

Economics and Finance Seminar
Basic income and other means for redistribution
Fall 2017
E4A cohort 3, climate justice

Class Meetings: Mondays 3:00 - 6:00pm, online (via Zoom)

First Class: Monday, September 11th, 2017

Final Class: Monday, December 4th, 2017

Seminar Members: Karan Kumar, Martin Sers, Claire-Helene Heese-Boutin, Douglas Baxter, David Mallery, Sam Bliss

Seminar Overview:

The seminar sets to explore a guaranteed basic income and other related means of redistribution. The seminar will explore a guaranteed basic income from the following perspectives:

- 1) Philosophical/ Moral (philosophical and moral arguments for and against a basic income, citizen's right to a living wage, Role of government, democracy and citizenship)
- 2) Economic (arguments for and against basic income as economic security, precariat class in an uncertain global economy, link between basic income and degrowth)
- 3) Ecological (basic income as an income instrument complementing the price instrument for efficient use of "natural capital")
- 4) Behavioral (Association of basic income and consumption, and reproductive behavior, Demographic argument exploring the link between basic income and population growth)
- 5) Social (As a medium towards achieving "capabilities to flourish", targeting the potential role of BI in enhancing capabilities, reducing poverty and destitution.)

Course Objectives:

Submit a review article for academic publication, that discusses the theoretical and empirical evidence surrounding the political ecological economics of a basic income, with reference to the future of welfare more broadly. (Ultimately publish the article!)

Seminar Structure:

Weekly, students will be assigned material (book chapters, journal articles, etc) to read in preparation for the seminar. Each week one student will be designated as the 'seminar leader', and is expected to give a short presentation on their assigned topic. This person will also be responsible for facilitating a group discussion, drawing on the material from the assigned readings.

Breakdown: Student Presentation > Group Discussion Period > Break > Final Paper Discussion Period

Schedule

Sept. 11th - Session 1:
The feasibility of implementing a basic income
Facilitator: Karan Kumar
Guest: None

Readings:

- 1.) Basic Income as a policy option. Policy brief, OECD, 2017.
- 2.) Guillaume, Mr Dominique M., Mr Roman Zytek, and Mr Mohammad Reza Farzin. Iran: The chronicles of the subsidy reform. No. 11-167. International Monetary Fund, 2011.

Sept. 18th - Session 2:
The healthy society: resilience thinking, relational theory, and infodynamics
Facilitator: David Mallery
Guest: Don Mikulecky (if possible)

Readings:

- 1) Coffman, J. A., & Mikulecky, D. C. (2015). Global Insanity Redux. *Cosmos and History*, 11(1), 1–14.
- 2) Folke, C. (2006). Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses. *Global Environmental Change*, 16(3), 253–267.
- 3) Mikulecky, D. C. (2006). Complexity Science As an Aspect of the Complexity of Science. Proceedings of the 51st Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences.
- 4) Salthe, S. N. (2003). Infodynamics, a Developmental Framework for Ecology/Economics. *Conservation Ecology*, 7(3).

Watch week 7 of Giampietro's Coursera course: *The Basic Concepts of Relational Analysis*
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/sustainability-social-ecological-systems>

Sept. 25th - Session 3:
The Biophysical Dimensions of Universal Basic Income
Facilitator: Martin
Guest: Robert Ayres (if possible)

Readings:

- 1) Hall, C.A.S., S. Balogh & D.J. Murphy. 2009. What is the minimum EROI that a sustainable society must have? *Energies* 2: 25–47.
- 2) Ayres, Robert.(2016) *Energy, Complexity, and Wealth Maximization*. Springer International Publishing.
 - a) Chapter 6. Relatively readable into the basic of earth-system science
- 3) Hall, C. A., Lambert, J. G., & Balogh, S. B. (2014). EROI of different fuels and the implications for society. *Energy Policy*, 64, 141-152.
- 4) Goosse, H. (2015). *Climate System Dynamics and Modelling*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1
 - a) A relatively readable description of the main components of the Climate System. I will provide the chapter for everyone.

Seminar Idea: I will add and change as necessary. The above resources represents some really good basics on energy and the high-level structure of the earth system. I want to try and develop the idea of what UBI for a sustainable society means in a biophysical context. This is certainly an out there topic but I hope it will be interesting.

Oct. 2nd - Session 4:
Basic Income Policy and Consumption Behaviour
Facilitator: Doug
Guest: N/A

Readings:

- 1) Lopez L.A., Arce, G., (2017). How does Income Redistribution Affect Households' Material Footprint? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 153(1), 515 - 527

Additional Reading:

- 1) Campbell, J., & Mankiw, N. (1990). Permanent Income, Current Income, and Consumption. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 8(3), 265-279.
- 2) Dodds, S. (2012). Redistributive taxation with heterogeneous relative consumption concerns. *The Canadian Journal of Economics / Revue Canadienne D'Economique*, 45(1), 220-246

Oct. 9th - Session 5:

Facilitator: Claire

Guest Discussant: TBD (Josephine Grey, Low Income Families Together)
Understanding Basic Human Needs in the context of strong sustainability and basic income.

Readings

- 1) Hirvilammi, Tuuli, Senja Laakso, Michael Lettenmeier, and Satu Lähteenoja. 2013. "Studying Well-Being and Its Environmental Impacts: A Case Study of Minimum Income Receivers in Finland." *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 14 (1): 134–54. doi:10.1080/19452829.2012.747490.
- 2) Lettenmeier, Michael, Satu Lähteenoja, Tuuli Hirvilammi, and Senja Laakso. 2014. "Resource Use of Low-Income Households — Approach for Defining a Decent Lifestyle?" *Science of The Total Environment* 481 (May): 681–84. doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2013.11.048.

Additional Readings

- 3) Lettenmeier, Michael, Christa Liedtke, and Holger Rohn. 2014. "Eight Tons of Material Footprint—Suggestion for a Resource Cap for Household Consumption in Finland." *Resources* 3 (3): 488–515. doi:10.3390/resources3030488.
- 4) Lukas, Melanie, Holger Rohn, Michael Lettenmeier, Christa Liedtke, and Klaus Wiesen. 2016. "The Nutritional Footprint – Integrated Methodology Using Environmental and Health Indicators to Indicate Potential for Absolute Reduction of Natural Resource Use in the Field of Food and Nutrition." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 132 (September): 161–70. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.02.070.
- 5) *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization*. 2011. http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_165750/lang--en/index.htm.

**Oct. 16th - Session 6:
Basic Income and Demographics
Facilitator: Karan
Guest: Dr. Mark Lindley**

Readings:

Andersson, Jan Otto. "Basic income from an ecological perspective." *Basic Income Studies* 4.2 (2009): 1-8.

**Oct 23rd - Session 7:
The Macroeconomics of Universal Basic Income under Steady State and Degrowth
Assumptions
Facilitator: Martin
Guest: Tim Jackson / Peter Victor**

Readings:

- 1) Chang, S. (2015). Effects of financial developments and income on energy consumption. *International Review of Economics & Finance*, 35, 28-44. doi:10.1016/j.iref.2014.08.011

**Oct. 30th - Session 8:
Financing Basic Income Policy
Facilitator: Doug
Guest: N/A**

Readings:

- 1) Bryan, J.,B. (2005). Targeted programs v the basic income guarantee: an examination of efficiency costs of different forms of redistribution, *Journal of Socio-Economics* 34(1), 39 - 47.
- 2) Boskin, M., & Sheshinski, E. (1978). Optimal Redistributive Taxation When Individual Welfare Depends Upon Relative Income. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 92(4), 589-601.

**Nov. 6th - Session 9:
Rethinking the institution of money: Local currencies, basic income and degrowth
Facilitator: Dave
Guest: Alf Hornborg (if possible)**

Readings:

- 1) Hornborg, A. (2017). How to turn an ocean liner : a proposal for voluntary degrowth by redesigning money for sustainability, justice, and resilience. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24, 623–632.
- 2) Hornborg, A. (2016). Redesigning Money to Curb Globalization and Increase Resilience. *In Global Magic: Technologies of Appropriation from Ancient Rome to Wall Street* (pp. 129–149).
- 3) Hornborg, A. (2013). Revelations of resilience : From the ideological disarmament of disaster to the revolutionary implications of (p)anarchy. *Resilience*, 1(2), 116–129.

Nov. 13th - Session 10:**Basic Income: Examining the morality and practicality of Basic Income vs Socialist Praxis and Communist Ideals****Facilitator: Claire****Guest:****Readings:****Nov. 20th - Session 11:****The job guarantee and degrowth****Facilitator: Sam****Guest: B.J. Unti****Readings:**

- 1) Blake Alcott. 2013. "Should Degrowth Embrace the Job Guarantee?" *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Degrowth: From Theory to Practice, 38 (January): 56–60. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2011.06.007.
- 2) B.J. Unti. "Job Guarantee." In Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria, and Giorgos Kallis (editors). 2014. *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era*. Routledge.

Nov. 27th - Session 12:**Decommodifying the basic income****Facilitator: Sam****Guest:****Readings:**

David Graeber. "For a new anarchism." *New Left Review*; London 13 (Jan 1, 2002): 61.

Dec. 4th - Session 13:

Analysis and synthesis workshop
Facilitator: TBD
Guest: None