



LSE 100.

Research-led teaching, 'big' issues and ways of thinking

The LSE100 strategy for developing intellectual breadth and research skills

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Keynote speech, Imperial College Education Day 2011

LSE 100. Overview

- Motivation, aims and challenges
- Course strategy
- Some examples from the course
- A student perspective

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LSE 100. History and motivation

LSE100 was proposed by the Teaching Task Force (2008), which concluded that a new compulsory university-wide course could:

- Broaden students' intellectual experience whilst also deepening their critical understanding of their core disciplines
- Provide students with intellectual breadth and stronger critical skills to enable them to compete more effectively in the labour market
- Increase the distinctiveness of the undergraduate degree by building on the strengths of the LSE

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LSE 100. Aims of LSE100

- To deepen and broaden students' understanding of social scientific thinking, with its core elements of evidence, explanation and theory
- To strengthen the critical skills that underpin the study and application of the social sciences
 - Methodological skills
 - Information skills
 - Communication skills

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Methodological skills

- **Evaluate** and **interpret** evidence of different types, including documentary and other qualitative sources as well as statistical data
- **Explain** the respective roles of, and interaction between, questions, theories, evidence and explanations in the social sciences
- **Identify** the role of counterfactuals in social science explanations
- **Analyse** a contemporary social problem using theoretical perspectives from more than one social science discipline.

■ **Thinking like a social scientist**

■ **Using information effectively**

Information skills

- **Find** and **access** information relevant to social science problems, making use of good searching principles and techniques
- **Evaluate** information sources, distinguishing scholarly sources from other content and critically assessing information from internet and other sources
- **Manage** information – and reduce information overload – using online and other resources as well as appropriate citing and referencing techniques.

Communication skills

- **Construct** a coherent and persuasive argument – both orally and in writing – on a current issue in the social sciences, structuring the argument logically and supporting it with relevant evidence.
- **Plan** and **deliver** an engaging and well-argued presentation that coherently addresses both question and audience.

■ Writing and speaking critically

- **Heterogeneity**
- **Scale**
- **Feedback**
- **Incentives**

LSE 100. Course strategy - Content

- A clear **framework** of aims and skill objectives
- Emphasis on **ways of thinking** and methodological skills
- **Research-led teaching** in lectures and classes
- Focus on **real world issues**
- **Alignment** of lectures, classes and assessments

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LSE 100. Course strategy - Delivery

- **'Deep' embedding** of skill development
- **Intensive teacher training** and support
- **Active learning** in classes *and* lectures
- Structured, frequent, varied and personalised **feedback** to students; and
- **Evaluation** of impact

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LSE 100. 'Big' questions and leading researchers

Lent term

- Introductory lecture: 'Can we make poverty history?'
- 'How should we manage climate change?'
- 'Does culture matter?'
- 'Why are great events so difficult to predict?'

Michaelmas term

- 'Who caused the global financial crisis?'
- 'Is population growth a good thing?'
- 'Who should own ideas?'

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LSE 100. Course structure

- **Six three-week modules** in Lent term of the first year and Michaelmas term of the second year
- **Weekly two-hour lectures** from leading researchers
- **Special lectures** on methodology and skills
- **Weekly small, task-based classes** requiring students to:
 - Engage critically with the evidence, explanation and theory presented in lectures and classes
 - Write position pieces and do quantitative exercises
 - Argue and debate

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- Research-led teaching and 'deep' embedding
 - Exploiting the modelling role of the lecturer as researcher
 - Emphasising the role of questions in driving research
 - Highlighting the similarity between research skills and active learning skills
- Aims
 - De-mystify research
 - Decrease the artificial distinction between research skills and other transferable skills
 - Engender a sense of discovery as a key motivator for acquiring and strengthening skills

- Online diagnostic and self-paced activities
- Active teaching and learning in classes
- **Active teaching and learning in lectures**



- **Personal response systems**
 - Stimulate student engagement
 - Support 'agile' teaching
- **'Muddy Points'** via sms or Moodle
 - Help students identify study needs
 - Provide feedback for lecturer



Feedback from students *and* teachers

Students:

- Teaching quality surveys
- Staff-student liaison committee
- Quick polls, PRS, focus groups, Students' Union

Teachers:

- Weekly training sessions
- Module review session
- One-to-one meetings and mentoring

Analysis of outcomes

The meaning and measurement of
poverty: Making poverty history?

Professor Mary S. Morgan

Agenda

- “What?” versus “Why?” questions
- “Why?” questions and explanations
- Iterative nature of science: questions, theories, evidence, explanations
- **Questions** come first
- LSE tradition of social science: to change things you need **knowledge of causes** (i.e., answers to “why?”)

- **What?**
 - How many people live in poverty?
 - What counts as poor: incomes?
 - Who are poor: ages, occupations, gender, ethnic origin?
- **Why?**
 - Explanations for poverty?
 - Possible solutions?
- **Booth’s poverty survey (1880-90s)**
 - Exemplary social science, what and why questions

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Booth's findings were shocking: 30.7% of Londoners lived in poverty



Explanations?

- Fabian reformists
- versus
- Charity organisations

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Causes of poverty

Analysis of Causes of "Great Poverty" (Classes A and B).

		Per Cent.		Per Cent.
1. Loafers	—	—	60	4
2. Casual work	697	43	878	55 { Questions of employment
3. Irregular work, low pay ...	141	9		
4. Small profits.....	40	3		
5. Drink (husband, or both husband and wife).....	152	9	231	14 { Questions of habit
6. Drunken or thriftless wife	79	5		
7. Illness or infirmity	170	10	441	27 { Questions of circumstance
8. Large family	124	8		
9. Illness or large family, combined with irregular work.....	147	9		
	—	—	1,610	100

Measuring poverty

Task 2 Measuring poverty

Two widely-used current poverty indicators are the 'US\$1-a-day' measure and the Human Poverty Index. As with any measure, there are associated methodological and measurement issues. Using the Maxwell article and the supplementary resources handout, assess these two measures against the criteria given below.

	'US\$1-a-day' measure	Human Poverty Index (HPI-1)
	A measure based on an absolute poverty line of US\$1 a day. This measure is the basis for Target 1 of the United Nation's MDGs, which is to halve, by 2015, the number of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day.	A multidimensional measure of poverty also used by the UN. It is based on deprivation in three basic dimensions: health and longevity, knowledge and standard of living.
What approach to poverty does this measure reflect?		
Merits of the measure		
Limitations of the measure		

Thinking about risk

Task 2 Taking risk into account in managing climate change

As with the coin toss example, the figures below show probability distributions of the range of possible climate change losses from the business-as-usual strategy compared to a counterfactual strategy of aggressive action to reduce carbon emissions. The horizontal (x) axis shows the economic cost of climate change, expressed as a negative percentage of today's global GDP. The vertical (y) axis shows the likelihood (in percent) of an economic cost of any given size. The shaded area shows how the total probability (100%) is spread across the different possible outcomes in each case. For example, the probability distribution in Figure 1 indicates that there is, in the 'business as usual' (BAU) case, approximately a 15% chance of a loss of 5% of global GDP (where the BAU probability distribution peaks) and about a 2% chance of a loss of 15% of global GDP. The horizontal bar below each figure shows the 5%-95% range of possible losses.

From 1929 to 1933, US GDP dropped 26.5% as a result of the Great Depression. The left-hand text boxes in each chart show the probability of a permanent loss of global GDP equal to or greater than that amount.

Figure 1: Probability distribution function for the economic cost of climate change: business as usual

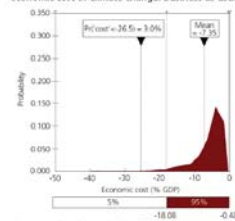
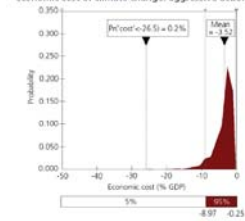


Figure 2: Probability distribution function for the economic cost of climate change: aggressive action



Illustrations based on analysis by Simon Dietz.
What is the meaning of the numbers -7.35, -18.08 and 3.0% for the 'business as usual' case and -3.52, -8.97 and 0.2% for the 'aggressive action' case?

■ Connecting evidence and explanations

Task 3 Evidence and explanations for the end of the Cold War

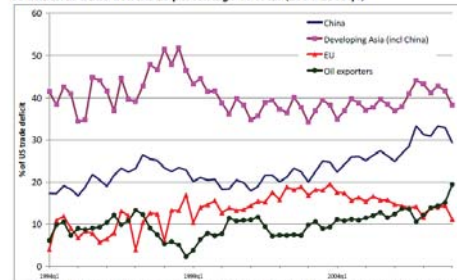
Step 1: Look at the other documents in your class reading pack. What evidence do they contain to support the three different types of explanation: agency, structure and ideas? Which specific explanations do they suggest? Note that the documents may not fit neatly into a single category, or, as in the case of the Chernyaev diaries, may contain evidence for several different explanations. As you are completing the table, consider also the advantages or disadvantages of each of these documents as scholarly sources.

Type of explanation	Evidence (source)	Specific explanation suggested by each piece of evidence
Agency		
Structure	Example: '22 million people earn less than 60 rubles' (Chernyaev, 1989)	Economic decline: USSR economic model was failing to provide decent living standards for large part of population.
Ideas		

■ Analysing causes

Task 3 Did China's trade surplus cause the global financial crisis?

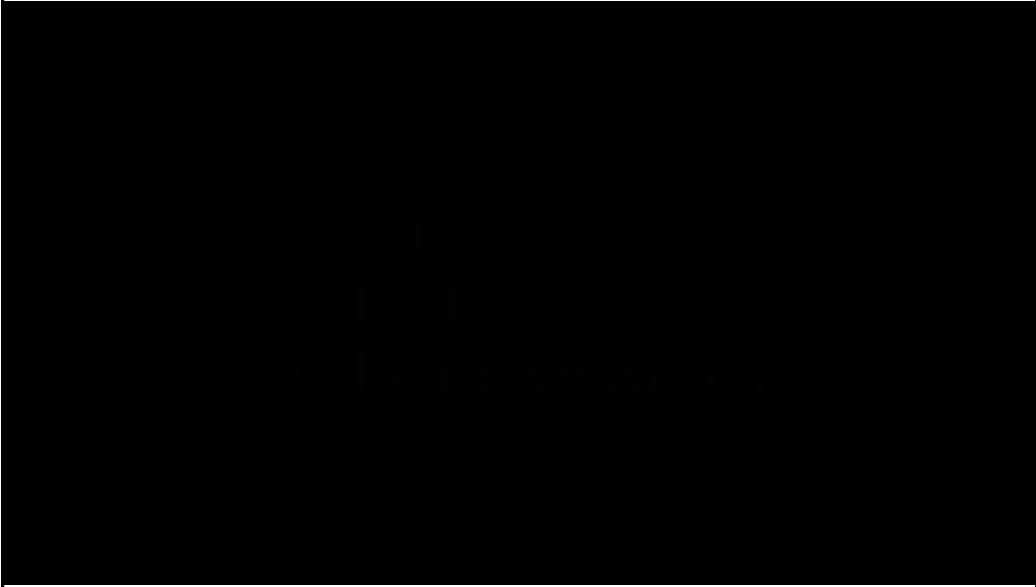
US bilateral trade deficits as percentage of total (2004–2008q1)



Source: Where in the world is Asian Thrift and the Global Savings Glut? Blog page by Professor Danny Quah <http://dqqb.blogspot.com/>

Drawing on the arguments presented in the lectures and the readings and using the above graph (of the US trade deficits with China, Developing Asia (including China), the EU and oil exporting countries) as a starting point, critically assess the following statement:

"But for China's trade surplus, the low interest rates that caused the financial crisis would not have developed."



LSE100 aims to help our students become independent and critical thinkers with the skills and breadth of thinking to deal with real world challenges

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