

Contemporary Economic Policy Issues
OLLI – University of California
Summer, 2024

4 Weeks: June 4 – June 25
Tuesdays, from 10am-noon

Instructor: Jon Haveman, Ph.D.
National Economic Education Delegation

Week 1: U.S. Economic Update

This talk will provide evidence on the current state of the U.S. economy. It will focus on a set of economic indicators, including GDP, employment, and industrial production. We will also discuss the current state of inflation and what the future prospects are. The Federal Reserve has been activity fighting inflation. We will discuss their efforts, how successful they have been, and what their policy choices might be going forward. Beyond that, I will provide evidence on whatever else of note is happening in the economy.

Week 2: The Economics of Immigration

Immigration is a policy issue with both social and economic implications. Economics has something to say about both. This presentation will shed light on several aspects of immigration that tend to overwhelm the narrative. These are: crime, government support programs, and jobs. It will also raise other issues that ought to be contemplated when developing appropriate immigration policy.

Week 3: The Federal Debt

The US federal debt has been increasing rapidly and is poised to grow more in the coming years. This deck will provide statistics on the growing debt and will provide an indication of the sources of growing debt. It will also provide a discussion of the implications for the economy and government budgets going forward. Finally, a discussion of policy options available for addressing the debt will be discussed.

Week 4: Tax Rebellions, Scoundrels, and Revenues

Taxes of one form or another have been around for nearly as long as any form of organized government. The historical evidence on taxation is informative, perhaps humorous, and often misunderstood. The Boston Tea Party didn't happen for the reason most people are taught that it happened. We will use history better understand how taxes might effectively and efficiently used to raise revenues, solve problems, and change people's behavior. In the process we will learn how taxes have caused people to shave their beards, board up their windows, and cut off the tails of their dogs.