

## Themes

A secondary goal of this course is to stuff students' heads with detailed knowledge of economic models and empirical findings. The primary goal is to affect how students think. Thinking would be greatly improved if the subject were approached with curiosity and scepticism. In particular, try to keep in mind the following list of questions.

### Questions regarding theory:

(1) What is the question that is being asked?

What real-world phenomenon does this theory help us understand?

What real policy problem does this theory help us solve?

(2) What role does the theory play?

Does the model help to organize and communicate your(our) ideas?

Is there some discovery that might come from studying the model? What "intellectual capital" is at risk?

(3) What connection does this theory have with the real world?

Is this a property of the real world, or only a property of the model?

Aren't you taking the model too seriously to study so intensely that odd property?

### Questions regarding empirical work:

(1) What is the theoretical basis for this empirical work?

(2) What is the reason for doing this empirical work?

What can we hope to learn about the behavior of real economies from this empirical work? What "intellectual capital" is at risk?

Why bother testing a hypothesis that is only meant to be an approximation?

(3) Is the empirical work persuasive?

How could it be done better?