

Microeconomic Theory - Econ 400

Spring 2020

Live Zoom on Mondays

10:30-12:20

Lectures posted Wednesdays

Instructor: Melissa Knox

Office Hours: Th 2:30-3:30 pm or by arrangement

Course Description:

This course presents the conceptual foundations and analytical methods of microeconomics. It covers the basic theories of consumer and firm behavior, including demand, indirect utility, expenditure functions, cost functions, profit maximization, and perfect competition.

Course Organization:

This is primarily a traditional lecture course, with problem sets and exams.

Prerequisites:

You need to have successfully completed Econ 300 and Math 126. You should be comfortable using multivariate calculus. Please reconsider this class if you are not.

Text:

Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions, 12th edition, by Walter Nicholson and Christopher Snyder. Mindtap by Cengage is required (but free!) software for the course.

Problem Sets:

It's nearly impossible to learn the tools of economics without working problems. So, I will assign a problem set for each chapter. These assignments will be submitted in Mindtap. I strongly encourage you to complete the assignments on a weekly basis, but you should at least complete them before the quiz associated with that chapter. You will get three chances at each assignment and each attempt can only help your score, not harm it.

Process Assignments:

Each chapter's asynchronous lectures will be posted on Wednesday, and will include an exercise for you to contemplate. You will need to write out the process you would use to solve the problem (see Canvas for complete rubric). Submit this document by 11:59 pm the Sunday after the lecture is posted. We will discuss these on Monday's live lecture.

Evaluation:

Homework – 50%

Process Assignments – 15% (9 assignments, due weekly on Sunday night at 11:59 pm, drop lowest score)

Quizzes - 35% (3 quizzes total)

If X is your weighted average for the course, your final grade will be calculated as following:

Percentage	Grade
$X \geq 95\%$	4.0
$95\% > X \geq 60\%$	$0.055X - 1.3$ (rounded to one decimal place)
$60\% > X \geq 50\%$	2.0
$X < 50\%$	0.0

Note: I don't expect anyone who completes all assignments to get lower than 50%.

Makeup Policy:

Due to the uncertainties involved in the current global pandemic, I will try to be as flexible as possible about makeups. Talk to me.

Course Outline:

1. Mathematical Preliminaries (NS, CH 2)
2. Preferences and Utility Maximization (NS, Chapters 3 & 4)
Quiz 1 - April 26
3. Demand Relationships and Revealed Preference (NS, Chapter 5)
4. Uncertainty and Asymmetric Information (NS, Chapter 7)
5. Production Functions (NS, Chapter 9)
6. Cost Functions and Cost Minimization (NS, Chapter 10)
Quiz 2 - May 24
7. Profit Maximization (NS, Chapter 11)
8. Partial Competitive Equilibrium (NS, Chapter 12)
Quiz 3 - June 10