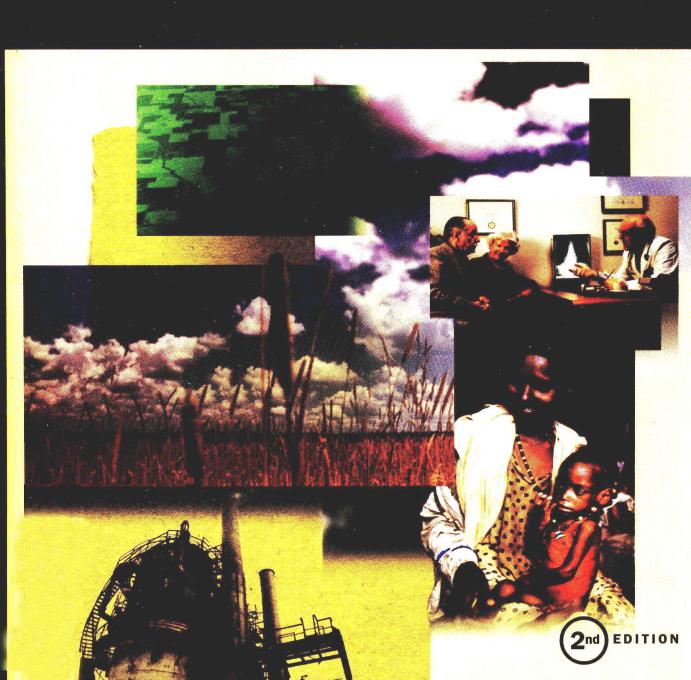
## ECONOMICS

### AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Michael R. Edgmand Ronald L. Moomaw Kent W. Olson



# ECONOMICS AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Second Edition

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### PREFACE

Economics is not just about theory. It is about the world around us. The workings of the global economy affect each of us very personally—our careers, our families, and every aspect of our lives and well-being.

This book examines major issues of both today and tomorrow that concern all of us: the crisis in health care, farm failures, housing shortages, unemployment, social security, inflation, the federal budget and balance of payments deficits, slow productivity growth, and disparities in the wealth of nations. Topics that students hear and read about daily are used as the platform from which the basic economic principles are taught.

This text has been developed with the objective of maximizing the value of the issues approach. Students develop a heightened interest in economics because principles and theories are presented as the forces underlying issues that concern them. The chapters analyze public policy and discuss alternatives for dealing most effectively with social issues and problems. Normative questions are also raised that will challenge students to increase their understanding of these underlying forces.

### NEW TO THIS EDITION

Economics and Contemporary Issues has been substantially revised for this second edition. We have updated all the data, tables and figures; examined every sentence, and carefully rewritten all those requiring clarification. We have added issues "boxes" as a means of examining various applications and examples more thoroughly, new review questions, and additional suggestions for further reading.

The second edition begins with a thoroughly revised chapter on health care, which provides the background essential for evaluating the **health care proposals** of the Clinton administration. Chapter 2 contains a new discussion of **agricultural policy**. There is a revised discussion of policy toward **illegal drugs** in Chapter 5, based on the latest data and research findings. Chapter 6 has been extensively rewritten to provide an evaluation of the benefits and costs of the

Clean Air Act. Chapter 9 has been restructured, and new sections have been added on the long-run outlook for social security and the effects of social security on the economy. The national income accounts in Chapter 10 (and elsewhere in the book) are now centered on gross domestic product, rather than gross national product. Discussions of the 1990-1991 recession and recovery have been added to Chapters 10 and 11. A section dealing with policies to reduce frictional unemployment has been added to Chapter 11. Chapter 11 also includes a discussion of **job opportunities** and **discrimination**. Chapter 12 now contains an examination of currency holdings and the underground economy. Discussions of the demise of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, President Bush's attempt to reduce the budget deficit, and President Clinton's deficitreduction plan have been added to Chapter 13. Chapter 15 has been thoroughly revised in response to the growing effort by economists to learn more about the causes and consequences of low productivity. Finally, the new discussions in Chapter 16 of the Uruguay Round, the European Community, and the North American Free Trade Agreement underscore our effort to make Economics and Contemporary Issues an up-to-date guide to the global economy.

### THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

One audience for this text is students enrolled in the growing number of oneterm issues courses offered by economics departments. This book contains enough economic theory, however, that it is appropriate for the traditional oneterm survey course in economics. It also develops enough applications that it could be used effectively as a supplement in traditional two-semester principles courses or for teaching economics in social science survey courses.

### FEATURES

Economics and Contemporary Issues has several features that we think are important elements in an issues-oriented text:

- 1. Effective aids to self-learning
- 2. A balanced treatment of microeconomics and macroeconomics
- 3. A basic theory core
- 4. Up-to-date, comprehensive, background information on each issue
- 5. Flexibility in the sequencing of topics and issues

AIDS TO SELF-LEARNING The most important aid to self-learning is clear, concise exposition of basic concepts. We have produced a book that we think is readily comprehended by beginning students. Every sentence has been read carefully by reviewers, editors, and students to eliminate confusing or excessive prose.

Students must understand more than the economists' prose; they must also master the basic vocabulary of economics. To help them do this, key terms are highlighted when they first appear, and they are defined in three places: in the body of the text, in the margin and in the end-of-the-book glossary. In addition, each chapter begins with a list of key terms that were introduced in previous chapters and should be reviewed, and ends with a list of the new key terms introduced in the chapter.

To help students master the standard tools of economic analysis, there is a judicious use of figures and tables, which are carefully explained both in the text and in accompanying captions.

Self-testing is an essential component of self-learning. Each chapter contains review questions (with answers in the *Instructor's Manual*), and a carefully constructed *Study Guide* is available. Each chapter provides a summary of important points.

MICRO-MACRO BALANCE The analysis of macroeconomic issues is often slighted in issues books. Not here. We devote 8 of 17 chapters to macroeconomic issues, including unemployment, inflation, the federal budget and balance of payments deficits, and economic growth and development. We also examine the microeconomic aspects of health care, agriculture, housing, crime, monopoly power, pollution, education, poverty, and social security.

Basic Theory Core

Both the micro and macro parts of this book are based on a small number of understandable, yet powerful, economic concepts and models.

In the microeconomics chapters, we use supply-demand and marginal analyses extensively. Models of competitive and monopolized markets are developed. The concepts of marginal benefit and marginal cost are used to illustrate market and government failures.

The basic macroeconomics tool is the model of aggregate supply and demand. Use of this versatile model enables beginning students to understand the forces that determine output, employment, and price levels, and the effects of alternative policies, without getting bogged down in the arithmetic of national income analysis.

CURRENT, COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION Our experience shows that most beginning students know very little about economic history, data, and institutions. A good issues course provides the information necessary for understanding the nature and significance of the problems addressed. If public programs are being addressed, a good course teaches students how they work.

Essential information can be provided by both the instructor and the text. Although there is no perfect substitute for an instructor who seeks new information and provides it to students, we have tried to minimize the instructor's task by providing current and comprehensive background information on all of the issues discussed in this book.

FLEXIBILITY IN SEQUENCING TOPICS This book is structured so that microeconomic issues are examined before macroeconomic issues. The macroeconomic issues can be studied first, however, because the micro chapters (1–9) have been designed to be independent of the macro chapters (10–17). Instructors who prefer to teach macro first, following an introduction to the market system, can do so by assigning Chapters 1 and 2 before beginning Chapter 10.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide some essential foundations for Chapters 3–6. Chapters 10 and 11 provide the foundation for the macro section of the book. A one-term principles survey course could be based on Chapters 1, 2, 10, and 11, and supplemented with additional chapters.

### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Students will benefit greatly from working through the *Study Guide*, prepared by Professor Kim McCoy of Central Missouri State University. Each chapter in the *Study Guide* includes a review of key terms, true/false and multiple-choice questions, and practice problems.

Instructors will find the *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank* helpful in planning their courses and preparing exams. This aid was written jointly by Professor McCoy and the text authors. This manual includes chapter overviews, learning objectives, teaching suggestions, additional references for each issue, detailed lecture outlines, answers to questions in the text, a variety of exam questions and problems, and transparency masters. A newsletter is also issued twice a year as a means of providing adopters with the latest available information.

#### Acknowledgments

This book is a joint product of three authors who are long-time colleagues—and still friends after working on this project. We did not produce this book alone, however, and we greatly appreciate the contributions of colleagues, reviewers, students, and the staff of The Dryden Press.

Professor Michael J. Applegate of Oklahoma State University merits special thanks. He wrote and revised Chapter 17, provided careful reviews of the entire text, and class-tested the first edition.

The first edition benefited greatly from the reviews of Gerald M. Lage, Andreas Savvides, and Larkin Warner (Oklahoma State University), Donald L. Bumpass (Sam Houston State University), Kim McCoy (Central Missouri State University), Pauline Fox (Southeast Missouri State University), Neil Garston (California State University, Los Angeles), Doug McNeil (McNeese State University), John Pisciotta (Baylor University), Steve Smith (Rose State College),

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In preparing the second edition, we drew on reviews provided by users of the first edition, including Michael Applegate and Steven Petty (Oklahoma State University), Ugur Aker (Hiram College), Gale Blalock (University of Evansville), James R. Frederick (Pembroke State University), Christopher Lingle (Loyola University, New Orleans), Edwin A. Sexton (Virginia Military Institute), and Ranbir Varma (Long Island University).

Former editor Liz Widdicombe insisted that Dryden was the right company for this project. We're glad that she persisted, and we gratefully acknowledge the guidance provided by the Dryden staff, including Rick Hammonds, Carla Houx, Laura Eaton, Jon Gregory, Trisha Dianne, Alison Howell, Scott Timian, Kathleen Sharp, and copy editor Janet Willen. We're still amazed by the contrast between what we started with and what came off the press.

Michael R. Edgmand Ronald L. Moomaw Kent W. Olson May 1993

### TO THE STUDENT

Welcome to *Economics and Contemporary Issues*. This book will teach you how the U.S. economy works and how economic incentives and institutions are related to important social problems. In the process of learning these things, you will also sharpen your analytical and decision-making skills.

The issues and problems you will study command the attention of concerned citizens and policy-makers. Many of them will continue to be important long after you finish this book. The principles you learn here, however, will help you to understand problems and issues that appear long after your final exam.

In examining each issue, we first develop and apply the principles that are essential for understanding its economic dimensions. Then we evaluate current and alternative approaches to dealing with the issue. The first step is the province of positive economics; the second is the focus of normative economics. Positive economics explains and predicts economic phenomena; normative economics selects social goals and evaluates alternatives according to how well they achieve these goals. This approach reflects the dual purpose of economics: to discover how the world works and to determine how it can be improved.

The basic normative questions posed throughout this book are whether government action is necessary to solve social problems and, if so, what policies should be adopted. For example, in the chapter on air pollution, we ask whether curbing pollution (a social goal) can be accomplished efficiently by the private sector alone, and we conclude that it cannot. We then evaluate existing regulations and proposed policies to determine which of them are most likely to improve the situation. We use a similar approach in examining the other issues. We hope the net result will be a greater appreciation on your part of the strengths and weaknesses of the private and public sectors.

To achieve lasting benefits from economics (and to do well in your economics course!) plan to go beyond merely memorizing this material. Learn, in addition, how to apply the principles and models developed in the text.

We have worked hard to write clearly and concisely so that you will understand the important principles and how they work. You will greatly enhance your ability to apply these principles by answering the questions at the end of each chapter and by working through the *Study Guide* to this book.

You will also progress faster and more surely in your study of economics if you master the basic vocabulary. To help you do this, we have focused on a list of essential, or key, terms. These terms are highlighted when they first appear, and they are defined in the body of the text, the end-of-book glossary, and (in almost all cases) in the margin.

Good luck in your study. May you discover, as we did, that your view of the world will never be quite the same after your first encounter with economics.

# ECONOMICS AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Second Edition

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