

Dear Prospective AP Economics Students and Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to AP Economics at Yorktown High School. I hope that you will find this class to be informative and challenging. Economics is perhaps the most practical class you will take in high school because, no matter what course of study you pursue in college, and what career path you might choose in life, economics will affect you. The more understanding we have of the subject, the easier it is for us to respond to economic changes. I am proud to say that we have numerous graduates of AP Economics who have gone on to make the study of economics their college major or minor and are moving into a career path based on that study.

As for my background, I am a graduate of Yorktown High School and Valparaiso University. I graduated from Valparaiso University School of Law and practiced law in Indiana for over ten years. My Transition to Teaching programs have been through Ball State and Taylor Universities. I have been in the teaching profession in various capacities for over seven years, and this will be my sixth year teaching AP Economics. My wife and I have raised 5 children who have all moved on into their adult lives.

Since AP courses at Yorktown are intended to qualify for college credit, this class will be conducted in a fashion very similar to a college classroom. The course work is challenging and more demanding than typical high school classes. Students can expect weekly assignments which are fairly extensive, i.e. 40-75 questions per assignment. The reading requirements for the class are also greater than those of a normal high school class. Therefore, I would like to help ease the reading burden for the first semester by assigning summer reading.

One question high school students frequently ask is, "Why should I study economics"? To answer that question I think that students need an historical understanding of important economic developments in our world. Toward that end I am assigning Niall Ferguson's "The Ascent of Money" as summer reading. This book may be borrowed from a library or purchased at a book store or online. I also have a few copies available from our department inventory. I suggest that it be purchased so that you can annotate it as you read. Amazon.com lists copies new and used from around \$9 and up. Here is the publisher's information on this engaging book:

Ferguson, Niall, The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World. New York: Penguin Press. 2008

ISBN: 978-1594201929

We will discuss concepts from the Ferguson book throughout the year.

Our text is *Principles in Economics* by N. Gregory Mankiw (6th edition). You should contact me through the school e-mail account to make arrangements to pick up your textbook. I will be in the building almost every Monday and Thursday just prior to 10 a.m. and after 12 p.m. I will also be available just before 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. These are routine times I am in the building during the summer, but I also drop in frequently at other times. Let me know what works for you, and I will see what I can do to accommodate that.

You will also need to pick up and complete three homework assignments which I refer to as “study guides”. These correlate with the first three chapters of the Mankiw text. They will be due on the first day of class.

Our class is not all reading and hard work. One feature of our year of study will be a research project on poverty in the first semester which will culminate with a sock drive to benefit the Muncie Mission. There will be a significant writing requirement related to this project. Each week we will also have in-depth discussions of current economic developments in the world.

I will be in the Yorktown area most of the summer. If you need to speak with me I would suggest that you contact me by e-mail to set up an appointment around the time periods I have identified above. I will be checking my school e-mail routinely for messages. If you want to reach me, send me a note at sbrown@yorktown.k12.in.us.

I hope you have a healthy, relaxing and rewarding summer, and I look forward to working with all of you next fall.

Sincerely,

**Steve Brown
AP Economics Teacher/Assistant Football Coach
Yorktown High School**