



Contending Economic Theories: Neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian (MIT Press)

By Richard D. Wolff, Stephen A. Resnick



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Contending Economic Theories offers a unique comparative treatment of the three main theories in economics as it is taught today: neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian. Each is developed and discussed in its own chapter, yet also differentiated from and compared to the other two theories. The authors identify each theory's starting point, its goals and foci, and its internal logic. They connect their comparative theory analysis to the larger policy issues that divide the rival camps of theorists around such central issues as the role government should play in the economy and the class structure of production, stressing the different analytical, policy, and social decisions that flow from each theory's conceptualization of economics. The authors, building on their earlier book Economics: Marxian versus Neoclassical, offer an expanded treatment of Keynesian economics and a comprehensive introduction to Marxian economics, including its class analysis of society. Beyond providing a systematic explanation of the logic and structure of standard neoclassical theory, they analyze recent extensions and developments of that theory around such topics as market imperfections, information economics, new theories of equilibrium, and behavioral economics, considering whether these advances represent new paradigms or merely adjustments to the standard theory. They also explain why economic reasoning has varied among these three approaches throughout the twentieth century, and why this variation continues today--as neoclassical views give way to new Keynesian approaches in the wake of the economic collapse of 2008.



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Editorial Review

Review

Clear, comprehensive, and brimming with provocative insights, this new book by Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick's book is a much-needed presentation of the three theories -- neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxist -- that make up the contested terrain of contemporary economics. There is simply no other text that brings together the material assembled here. Throughout, the authors are sensitive to the causes and consequences of theoretical differences and demonstrate -- to teachers and students of economics, and to everyone else who wants to learn about economic debates in the world today -- that economic theories really do matter.

(**David F. Ruccio**, Professor of Economics, University of Notre Dame)

At a time when the world is in an economic tailspin, confusion over the 'dismal science' has never been more pronounced. By carefully describing neo-classical microeconomics and Keynesian macro-economics, and by juxtaposing both to Marxian economic theory, Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick provide an essential guide for building a more just future.

(David Fasenfest, Wayne State University; editor, Critical Sociology)

Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick treat their readers as adults who can, and in fact must, choose among theories, rather than as children who need to be spoon-fed the truth. Their clear and creative presentation of the different entry points, logics and conclusions of neoclassical, Keynesian and Marxian theories makes this by far the best comparative treatment of economics available today. Readers will have a grasp of the history of these theories as well as the latest developments in them, and will see how theories change in mutual interaction with changes in the economy. Which theory we choose to follow matters profoundly. Contending Economic Theories gives students the tools to choose for themselves.

(**Richard McIntyre**, University Honors Program Director, Professor of Economics, University of Rhode Island)

About the Author

Richard D. Wolff is Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Visiting Professor in the Graduate Program in International Affairs at the New School, New York. **Stephen A. Resnick** is Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Wolff and Resnick are the authors of *Economics: Marxian versus Neoclassical*.

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