

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S. 443

MEMORANDUM

To.....	SENATE	From.....	H. M. EVANS, REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY
Subject.....	NEW GRADUATE COURSE - ECONOMICS 807-5 - METHODOLOGY IN ECONOMIC THEORY	Date.....	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES NOVEMBER 12, 1970

This is to advise that the Executive Committee of the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies at their meeting on November 9, 1970, approved the Faculty of Arts graduate course - Economics 807-5, subject to change in title to Methodology in Economic Theory, and that the course with this change be forwarded to Senate for approval.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To Dr. J.M. Webster

From Z. Spindler, Chairman
Graduate Academic Program
Department of Economics and Commerce

Subject Economics 807--5

Date October 26, 1970

With respect to the two points raised by your note of October 13

- a. We currently have a faculty member (Dr. L. Boland) who is capable of teaching this course. In fact, it was on his initiation that the Department of Economics and Commerce - Graduate Studies Committee recommended the inclusion of this course in the calendar.

We do not anticipate that the course will draw large enrollments very often and so we do not plan to put it on very often as a regularly scheduled course. Rather, we anticipate that in most cases interested students can be accommodated by a private arrangement with Dr. Boland which would not reduce his availability for teaching other scheduled courses. In this case, little or no contact hour credit would be given to Dr. Boland for directing the course. In those cases where student demand warrants (we anticipate that this wouldn't happen more often than once every two years), the course would be regularly scheduled and full contact hour credit would be given to Dr. Boland if he teaches the course.

We want this course listed in the Calendar so that students will be aware that such a course is available and that a faculty member is ready to teach it.

- b. Given the title of the course, one may wonder if it would be more appropriate for the Philosophy Department to offer. However, the course would have to be taught by someone with a specialized knowledge in Economic Theory (at the graduate level) as well as a knowledge of the philosophy of Social Sciences. Since such a person is already a member of our Department, it seems most appropriate for our Department to offer this course. Although Dr. Boland may be willing to teach the course even if it were offered by the Philosophy Department (assuming they were willing to list that course) such an arrangement would involve obvious complications.

The course is really about the philosophical problems involved with the economic theory discipline. Those who are best qualified to discuss such problems of a discipline are those who in fact regularly work in that discipline.

If any further information is needed by the Committee at its next meeting, please notify Professor Boland or myself in advance and we will be available to answer any questions.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To.....Dr. J.M. Webster.....

From: Dr. Z. Spindler, Chairman.....
Graduate Academic Program.....
Dept. of Economics and Commerce.....

Subject.....Economics 807-5.....

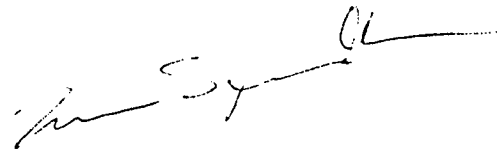
Date.....October 1, 1970.....

The following are answers to questions raised by you concerning Economics 807-5.

- 1.a) If offered as a scheduled course $n \geq 5$
- b) If offered as a reading or directed studies course $0 < n < 5$
- 2.a) The course will be offered as a scheduled course whenever sufficient numbers of students are interested in it and faculty are available but no more than once a year.
- b) It may be offered on a reading or directed studies basis by private arrangement between the individuals concerned with the approval of the DEC Graduate Studies Committee.
3. Determined by student demand and faculty availability.
4. The course will normally be offered by Dr. L. Boland. It will be counted as a 5 credit course in determining his teaching load only if it is offered on a scheduled basis in which case it may require room space. If offered as a reading course it will not affect Dr. Boland's availability to teach a normal course load (i.e. two courses per term for full-time faculty).

ZS/cmt

cc Dean Sullivan



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To.....Chairman, Senate Committee.....	From.....D. H. Sullivan, Dean.....
.....on Graduate Studies.....	Faculty of Arts.....
Economics 807-5 - SEMINAR IN	Date.....September 1, 1970.....
Subject.....PHILOSOPHY OF ECONOMIC THEORY.....	

The attached proposal for a Graduate Course in Philosophy of Economic Theory has been approved by the Faculty of Arts. Would you please bring this proposal before the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies for approval, and inclusion in the next graduate studies calendar.

Thank you.



dt

attach.

cc: Miss M. McGinn

Calendar Description

Topics to be discussed included Theories of Rationality; Social Theories involved in the Economic Concept of Equilibrium; The Role and Status of Economic Theories and Models; Methodology vs Sociology of Economics; The Role of Mathematics in Economics; Theories of Economic Knowledge; Realism of Assumptions and Value Premises in Economics.

Rationale

In every course in our program many questions arise which are fundamental in a Philosophical sense but are secondary for the purposes of the course in question. For example, does it matter that our assumptions are not realistic? Does it matter that the observed prices are administrated yet we continued to assume they are determined by equilibrium quantities? What is the Role of Rationality in making Rational decisions? Is it possible to isolate values outside our theories and treat them merely as "givens"? Is it always possible to mathematise economic ideas? Does it make a difference if our theories are merely approximations or if they are claimed to be true or false? Should we worry about verifying our theories or should we worry about their falsifiability as Samuelson suggests? Is logical validity a sufficient criterion for accepting any argument or theory? These are questions that if pursued in any standard theory course would require too much time, but can be dealt with in the context of an explicit philosophical framework. Students pursuing a Ph.D. should be equipped to deal with these questions since they are functional questions. The one way to equip them to deal with these questions is to offer them such a course.

2S/cmt
6/7/70