the professor or not caused by illness or emergency. Getting behind in the reading means that the professor has called on you to give a résumé of the reading for the day, or to ask you "What is your question on the reading for the day?" and you clearly have not done it. Summary: this is a discussion course; you cannot pass it without attending and doing the reading on time.

Any student who will be absent from class is expected to tell the professor in advance (email is OK). For emergencies and/or illnesses, tell the professor as soon as possible afterwards. Missing class is a serious matter.

Pictures

Once the class settles down (students having dropped or added), the professor would like to take individual pictures of students. He will bring a camera to class to do this, an operation that may take five to ten minutes.
Pictures help him to know students individually. If you prefer, you may bring in a picture of your own, about one inch square.

**Other information**

Students wishing further information on the professor will find it on his home page: http://spot.colorado.edu/~powelson. The present syllabus is also found on the home page, so if you need more copies, just download them. The professor may also be reached by email: john.powelson@colorado.edu, or, if you are on the Colorado network system, just type john.powelson.

Mr. Powelson does not keep regular office hours. However, he will be glad to meet students by appointment, preferably before or after class, in a nearby coffee house, or at other times by mutual convenience. Call for an appointment, at 720-304-7175. If no human answer, leave a message on the machine.

**Social Events**

Students are invited to dessert, coffee, and slide shows at the professor’s home (4875 Sioux Drive, Apartment #001, Boulder CO 80303) on either Tuesday or Wednesday, February 12 or 13 (sorry, not both dates; the space isn’t large enough). Slides of the professor’s experiences in Latin America, Africa, or Europe will be shown. Wives, husbands, dates, and significant others are also invited. Directions will be found on the professor’s web page.

In addition, all students who have survived the semester are invited to celebrate at a picnic at the Powelson cabin in Pinewood Springs (about a 45-minute drive from Boulder) on Saturday, April 13 at 1 p.m. (Rain date, April 20). There will be hiking in the woods,
swimming for the hardy ones, and just talking and visiting for everyone. Husbands, wives, dates, and significant others are also invited. Food and beverage will be provided. In case of rain on both days, the picnic will be held indoors (at the cabin) on April 20.