

[LWT/Teacher Training Seminar]

Edge Funding

Modern finance through Rudolf Steiner's eyes

*An introductory course with Dr. Christopher Houghton Budd**

12 Saturdays (9.00 to 10.00), 26 September 2010 to 9 July 2011
Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London, Nr. Baker Street Station

* Christopher Houghton Budd is an economic and monetary historian with a doctorate in banking from Cass Business School, London. He has been a student of Rudolf Steiner's work for over forty years. Combining practical entrepreneurial knowledge and academic rigour, his experience includes small-scale businesses, local politics, school governance and research into the financial markets.

'Financial markets are like the mirror of mankind, revealing every hour of every working day the way we value ourselves and the resources of the world around us [so that] it is not the fault of the mirror if it reflects our blemishes as clearly as our beauty.' – *Niall Ferguson*

'It means extinction and death to the economic body when we deprive the individual of his initiative, which must proceed from his spirit and take part in the ordering of the means of production purely for the benefit of human society.' – *Rudolf Steiner*

There is perhaps no greater challenge today than understanding modern finance. Many of today's pressures derive from the way we behave or are expected to behave in regard to finance; pressures that are only increased by lack of understanding and the bewilderment and disempowerment this can bring. This is even more the case if one sees finance as something merely outer and not as the deeply spiritual event it in reality is. By bringing together two themes normally kept apart – finance and the threshold – and by spanning from the big picture to hands-on, from comprehension to competence, this course is designed to equip participants with an appreciation of modern finance, cladding them against an often otherwise harsh environment.

Course Description

This course brings together Rudolf Steiner's conception of economics and finance (associative economics) with today's realities. No prior understanding of either is required, only a readiness to become acquainted with a world of challenging ideas!

Format

Conceived as a module within the TTS, the course comprises 12 1-hour sessions divided into [40m] presentation of material and [20m] for discussion. Participants are encouraged to create their own textbook (see below) as a way of assimilating the content but also to serve as an aide memoire for those who want to develop the subject further. (Written assignments and presentational opportunities can also be created, both of which should be of a rigorous standard.)

Textbooks

Most textbooks are used by teachers to teach from. They therefore purport to contain the truth concerning their field, conveying ideas as if they were factual, to be accepted as givens. In reality they may be anything but! In contrast, this course is conceived as a sharing with the participants of ideas about economics and finance, and assumes participants will be attentive and critical. For this reason students are asked to accompany the course with a textbook of their own creation. A record of what the participant has heard, learned or had original thoughts about, it provides a way to check against the presenter's textbook to see if what was imparted was (a) comprehensible and (b) actually got transferred, but also (c) to assess the participant's relationship to the material presented.

Accreditation

Self-accredited, the course is subject to two-way (presenter<>participant) evaluation and will be conducted mindful of the presenter's experience as a doctoral supervisor and Masters examiner.

Reading Material

There is no required reading material, but two basic texts (*available from cfae.biz/publications*) provide backgrounding:

A Human Response to Globalisation, Discovering Associative Economics – Marc Desaules
The Metamorphosis of Capitalism, Realising Associative Economics – Christopher Houghton Budd

Participants may also wish to make suggested reading of their own provided the relationship to associative economics is clear.

Costs

Included in Teacher Training Seminar fee.

Part 1: Finance and the Threshold

Providing an essential context in two regards: Rudolf Steiner's view of why human existence is the way it is today, and the idea that finance is a reflection of the human condition, both inwardly and historically.

26 September 1: Inner and Outer Aspects of Finance

Finance is not just about the settlement of debt; it is a mirror of human existence. Whether at the level of the individual or humanity as a whole, its outer expression is linked to the inner nature of life.

30 October 2: The Threshold Condition of our Times

Modern humanity finds itself at the threshold between the sense- and supersense-perceptible worlds. Understanding this is crucial to understanding finance, and vice versa.

27 November 3: The I of Man

The foundation of modern existence is the I of man. Only, the I cannot see itself except as that which through its deeds renders the world in two then puts it back together again.

18 December 4: The Threefold Nature of Life

It is in becoming aware of oneself as an I-being that one perceives the threefold nature of life, through which knowledge one is able to engage concretely with modern existence.

Part 2: Learning to speak Finance

Focusing on economic and monetary affairs, both as seen from Rudolf Steiner's point of view, and as currently conducted. It aims to bring a dry topic alive and will involve some simple accounting exercises.

8 January 5: Understanding Modern Economic Life

Threefolding has its greatest chance of traction today in the economic realm, where it also provides the ground of conventional theory and practice.

5 February 6: Three Kinds of Money

Seen not as a parallel universe, but as a nuancing of what already exists, Rudolf Steiner's conception of three kinds of money is the key to understanding today's big events, but also to linking them to one's own actions.

5 March 7: Threefold Accounting

Care needs to be taken not to wrongly oppose materialism and spiritual science. Thanks to its threefold structure, these two worlds meet in accounting.

26 March 8: Bookkeeping – Finance's equivalent to Perspective

Nowadays, as well as looking out on the world one needs to see oneself as the world sees one. For this, as the foundation and gateway to modern finance, double entry bookkeeping is to finance what perspective is to art.

Part 3: Finance and Education

Turning attention to the practical use of Rudolf Steiner's ideas in the specific field where he makes a unique contribution – the idea of a free spiritual life, especially as represented (or not!) by the funding of education.

7 May 9: The Free Spiritual Life

The key concept for understanding Rudolf Steiner's economics, as also modern life, is that of a free spiritual life, meaning that history arises through individuals enacting their destinies. This is what society should be led by.

28 May 10: Capitalising the Individual

The unfolding of human destinies is reflected in how people are funded, especially whether their initiative is capitalised. But how are we to understand this idea and, more importantly, give it practical expression?

18 June 11: For or Not for Profit?

Responsible action today presupposes 'ethical individualism', that one carries one's deeds. By splitting activity into for-profit and not-for-profit categories, today's tax regime works against this. How can this divide be overcome?

9 July 12: The Funding of Education

If education is to belong to a free spiritual life, ways need to be found that are true to this idea. What possibilities are there that are neither elitist nor statist?