

ECON 200: INTRODUCTION TO MICROECONOMICS

Fall 2023

Instructor:	Yael Jacobs (she/her)	Time:	TR 8:30 – 9:50
Email:	jjacobs7@uw.edu	Place:	Kane 130

Course Pages:

- <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1663407>

Office Hours: Tues. 10:00–11:00, Thurs. 4:00–5:00, Savery 334. I am also available by email, and if you want to schedule office hours at a different time or schedule a Zoom meeting, please just let me know.

Main References: We will be using selections from the following textbook.

- Karlan, Dean and Jonathan Morduch, *Microeconomics: Improve Your World*. 3e, McGraw Hill.

We will be utilizing the *MH Connect* tools associated with this text for several assignments. This software comes with a digital copy of the text. A free trial of the MH Connect software and the digital text is available for the first two weeks of the class. Reading the book is not a substitute for attending class. If you are unable to access the text or MH Connect for any reason, please contact me and we will figure out a solution, no questions asked. It is my goal that circumstance should not be a barrier to entry for this course.

Objectives: This course serves as an introduction to the principles of microeconomics, used to understand the behavior of individuals and firms operating in markets and in other strategic interactions. Topics covered include opportunity cost, scarcity, preferences and decision making, gains from trade, game theory, social preferences, institutions, efficiency, firms, market power, competition, supply and demand, labor markets, market failure, and more.

Grading Policy: Problem Sets (25%), Essays (15%), Midterm (30%), Final (30%). Grades in this class will be curved so that the median student gets a grade point between 2.8 and 3.1. As such, it is impossible to guarantee a particular grading scale for this class, as the median may be above or below what it was in the past. I will give detailed information about the distribution of grades throughout the quarter, to try to help you understand how you are doing in the class.

Problem Sets: Short problem sets will be available on Canvas each week, due at 11:59 PM Pacific Time on Tuesdays. These will be graded for correctness, but the two lowest scores will be dropped from your grade.

Essays: You will turn in two short essays this quarter. For each, you are to find a news article from a major news source (newspaper or magazine, either online or print) that was published since October 1, 2023 and related to some topic taught in class. The second article must cover a topic taught after the first essay was due. You should describe the economic issue presented within the article, and explain it using what you have learned in that half of the class. You should include at least one graph as part of your explanation. You should ensure that your article is a news article, rather than an opinion or editorial piece. The paper should be no more than two pages long, including the graph, and you must submit a copy of the article that can be read without payment (so that it can be graded). Grades will be based on how well you relate the article to course material, how clearly and correctly you summarize the issue at hand, how clearly and correctly you explain the economics behind the topic, and the clarity and correctness of your graph.

Chat GPT and Other Generative AI: Chat GPT can be useful for supplementing your effort on repetitive writing tasks. However, using generative AI to draft or complete your writing tasks in this class is unlikely to meaningfully advance your understanding of economics. For this reason, I allow the use of generative AI to revise or improve your grammar or writing skills, but not to replace your thinking about economics.

You are permitted to use AI tools to assist you in gathering information, writing drafts, and revising your writing. However, you are strongly cautioned not to let AI do your thinking for you. Also, you are expected to include a disclosure statement at the end of your assignment describing which AI tool you used and how you used it. For example: "Chat GPT was used to provide revision assistance. AI-produced content was edited for accuracy and style."

Please note that ChatGPT and other AI tools do not actually know economics, and cannot distinguish from correct and incorrect information in its training data.

Attendance Policy: It is your responsibility to keep up with the class throughout the quarter. It is highly recommended that you do this through regular attendance in class.

Exams will be in person. If you cannot attend an exam, please contact me as soon as you are aware of the potential conflict. Failure to do so will likely impact your opportunity to makeup the exam. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to make up an exam unless you have been excused from the exam before missing it.

Exceptions will be made for health, religious, and academic reasons, and accommodations may be possible for those with other challenges.

Late assignments will not be accepted.

Accommodations: Should you require disability accommodations, please contact Disability Resources for Students at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/> or 206-543-8924.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).

Academic Misconduct: All students are expected to know and to abide by the University's Academic Misconduct policies as defined at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/SGP/SPCH209.html#7> summarized at <https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>. In particular, while you are encouraged to study with each other, all assignments for this course must be completed on one's own. Exams are closed-book must be completed without accessing outside information, whether from "cheatsheets," cellphones, your computer, or other sources. Failure to abide by these policies is likely to result in failing this course, and may result in further sanctions as described by the policy. Should I believe that you cheated or plagiarized on an assignment, you will receive a "zero" grade on that assignment.

Table 1: Tentative Outline

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
9/28	Introduction to ECON 200 B	Chapter 1	
10/3	Comparative advantage and trade	Chapter 2	
10/5	Demand	Chapter 3	
10/10	Supply	Chapter 3	
10/12	Elasticity	Chapter 4	
10/17	Efficiency	Chapter 5	
10/19	Taxes, subsidies, and other interventions	Chapter 6	
10/24	Taxes, subsidies, and other interventions	Chapter 6	
10/26	Externalities	Chapter 18	
10/31	Review		Essay 1
11/2*	Midterm Exam	Chapters 1–6, 18	
11/7	TBA	TBA	
11/9	TBA	TBA	
11/14	Firms	Chapter 12	
11/16	Firms	Chapter 12	
11/21	Perfect Competition	Chapter 13	
11/23*	<i>Thanksgiving</i>		
11/28	Perfect Competition	Chapter 13	
11/30	Monopoly	Chapter 14	
12/5	Monopolistic Competition and Oligopoly	Chapter 15	
12/7	Review		Essay 2
12/12	Final Exam 10:30–11:50	Chapters 12–15	

Note: There will be no TA sections the days after those marked with asterisks