

Syllabus for the Master's course on Economic Growth

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Freie Uni Berlin Dept. of Economics, Summer semester 2025
(this version: March 31st)

(This preliminary syllabus is still subject to change.)

1 Times and Places, and general information

- Lectures and “seminaristic instruction”: We have the two weekly time slots (a) Thursdays starting April 17th, 8.30 - 10h (s.t.); (b) Fridays starting April 25th, 14-16 (c.t.). Both in room HS108a, Garystraße.
Because of some holidays and other occasions during this summer semester, we will regularly have to make use of the full Friday slot (90min). See below for a calendar listing.
- This course should be eligible in the Economics and Public Economics Master's programmes, in the module “Topics in Economic Theory”. Official numbers are WIWISS_S_10146211_25S, WIWISS_S_10146206_25S.
- For some topics it will be useful or necessary to bring a computer where you can use data-handling and/or econometrics software (meaning: a tablet may not be enough, depending on how it is equipped).
- Exam: An old-school written exam at the end.
- The language of the course is English per default. An exception may be made if all participants are native speakers of German.
- The number of participants is loosely limited to a maximum of 25. Preference will be given to those who are reaching the end of their studies (such that they would not be able to wait for the next time a similar course is offered). Note also the prerequisites for the course explained below.

2 Contact

- Office hours: Physical meetings will typically be limited to the weekly sessions, and many things may be clarified directly after class. Additionally required video meetings can also be scheduled.
- Email: sven.schreiber (at) fu-berlin.de
- Online: The course area in the Blackboard system will be used.

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3 Course requirements

- Prerequisites: You typically must have successfully completed the introductory macro and econometrics courses of the Master's programme (or equivalent). A previous Bachelor's level introductory growth course is obviously recommended but not a strict requirement.
- Follow the course actively by reading the assigned material and solving the exercises.
- You may voluntarily present certain end-of-chapter exercises of the main textbook (see below) to improve your course grade (bonus grading). If you are interested, contact me (Sven Schreiber).

4 Literature

- Main text: Aghion & Howitt (2009), *The Economics of Growth*. MIT Press.
- *Handbook of Economic Growth*, 2014. Ed. Philippe Aghion, Steven N. Durlauf, volumes 2A and 2B, Elsevier. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/handbook/handbook-of-economic-growth/vol/2/>)
- Technical e-book (free!): Klaus Wälde, *Applied Intertemporal Optimization* (2011-2020, available at <http://www.waelde.com/aio>) – this is not directly a book about growth, but about dynamic and optimization methods that are useful for many growth models.
- other material will be provided along the way

5 Course contents

5.1 Part I of the main text (Basic Paradigms of Growth Theory)

- ch. 1: Neoclassical Growth Theory
- ch. 2: The AK Model
- ch. 3: Product Variety; (and Strulik, 2024, tba)
- ch. 4: The Schumpeterian model

5.2 Green growth and climate transition

- ch. 16: Preserving the Environment; (and Burda & Zessner-Spitzenberg, 2024, tba)
- brief introduction and presentation of integrated (economic-climatic) assessment models (e.g., DICE); so-called ecological macroeconomics (DEFINE model)
- recent literature on (long-run) growth and climate: Dietz & Lanz (2025, tba), Mehrotra (2025, tba), Sahuc/Smets/Vermandel (2024, tba)

5.3 Selected issues of the growth process and policy (as time permits)

(the items of 5.2 and 5.3 not necessarily in this order)

- ch. 10: Stages of Growth
- ch. 13: Investing in Education
- The prospect of artificial intelligence (Acemoglu & Johnson, 2024, tba)
- ch. 5: Capital, Innovation, and Growth Accounting
- Critical assessment of empirical evidence on competing theories (e.g., Feng/Gao/Peng, 2022, tba)

6 Calendar

(Semester plan as of March 31st, subject to updates.)

6.1 April

- Thu 17th – seminaristic/lecture
- (Fri 18th – Good Friday)
- Thu 24th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 25th – seminaristic/tutorial

6.2 May

- (Thu 1st – labor day)
- Fri 2nd – tbc
- (Thu 8th – liberation holiday)
- Fri 9th – tbc
- Thu 15th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 16th – seminaristic/tutorial
- Thu 22nd – seminaristic/lecture
- (Fri 23rd – no class)
- (Thu 29th – Ascension Day)
- (Fri 30th – no class)

6.3 June

- Thu 5th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 6th – seminaristic/tutorial
- Thu 12th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 13th – seminaristic/tutorial
- (Thu 19th – no class)
- (Fri 20th – no class)
- Thu 26th – seminaristic/lecture
- (Fri 27th – no class)

6.4 July

- Thu 3rd – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 4th – seminaristic/tutorial
- Thu 10th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 11th – seminaristic/tutorial
- Thu 17th – seminaristic/lecture
- Fri 18th – seminaristic/tutorial