

Assessment Summary

Macro & Microeconomics

2024 – 2025

The major assessment goal for economics students at Concordia Seward for the 2024-25 academic year was understanding economic issues from a Lutheran Biblical perspective. The topics and questions were chosen to support the – new for 2024 – Living Stones General Assessment Framework. The topics were reviewed and approved by the Gen Ed committee led by Dr. John Hink.

In it's 250 year history, the study of economics has been agnostic about religious faith; as one might expect from a discipline that arose from The Enlightenment in Europe. Concordia Nebraska is educating our students to recognize that the reality of Christian theology exists in the same reality as everything else in the universe. There is no separation of real, current observations and measurements of reality and spiritual, religious descriptions of reality.

Assessment Criteria

In order to be considered a success, students must perform better than average on the five questions listed on the last page of this summary. The weighted average exam score of students in the traditional delivery course of Macroeconomics (ECON 101) in the Fall '24 semester was 82.9% (a meaningful improvement over the previous year's 76.0%). Considering that last two years averages, students must score a minimum of 80% on each of the five questions to be considered better than average. Scores from the Spring semester were not included, because the instructor tried to improve instruction on the issues that were deficient in the Fall semester. This resulted in significant improvement, but the Fall semester results show what happened without extra concentration on the issues.

Christian Economic Perspective Assessment Macroeconomics (ECON 101) 2024-25 Concordia University Nebraska – Traditional Delivery (n=89)				
CHAPTER	QUESTION	% CORRECT	% BASELINE	DIFFERENCE
2	I	66%	80%	-14%
2	II	90%	80%	+10%
4	III	82%	80%	+2%
4	IV	96%	80%	+16%
34	V	93%	80%	+13%

The biggest problem that students exhibited was understanding that divine action is accompanied by human action in earthly outcomes. Many students answered that God runs a command & control economy and that humans exercise little free will (Question I). History shows that human action is sufficient to result in outcomes, but God's will and actions are a necessary basis for the outcomes to occur in the first place. God can veto or support any outcome, or simply "let it be" (*laissez faire*),

regardless of whether humans consider these outcomes to be good or bad.

To a lesser extent, some students were confused about whether Jesus took any stance that could be interpreted in economic ideological terms. Most students read the material - which emphasizes that Jesus' parables and actions cannot be interpreted with 19th century dogmas, but 18% of students answered that Jesus was either a capitalist or a socialist. That was an average result in this cohort of students and can be improved upon.

On the positive side, students understood that human abilities are gifts from God that should be used appropriately to God's teachings and that faith in money is folly compared to faith in God. The overall reaction to the Living Stones line of questioning was positive. Part of that was simply that these questions were easier to answer than technical aspects of economics for the students who read the study material and Biblical references.

Christian Economic Perspective Assessment AP Macroeconomics (Blended) 2024-25 High School – Alternative Delivery (n=13)				
CHAPTER	QUESTION	% CORRECT	% BASELINE	DIFFERENCE
2	I	100%	80%	+20%
2	II	92%	80%	+12%
4	III	85%	80%	+5%
4	IV	100%	80%	+20%
9	V	100%	80%	+20%

In the alternative delivery course, the students met all five delivery criteria. Actually, these thirteen students performed better than the traditional delivery students. The instructor quipped that he didn't think it was his own instruction, but the excellent instruction of that high school's theology department. These students demonstrated better understanding of God's necessary roll in social outcomes than the traditional delivery students. The two sets of students were similar in their understanding that economic ideologies do not apply to the Savior of the world.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The assessment criteria will be similar in the 2025-26 academic year. Although the answers to these multiple-choice questions are not difficult to grasp, the real learning took place with the class discussions that led to these results. However, there will be one change. A new question on the nature of money will be developed. The answer to the fifth question in the series is rather rote for any student who has been church-ed, as the majority of our students are. The new question will query students about debt (which is what money actually is). Debt is a considerably more nuanced issue in Christian theology and there is a vast difference between Old Testament and New Testament rules and revelations.

Assessment Questions

I. Theism is most consistent with:

- A. Socialist economics, because God treats everybody equally
- B. Market economics, because outcomes may be part of God's will**
- C. Command & Control economics, because God is in control
- D. The view that economics is a science and not simply a social study

II. Theists believe that:

- A. land resources are a gift from God, but capital comes from sinful human action
- B. risk is the product of sinful human nature and has nothing to do with God
- C. rules, regulations and taxes are all just socialist interference with God's will
- D. entrepreneurial ability is a gift from God**

III. Jesus Christ is:

- A. not to be associated with 19th century political ideologies**
- B. a capitalist, because he uses many business examples in parables
- C. a socialist, because he discourages wealth accumulation
- D. the cause of inequality in modern society

IV. In the Parable Of The Talents (Matthew 25: 14 – 30):

- A. The employer sets the low-income employee up for failure
- B. Jesus teaches us that outcomes in this life are determined at birth
- C. Jesus teaches us that we should make maximum use of the talents that we have to the glory of God**
- D. God will decide the reward, whether we think it is fair or not

V. Jesus teaches us that:

- A. Faith in money is folly, compared to faith in God**
- B. Money is evil stuff
- C. Practicing a monastic lifestyle (either nun, or monk) is the best way to serve God
- D. We should get rich first and then donate the wealth to the poor and the church