

**Sophomore Seminar**  
**“Buddhist Economics”**  
Prof. Clair Brown

Spring 2013 (7 meetings: Jan 22, 29; Feb 5, 12, 26; Mar 5, 12)  
Tuesday, 4 to 6 pm  
IRLE Conference Room (2521 Channing Way)

Prerequisite: a course in introductory micro economics, including Econ 1 (or equivalent) or a microeconomics course taken in high school.

Requirements:

- **Attend all seven seminar meetings.** You may miss one seminar meeting without penalty (let Prof Brown know).
- **Practice (sitting and lesson) with Anam Thubten Ripoche** at Dhyana Hall, 235 Washington Ave, Point Richmond on **Feb 3 (10-noon)**. <http://www.dharmata.org/>  
If you cannot go on this Sunday, you may do this practice on Feb 17 or Mar 3. Please let me know if you are attending an alternative date (instead of Feb 3). See information below.
- **Keep a journal** of how you see Buddhist Economics occurring or being transgressed in your daily life. You must write a page in your journal at least three times per week (min 20 pages). You will hand in a hard copy of your journal on Feb 12 and on Mar 12 (last class).
- **Write a short paper (5 pages)** that compares Buddhist Economics and Neoclassical Economics on one topic or question. An electronic file of this paper emailed to Prof Brown is due no later than **Thursday April 9, 2013** (four weeks after our last seminar meeting).

**Required Books**

*Magic of Awareness*, Anam Thubten  
*Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen

**Seminar Meetings**

1. Jan 22: Overview of Comparing Neoclassical Economics with Buddhist Economics
2. Jan 29: Practice (class) with Anam Thubten Rinpoche (to be confirmed)
- Feb 3 (10-noon) Practice (sitting and lesson) with Anam Thubten Ripoche at Dhyana Hall, 235 Washington Ave, Point Richmond on <http://www.dharmata.org/>  
Please arrange car pools, or take BART to Richmond and let me know you need a lift from BART to Dhyana Hall.  
This is SuperBowl Sunday, and game time is 3:30 pm, so no problem. Go 49ers!
3. Feb 5: What is an equitable distribution of income? What is the desired outcome for individuals consuming income (resources)?

4. Feb 12: What creates happiness? More Is Better or Giving Up Attachment
5. Feb 26: Sustainability in Economics (Prof. Richard Norgaard)
6. Mar 5: What do we get from economic growth? A global perspective vs. USA/personal perspective
7. Mar 12: What can we learn from Buddhist Economics?

Prof Brown will hold office hours at her office at IRLE on Tuesday before class, 3 to 4 pm, and by appointment. Please email her to arrange a meeting, or to ask questions and provide feedback: [cbrown@econ.berkeley.edu](mailto:cbrown@econ.berkeley.edu)

### **Readings**

You are required to do readings BEFORE class, which will be discussion (not lecture). Please note that the amount of reading you do can vary according to your knowledge and to your interests. By university guidelines, you should spend 4 hours on class work outside of seminar time (i.e., 2 hours for each hour of class time). Remember that this seminar meets for only 7 weeks, so it is “double duty” for one-half of the semester. Please let the professor know if you are having any problems with doing the reading before class, or any aspect of the class.

#### **1. Jan 22: Overview of Comparing Neoclassical Economics with Buddhist Economics**

Fill out the one-page form about your background and interests and give to Prof. Brown at class.

Before first meeting: Review your microeconomic principles of maximizing utility at  $MC=MB$ , and maximizing social welfare when markets are competitive and all costs are private and in production function (i.e., no public goods or externalities). Because students have used various books in their introductory micro, a particular book is not required. If you need to locate reading for this, please ask other students in the class or the professor.

E. F. Schumacher, “Buddhist Economics”, *Small Is Beautiful* (especially pages 3 and 4)  
<http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-ADM/schumaa.htm>

Sachs on Bhutan’s approach:

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/growth-in-a-buddhist-economy>

During first two weeks (read some before first meeting):

*Magic of Awareness*, Anam Thubten. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10. This is not a book that you can read quickly, so please read it over the first two weeks, and meditate upon each chapter. Don’t worry if you don’t understand the message, or disagree with it, you can still work with it in this seminar.

#### **2. Jan 29: Economics from a Buddhist perspective with Anam Thubten Rinpoche**

Continue reading *Magic of Awareness*

**3. Feb 5: What is an equitable distribution of income? What is the desired outcome for individuals consuming income (resources)? What is the role of inequality?**

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (read entire book if possible; make sure you read Chapters 3, 4, 5).

Anam Thubten, *The Magic of Awareness*, chapters 5, 6.

Joseph Stiglitz, NTY oped on price of inequality  
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/inequality-is-holding-back-the-recovery/?src=me&ref=general>

**4. Feb 12: What creates happiness? More Is Better or Giving Up Attachment**

Recall microeconomic consumer theory (utility maximization, with assumption that consumer has diminishing marginal utility that is always positive)

Clair Brown, *American Standards of Living 1918-1988*, ch 1 (pp 1-22)  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=ExTFM-jrONEC&q=>  
(click on book cover “image not shown”; then click on button “front cover” and scroll to first line “Economic Growth Living Standards...”, which is the first chapter)

Atlantic Article (short overview) <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/05/the-new-economics-of-happiness/257557/>

Anam Thubten, *The Magic of Awareness*, chapters 7, 8, 11, 12.

**NOTE: our seminar takes a one week break and does NOT meet on Feb 19.**

**5. Feb 26: Sustainability in Economics (Prof. Richard Norgaard)**

These readings are available on bspace, courtesy of Prof. Norgaard.

“A Coevolutionary Interpretation of Ecological Civilization”  
Richard B. Norgaard, working paper, 2010.

“Transcendancy Challenged”  
Richard B. Norgaard, chapter in *The Coming Transformation*, Yale, 2009.

“Sustainable development in a post-Brundtland world”  
Chris Sneddon, Richard B. Howarth, Richard B. Norgaard, *Ecological Economics* 57 (2006)  
253– 268

**6. Mar 5: What do we get from economic growth? A global perspective vs a USA/personal perspective**

Bhutan Gross National Happiness: <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Short-GNH-Index-edited.pdf>

Anam Thubten, *The Magic of Awareness*, chapters 13, 14.

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Chapters 2, 11.

**7. Mar 12: What can we learn from Buddhist Economics?**

Anam Thubten, *The Magic of Awareness*, chapters 15