

Business Cycles and Growth (F001009)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	independent work	0.0h
			seminar	0.0h
			lecture	0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Heylen, Freddy EB21 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	5	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Science and Technology(main subject Chemistry)	5	A
Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject (Bio)Organic and Polymer Chemistry)	5	A
Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject Analytical and Environmental Chemistry)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject India)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Japan)	5	A
Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject Materials and Nano Chemistry)	5	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Middle East Studies)	5	A
Master of Science in Biochemistry and Biotechnology	5	A
Master of Science in Computer Science	5	A
Master of Science in Geology	5	A
Micro-credential Principles of Economics	5	A
Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Engineering – Advanced	5	A
Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Engineering – Foundations	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Science in Complementary Studies in Economics	5	A
Elective Set Economics	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

business cycle, economic growth, standard of living, employment and unemployment, price level and inflation, interest rate, exchange rate, budget balance of the government, public debt, income inequality, consumption, investment, government spending, taxes, fiscal policy, money market, monetary policy, balance of payments, labour market, labour market policy, wage formation, price setting, sustainability

Position of the course

This course studies the evolution of the macroeconomic environment in which firms and households operate. It aims at clarifying the evolution of macroeconomic activity (GDP, in the short and the long run), employment and unemployment, the aggregate price level and inflation, the interest rate, the exchange rate, the government's financial balance and public debt, the current account of the balance of payments, and the development of prices on financial markets (stock and bond prices). In doing so, we also study the mutual influence between all these variables.

Special attention is paid to the relationship between theory and facts (in different countries) as elaborated in more than 30 applications. The applications also allow to touch upon the most important macroeconomic developments and (policy) discussions of the last decades. These developments include i.a. the sharp decline of the interest rate and 'secular stagnation', the falling labour share in national income and increased inequality, the recent return of high inflation, and the macroeconomic consequences of Trump II. Policy discussions relate to the very expansionary monetary policies pursued after the 2008 financial crisis, optimal fiscal policy and public debt sustainability, ageing and the debate on working longer, the macro impact of policies aimed at ecological sustainability, and the debate on economic growth as a policy priority, etc.

Contents

- 1 Macroeconomics and macroeconomic relations (production, income and expenditures): an introduction
- 2 Determinants of macroeconomic expenditures (demand for goods and services)
 - components of total spending: household consumption, private investment, government spending and fiscal policy, net exports of goods and services.
 - the influence of the monetary sector: the money market, monetary policy and the determination of the interest rate
 - the influence of the balance of payments: international capital movements, exchange markets
 - the Mundell-Fleming model (IS-LM-BP-model)
 - the derivation of the aggregate demand curve (AD-curve) in an open economy
- 3 Determinants of aggregate supply of goods and services: the production function, the labour market and labour market policy, taxes on labour, wage formation, the use and cost of energy, price setting and the derivation of the aggregate supply curve (AS-curve).
- 4 Equilibrium of demand and supply and the explanation of macroeconomic activity, (un)employment and inflation in the short and medium run (business cycle, Phillips curve,...), with a lot of attention to the impact of macroeconomic policy.
- 5 Explanation of economic growth and income per head of countries in the long-run (Solow growth model, introduction to endogenous growth theory). Reflection on long-term developments and problems in developed economies: the declining labour share in national income and rising inequality, the discussion of economic growth as policy priority (sustainability debate).

Initial competences

Understand basic concepts of economics and economic behaviour (cost/benefit analysis, marginal principle,...)

Final competences

- 1 Define and explain the core concepts and variables of macroeconomics. Define and describe the instruments of macroeconomic policy: fiscal policy, monetary policy, foreign exchange policy, labour market policy, product market competition policy. Define the important macroeconomic relations and curves (e.g. Okun's law, IS-curve, AD-curve,...) and explain the underlying causal patterns.
- 2 Outline the core of basic theories about the behaviour of households and firms (e.g. permanent income hypothesis for private consumption, households' money demand, firm's demand for labour, wage bargaining,...) and explain the underlying causal relationships. Explain the determinants of key variables relating to the government and the international economy (e.g. the government's financial balance, the evolution of public debt, net exports of goods and services, net inflow of capital).
- 3 Master, select and adequately use relevant macroeconomic models of increasing complexity to analyse presented questions. Those questions may concern the impact of exogenous developments (e.g. an energy price increase) or policy interventions (monetary policy, fiscal policy, labour market policy,...) on various macroeconomic variables (GDP, employment, interest rates, exchange rate, government budget balance and public debt, inflation, real wages,...). Analyse, reason logically and explain the relations between the evolution of

those variables.

4 Be aware of the most remarkable macroeconomic developments during the last two decades, in particular in Belgium and Europe (but for some developments also the US, Japan, China). On the basis of cases studies in class / in the textbook, apply the theories that you studied to explain these developments or their consequences.

5 Understand and explain the importance of macroeconomic developments and macroeconomic policy choices for the welfare of society (including aspects of social and environmental sustainability). Clarify the often conflicting interests (winners and losers) and tradeoffs involved (e.g. employment or price stability). Starting from the course and provided supplementary articles from economic daily and weekly newspapers (e.g. De Tijd, The Economist), reflect on current macro developments in society and follow up on macroeconomic news.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

* Ex cathedra lectures in which theory is explained.

* Seminar: elaboration of applications and real case studies, solution of small exercises and multiple-choice questions, guided and interactive training of the theory in the two main chapters 10 and 13.

* Independent work: students can monitor their progress by solving multiple choice questions provided for each chapter via Ufora/Curios.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Macroeconomics

Indicative price: € 55

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Author : Freddy Heylen

ISBN : 978-9-46478-816-7

Number of Pages : 600

Oldest Usable Edition : 5th edition (2023)

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Additional information: * 'Mandatory' or 'optional'? Nothing is "mandatory," but the handbook contains the quasi complete content of the course. * Number of pages: +/- 550 to 600 pages are part of the course material. * Lifetime within the programme: once for business economics/engineering, several times for economics. * Lifetime after the programme: 'occasionally' on the assumption that many students later work in an environment where macroeconomic developments are the order of the day.

Type: Slides

Name: Macroeconomics / Business cycles and growth

Indicative price: € 10

Optional: yes

Language : Dutch

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: Slides are made available via Ufora the day before class. The mentioned price only applies to those who print the slides. Moreover, a lot depends on how many slides are printed on a page.

References

Blanchard, O.J., 2024, Macroeconomics, Pearson, 9th edition.

Course content-related study coaching

Students can get help, explanation and coaching from an assistant. If necessary the responsible teacher can also be contacted for additional explanation. Interactive support via Ufora (forum, online discussion). Recordings of each class will be available for one week after the session. A large set of multiple choice questions (in Dutch) can be solved by students independently. This set of multiple choice questions is provided on Ufora (Curios).

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Continuous assessment, around mid november: multiple choice test on important parts of chapters 1, 4, 6, 7 and 8 (3/20 points). The points obtained here are valid for the first examination period, not for the second.

End-of-term evaluation, first examination period:

Oral exam (with preparation in writing) and written exam (open questions). Both exams have about equal weight. Together they count for 17/20 points. One part of the written exam concerns applications. These applications have been discussed in class, or are small variants of what we discussed in class.

End-of-term evaluation, second examination period:

Oral exam (with preparation in writing) and written exam (open questions). Both exams have about equal weight. Together they count for 20/20 points.

Calculation of the examination mark

End-of-term evaluation: first examination period 85% / second examination period 100%.

Continuous assessment : 15% (only for the first examination period)