Cluster Course Addition
(New Course to UNST)
All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSUs Senate Curriculum Committee.

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION. (100 words or less)

EC 399U: A Living Wage in Portland
This course examines the concept of a living wage as applied to the local metropolitan region. We will survey the explanations of different schools of economic thought for how wage levels are set for different jobs, current economic policy suggestions for raising wages in a locality, the history of the American living wage movement, the case for and against local legislation of a living wage, analysis of potential winners and losers, and methodologies for establishing the appropriate level of a “living wage.” Students will interact with relevant local policy groups, and—if possible—establish a “living wage for Portland.”

A. DEVELOPMENT (Is the course based upon an existing course, or a new course in development?)

This is a new course in development. One element of this proposed new course is included in an existing course. EC 465/565 The Economics of Labor Markets includes a section on economic analyses of wage determination.

B. AVAILABILITY (With what regularity has been/will be the class offered?)

This class will be offered every other year, by Mary King, unless additional hiring makes it possible to offer the class more often.

C. PREREQUISITES (What are the current pre-requisites, and the suitability of SINQ as a substitute?)

This class is conceived as one without pre-requisites other than a junior level of literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and research skills.

2. COURSE OUTLINE

EC 399U: A Living Wage in Portland, taught by Mary King, Assoc. Prof., Economics

A. The Living Wage Movement

1. History of the Living Wage Movement & the Minimum Wage in the United States

2. Current Living Wage Movement & Local Representatives

3. Opposition to the Living Wage Movement & Local Representatives

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And discussion of this book by several eminent economists in the journal *Industrial Relations*.


Examples of local living wage reports, such as John Chylek’s for Eugene and the Northwest Policy Center’s Job Gap Study for Oregon, June 2001.

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.

A. CONTENT (Demonstrate that course content is of a high enough caliber to replace an old distribution-model class.)

This class is aimed at upper-division college students. It requires an analytical approach to several different theoretical perspectives; application of theory to real world issues; critical assessment of the strength of different arguments made in theoretical, political and empirical terms; and significant student responsibility for presentation of material and conduct of both library and field research.

B. UNST GOALS

(Discuss how the course will fit the four goals of Portland States’s revised general education curriculum: 1) Inquiry and Critical Thinking, 2) Communication (in various forms), 3) Diversity of Human Experience, and 4) Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility. *Note: Cluster Courses are expected to focus on the goals 3 and 4.*)

This course is designed to address all four university studies goals:

1. Inquiry and Critical Thinking: Students must critique different theoretical perspectives on the basis of logic and applicability to the world they perceive through empirical research.

2. Communication: Students must communicate their analyses and critiques in written papers and oral presentations, as well as debates in class and --potentially--in a final class report for the public on a Living Wage for Portland.

3. Diversity of Human Experience: Students will need to investigate the impact on different groups of people--distinguished by age, sex, ethnicity and educational