

University of Washington
Economics 200: Introduction to Microeconomics

Autumn 2017

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OH: Tuesday 10:00-12:00

Course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1116283>

I will use the website to disseminate information about the class. This course also requires access to MyEconLab, a link and instructions for signing up can be found on the course website under the “MyLab and Mastering” tab.

Course Description

Economics is the study of choices made under constraints, usually the constraints of budgets, prices, and input costs. In this class, you will learn not only a set of tools for analyzing economic markets at the “micro” or individual level, but a way of thinking about human decision making and choices in the face of scarcity. Topics covered include consumer demand, production, exchange, the price system, resource allocation, market friction and government intervention, but “economic thinking” can be applied to most social and political issues. This is not a class in which you can succeed by memorizing a set of facts. You must use the tools we will develop to explain why households and firms act the way they do.

Course Objectives

Fundamental Knowledge

- Understand and be able to use microeconomic terminology
- Understand that the highest-valued alternative foregone is the opportunity cost of what is chosen
- Understand how individuals and firms make themselves as well off as possible in a world of scarcity
- Understand how prices inform the decisions about which goods and services to produce, how to produce them, and who gets them
- Understand how government policies affect the allocation of resources in a market economy
- Understand how market structure influences the allocation of resources

Application

- Use microeconomic principles to understand and explain economic events and other social phenomena – under a competitive market structure
- Use elements of game theory to explain the strategic choices of individuals or organizations
- Critique the economic content of articles or presentations
- Appreciate the usefulness of economic reasoning in personal decision making

Textbook & Readings

The required text for this course is R. Glenn Hubbard and Anthony Patrick O'Brien's Microeconomics, 6th edition. Daily reading assignments are posted on the class website. Students are expected to have done the assigned reading before class.

Study Groups

You should form a study group with 2-4 fellow students, preferably in the same section as you. Exchange contact information and plan to get together with these students throughout the quarter to work through the homework assignments and prepare for the exams. Your study group should also be your first resource for notes and information when you miss class.

Grading

Homework 15% (due every Monday by 11:59pm)

Article Responses 7%

Class Participation 12%

Midterms 36% (2 X 18% each)

Final 30%

All grades will be updated in the gradebook.

The grades in this class are not curved. Rather, there is a (preliminary) grade scale on the basis of which we determine course grades. The grading policy of the Department of Economics sets the upper boundary for the Median grade in principles of economics courses at 3.1. We will maintain a median grade for this course in the 2.8-3.1 range. If the median grade for the course happens to be outside of 2.8-3.1 range on the preliminary grade scale, we will adjust the grade scale accordingly.

Homework

Working problems is an essential part of learning economics. To give you practice in working problems, I will assign weekly problem sets. You may work on these assignments with your study groups, but make sure you know how to do each problem yourself from start to finish, as they are the best preparation for the exams. **Weekly assignments can be found in your MyEconLab page (accessible through Canvas) and will be due every Monday night at midnight.** You will be given two chances to get the right answer, with your final score being your best of the two tries. The lowest HW score will be dropped. This policy is designed to accommodate the occasional illness or technical difficulty. No other make-ups or extra time will be given.

Writing Assignment

You will submit one writing assignments for this course. You will find a news article from a major newspaper or periodical (either in its physical format or online incarnation) that 1) was written since the beginning of the quarter, and 2) relates to a course topic taught after the previous response was due. I will not accept articles from aggregators (Google, Yahoo, AP feeds, etc), nor from blogs or opinion pieces, even if they are hosted on news sites.

You must describe, in your own words, the issues presented in the article, and then summarize how the material taught in class explains the information, events, or phenomenon in the article. This economic explanation must relate to a theoretical graph (one with some sort of equilibrium, like Supply and Demand, the PPF, etc). The graph must be drawn and included in your response.

Your response should be no more than two pages long: One page of writing and one page for your graph. Be brief! You must submit a saved or scanned copy of the article along with your

assignment. Hyperlinks are not an acceptable substitute. Writing assignments without source material will not be accepted.

Responses will be evaluated in a very simple manner, out of 5 points:

- 5 Points: Successfully and correctly a) summarizes the article (gets the facts right), b) assesses the relationship between the article and the textbook, c) includes a classroom theoretical, analytical graph, and d) relates to the appropriate class material.
- 4 Points: Didn't do one of the things necessary for a 5-point answer correctly
- 3 Points: Didn't do two of the things necessary for a 5-point answer correctly
- 2 Points: Write-up is not satisfactory, but the article is from the relevant time period, and addresses a relevant issue.
- 1 Point: Write-up is not satisfactory, and the article does not cover relevant issues
- 0 points: No response submitted.

Notice: *The University has a license agreement with Vericite, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from internet resources. By participating in this course, you are granting permission to Vericite and your instructor to evaluate your work using this software. The Vericite report received by your instructor will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.*

Class Participation

Most class sessions after the first week will include at least one opportunity to earn class participation points through performing class exercises and responding to my questions about the exercises through the Learning Catalytics system. This system is part of MyEconLab and can be accessed on any internet-capable device (i.e. your phone, tablet, or laptop). We will practice working with this system during the first class, so please be sure to bring your device (but only use it when I tell you – see below).

Class participation will be graded, but I will drop your five lowest scores to make up for absences **and technical problems**. No other make-ups will be given due to the size of the class. Under no circumstances should you submit responses for someone who is not in class. That is cheating and will be dealt with as such.

Exams

There will be two midterms and one final. Exams will be graded for clarity and accuracy. Please mark your final answer and clearly show the steps that you took to arrive at that answer. If you make any assumptions, state them up front. If it is not clear, concise, and legible, you risk receiving no credit, no matter how well you understand the material. There will be no early exams and no make-up exams given without a doctor's note or an excused absence for participation in university athletics. If you miss the final exam, you risk being given an incomplete for the class. There will also be no "cheat sheets" and no graphing calculators or internet-capable devices allowed in exams. Please buy or borrow a simple calculator for this class if you do not already have one.

Attendance

Attendance is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. If you miss class or section, please speak to someone in your study group to get the notes and consult the class website for

important announcements as well as lecture notes and class recordings. See the policy above for missed exams and other assignments.

No Laptop Policy

Due to the distraction created for other students, I have a no laptop policy while I am lecturing. Don't worry; there will be ample opportunity to use your devices during class participation times.

Disability Accommodations

Please contact me as soon as possible if you have a documented disability and need accommodations. Information for documenting your disability can be found here: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>

Student Athletes

Please approach me as soon as possible if you will be missing any important dates for this course due to your athletic activities, especially exams. You should have official documentation of these dates.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Cheating is unfair to your fellow students and annoying to me. I can, and will, pursue the strictest of disciplinary actions against anyone caught cheating. In the past, this has resulted in students receiving a zero grade for the course. Please see the Department of Economics full statement on cheating on the last page.

Course Outline

Part I: Markets (Weeks 1-4)

1. Introduction to Economic Thinking and the Market System (Chapters 1 & 2)
2. Market Equilibrium: Combining Supply and Demand (Chapter 3)
3. Elasticity and Market Responsiveness (Chapter 6)

Midterm 1: Thursday, October 19, 2017 in class

Part II: Frictions (Weeks 4-7)

1. Economic Efficiency and Market Interventions (Chapter 4)
2. Externalities (Chapter 5)
3. Gains from Trade (Chapter 9)

Midterm 2: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 in class

Part III: Foundations of Microeconomics (Weeks 8-11)

1. Consumer Choice (Chapter 10)
2. Firms and Production (Chapter 11)
3. Market Structure: Perfect Competition, Monopoly and Monopolistic Competition (Chapters 12, 14, 13)

Final: 8:30-10:20 Thursday, December 14, 2017

Exam Rules

I Exam Absence Policy

1. If you are unable to make it to an exam period due to illness or another unexpected happening, do the following:
 - i. Notify me no later than the time of the exam that you are not able to take the exam and why.
 - ii. If you missed the exam for health *reasons*, you need to show me a note issued by a medical professional documenting the reason you missed the exam.
 - iii. If there was some other reason for missing the exam come and see me to explain the reason. You will need to show appropriate documentation. Not waking up or missing your bus/plane is not an acceptable excuse.
2. If you know that you are going to be away due to a University-related activity, such as participation in an away sport or debate, let me know well in advance so that arrangements can be made.

II Exam Taking Rules

1. Material allowed during a closed book exam.
 - i. All books, papers, notebooks, etc., must be placed inside your backpack or other type of bag, which must be securely and fully closed. If you do not have a bag, you must place all your material out of your reach.
 - ii. Only a basic 4-function calculator may be used during an exam. Graphing calculators and calculators with memories will not be allowed. Sharing of calculators is not permitted.
 - iii. No other electronic devices can be accessible during the exam. Cellular phones must be turned off before entering the class and placed in your closed bag (not in your pocket). You are not allowed to use a cellular phone during an exam. Doing so will result in the termination of your exam time.
 - iv. Baseball caps and any other kinds of headgear that conceal your eyes are not permitted.
2. Attendance and special accommodation
 - i. You are not allowed to leave the room during the exam. This includes restroom use; be sure to use the restroom before the beginning of the exam.
 - ii. If you arrive late to an exam, you cannot expect to get extra time after the official end of the exam to make up for the missing time at the beginning.
 - iii. If you have a documented disability, please show me documentation from the Office of Disability Resources for Students on the first day of class, so that I can make any arrangements required for accommodations.

III Academic Honesty

1. Exams are individual work and cheating will not be tolerated. You are not allowed to look at your neighbors' exams. Doing so will result in the termination of their exam time.
2. Altering an exam before submitting it for a review of the grading, obtaining an advance copy of an examination, or arranging for a surrogate test-taker are all flagrant violations of University policy.

3. Cheating of any kind may result in expulsion from the University. The Department will follow University policy in case of academic misconduct. I strongly recommend that you review University policy at <http://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/help/academichonesty.php> . Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions, which range from a disciplinary warning to permanent expulsion from the University, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct.

The following message is forwarded to you from UW Human Resources.

UW SafeCampus

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.

- * Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- * Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- * Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
- * Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at www.washington.edu/alert

For more information visit the SafeCampus website at

www.washington.edu/safecampus