

Economics 200A: Principles of Microeconomics

Fall 2018

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Office: Savery 357

Office Hours: M: 12:30-1:30 pm, W: 12-1 pm, F: 10-11 am

and by appointment

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Our course website is at:

canvas.uw.edu

Please read the following carefully:

Overall Description of the Course: Economists in general agree with the following proposition: economics is not a field of study of something particular. Rather, it is a set of tools and concepts that can be applied to understand a great number of phenomena in the economic and social sphere. We use the tools of the science of economics to study why things are and how they change when a relevant factor or force — that shapes the phenomenon under study—changes. As you read the assigned textbook for this course, attend the lectures and quiz sections, and **most importantly, practice applying the analytical tools of economics**, you will find great insights into the workings of the economy and the amazing system of coordination which regulates our everyday life. You will be able to analyze and explain a great number of interesting and important economic as well as social issues in our world. Many of these issues—part of the “conventional wisdom” believed by many—are re-examined from an in-depth and insightful perspective. As the meaning and purpose of higher education go, this should be truly a *higher* education experience!

Student Learning Goals:

The goals for your learning fall into a couple of categories:

1. Fundamental Knowledge

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

2. Application

- Use microeconomic principles to understand and explain economic events and other social phenomena
- Critique the economic content of articles or presentations
- Appreciate the usefulness of economic reasoning in personal decision making

Our respective responsibilities:

Your Instructor: my responsibilities include clear explanations of concepts and tools, inspiring and motivating you to want to master the tools and concepts that aid you to gain insight into the workings of the economy and the society you live in, and provide a clear set of expectations for your performance. I will also supervise the TA team.

Your TAs: review concepts and tools through solving problems with you in quiz sections, and review and discuss test questions. Your TAs also grade the various quizzes and the first and second exams. To preserve consistency in grading, our TA team will collectively establish the grading points for each test.

You: Learning the economic way of thinking is a demanding undertaking. This discipline requires at least 3 sets of skills from students. You need to: **i)** learn new concepts, vocabulary and essentially the language of economics. **ii)** learn to use abstract tools to model human economic behavior and **iii)** learn to apply those tools to understand the likely consequences of various forces (government policies as well as other economic, social and natural events). As such, applying the tools of economic analysis and ultimately learning the economic way of thinking requires a lot of practice. It is a great idea to form a learning group (2-4 members) among peers in your quiz section to discuss the material of the course and/or do practice problems together. **Please do not address the problems in your head only. Rather, use the concepts you learn plus the reasoning process to write out the solutions in full. The analysis uses graphs and essay writing, and it also uses a basic level of calculus and arithmetic. You should also write out some explanations about your graphical and mathematical solutions.**

It is very important to check the course website regularly. Please note that all the material that is additional to your textbook readings, as well as practice questions and answer keys for quizzes and exams, are or will be posted on the course website. The agenda and summary notes for each lecture session are also posted on the course website (under *Files* and then *Session Notes*) and it is your responsibility to look them up. If you are unsure about the date of a quiz or have other questions regarding the course material, please refer them to your peer group and seek help there first before emailing your TA.

For best results regarding your learning process and your grade, you need to engage in effective and active studying throughout the quarter (**never cram for an econ test!**). To give you an idea about how much time resources you will need, for every hour of lecture or quiz section, you should plan on spending at least two and a half hours of *effective* studying/problem solving with your peer group or by yourself. This implies that you will need at least about 12.5 hours of effective studying outside of class per week to understand and master the approach and be able to adequately address issues in principles of microeconomics. Ideally, you want to spend about 70% of your study time—outside of class—doing the practice problems carefully and writing solutions in full. The remaining 30% or so of your time can be allocated to reading and reviewing the concepts. Students should read the text prior to attending each lecture. For a quick guide on how to succeed in the course please refer to the heading “How to Study Effectively” on page 7 of this syllabus.

Below you will find information on the various ways your learning will be evaluated. For the quizzes and the first and second exams, your exam will consist of analytical, “story” problems, similar to the end of chapter problems in the text. You will be asked to analyze the effect of a change in a price, changes in other market forces, the imposition of government tax or subsidy, etc., using both graphs and analytical explanations in written form. We will also use a minimal amount of calculus and some arithmetic. **Your grade from a quiz or**

an exam depends on the **quality of your answer**. That is, your grade will be determined based on your use of an appropriate conceptual framework and the precision of your logical explanation and conclusion. A small part of the grade is allocated to correct use of grammar and composition. For examples of good versus mediocre answers to a few questions, please see “*Questions with model answers- Econ 200*” on the course website – on the homepage and also under *Files*.

Your TAs and I are the happy facilitators in your learning process. Having established the set of responsibilities for your optimal learning experience, as your teaching team, we accept and honor your personal choice of time and effort you devote to this class. In line with the “postulates of behavior” we will learn in Chapter 2, we realize that you make your decisions about your level of engagement and effort in this class based on the desire to maximize your net gains! That is, your time and effort face competing interests and you will make choices that maximize your net benefits (be it grade, satisfaction, or whatever else that constitutes your motivation for taking this and other courses). As such, we realize that as rational and informed decision makers, you will accept the consequences of your choices regarding your level of effort devoted to this course. Of course, if circumstances beyond your choice and control materialize (such as a sudden illness, an accident, etc.) that derail you from studying or taking a test on time, you have the responsibility of informing your TA as soon as possible. Your TA and I will then try to help you to the best of our ability. Please read the section on make-up exams on page 6 of this syllabus. Of the 5 quizzes in this course, you can drop one worst quiz and we’ll take grades for the 4 other quizzes and count them toward your course grade (please see the section on grading on page 6).

Textbook and Related Reading Material: Our main textbook is Principles of Microeconomics (7th ed.), by Eugene Silberberg and Gregory Ellis (published by Pearson Custom Publishing, 2013) **with MyEconlab**. This package also includes access to **Learning Catalytics**, the venue we use for the audience response questions in our lecture sessions (see the next headline and also page 4 of this syllabus for explanation). I would also recommend a cartoon text by Yoram Bauman and Grady Klein, *The Cartoon Introduction to Economics: Volume 1- Microeconomics*, (published by Hill and Wang, 2010) and *Freakonomics, A Rouge Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner (published by Morrow, 2005). If you like to purchase an earlier edition of the textbook that is fine too. The one drawback of an earlier edition is that it may exclude some of the additional problems at the end of chapters that have been added to the latest edition. Also if you buy the text second hand, you would have to purchase the access to MyEconlab separately (access to MyEconlab plus the e-book is priced at \$82.50, I believe). Please visit MyLab and Mastering tab on the Canvas course website—on left hand side of the webpage.

Use of Learning Catalytics—Audience Response System --in our Lectures:

During each lecture session, students are asked to address a few multiple choice questions to assess their learning. To answer questions, you can use any web-enabled device. This includes laptop, smartphone (iPhone, Android, Blackberry, etc.), and tablet (iPad, Kindle Fire, etc.). The audience response questions answered by students during the lectures count toward 9.5% of their course grade.

The CLUE (Center for Undergraduate Learning and Enrichment) Program:

Econ 200 is part of the CLUE Program on campus. The CLUE evening study sessions provide extra educational support for students. The CLUE dates and times for Econ 200A will be announced on CLUE website. The CLUE schedule online is at: <http://webster.uaa.washington.edu/asp/website/get-help/clue/home/>

Topics and Chapters:

1. Introduction to economics and the concepts of scarcity and opportunity cost including some examples and applications. Chapter 1
2. The postulates of human (individual) behavior and concepts of **marginal** value and demand, including some examples and applications. Chapter 2
3. Applications of the theory of demand: relative versus absolute prices and the concept of elasticity. Includes various applications of the law of demand. Chapter 3
4. Gains from exchange and derivation of the supply behavior. Includes examples and applications. Chapter 4
5. Analysis of the market (the realm where supply and demand interact) and changes in the market outcomes as forces affecting demand and/or supply change. Includes applications to the incidence of tax/subsidy and also shortages and surpluses. Chapter 5
6. Costs and production: The concepts of increasing **marginal** cost and economic efficiency. Includes examples and applications. Chapter 6
7. The Law of Diminishing **Marginal** Returns in Production, demand for factors of production and the importance of the system of property rights. Includes examples and applications. Chapter 7

Evaluating student learning:

- **Know Your Syllabus:** This is an online multiple choice assignment and it tests you on your knowledge of the important aspects of the course and the ways your learning will be evaluated. There are 7 multiple choice questions in this assignment and you have 5 minutes to complete it. It is open on Sept. 27, 12 noon and is due on Oct. 10, 11:59 pm. The grade for this assignment counts toward **0.5% of your course grade**.
- **Quizzes:** There will be 5 quizzes administered in your quiz sections on Fridays. Each quiz consists of 2 or 3 non-multiple choice questions. The maximum grade for each quiz is 30. We drop your worst quiz grade and count the rest for **20% of your course grade**. The answer key for each quiz will be on the course website by the afternoon of Friday that you take the quiz. Quizzes are non-comprehensive. Quizzes are held on the following dates:
 - Quiz # 1: Friday, Oct. 5
 - Quiz # 2: Friday, Oct. 12
 - Quiz # 3: Friday, Oct. 19
 - Quiz # 4: Friday, Nov. 16
 - Quiz # 5: Friday, Nov. 30
- **Audience Response Questions in lectures:** We will use the Learning Catalytics-- Audience Response System by Pearson Education. As mentioned before, you can use any web-based device to answer a few questions during each lecture. Each correct response to a question receives 4 points and an incorrect response receives 1 point for participation. **Audience Response Questions (ARQs) are collectively worth 9.5% of your course grade**. The questions you answer on the first day—Thursday, Sept. 27 – will not count towards your grade. This first session of ARQs will be treated as a practice run. We additionally will drop your lowest ARQ grades from **3** other lecture sessions and count the

rest towards 9.5% of your course grade. You can find your ARQ grades for each session on our Canvas course website. To get started with Learning Catalytics and also to receive support please go to:

http://help.pearsoncmg.com/learning_catalytics/student/en/Topics/lc_looking_for_help.htm

- **Homeworks from MyEconlab:** There will be a set of multiple choice questions titled “homeworks” (HWs) assigned from MyEconlab. These will be assigned approximately weekly and will be automatically graded in MyEconlab and then transferred to Canvas Gradebook. The questions in this type of assignment check your understanding of the concepts and on some occasions ask you to analyze a problem using the concepts you have learned. **Your Homework will be collectively worth 10% of your course grade.** The grade for the first HW, HW 1, will not count as part of your course grade. This first HW will act as a practice run. All HWs will be due at 1 pm on Mondays. Late HW will receive a zero grade.
- **Exams:** There will be two exams, the First Exam and the Second Exam. Both tests will be conducted in the lecture hall. The First Exam covers material from the beginning of the quarter to Thursday, October 25. The Second Exam will test you on the material from Thursday, November 1 to Tuesday, December 4. Each test consists of 5 non-multiple choice questions. You will need a calculator for some of the questions on your quizzes/tests. Please bring a simple 4-function or a scientific calculator to all your quizzes and exams. Graphing calculators are not allowed in any of the exams in this course. **Your First and Second Exams are collectively worth 60% of your grade. (Each exam is worth 30%).**

Your First Exam is held on Tuesday, Oct. 30, 8:30-9:45 am in our lecture hall.

Your Second (and last) Exam is held on Thursday, Dec. 6, 8:30-9:45 am in our lecture hall.

There is no class, quiz section, or exam after Dec. 6.

The Schedule of Readings, the in-class exam dates, and the list of problems from the textbook for Econ 200:

Week	Chapters	List of Practice Questions for the material discussed during the week
Week 1 (Sept 26-Oct. 5)	1 and 2, sections 2.1 - 2.6	Ch. 1: “Review Questions” nos. 1,2, 4, and 5 and “Problems” 1-12, 14, 19 and 20; Ch. 2: “Review Questions” 2-6 and “Problems” 1-6, 10, 15-16, 18-19, 21, 25, 29-32 [Quiz 1 held on Friday, Oct. 5]
Week 2	2 to the end and 3, sections 3.1-3.3	Ch. 2: “Review Questions” no. 8; “Problems” 13, 17, 20, 23, 27; Ch. 3: “Review Questions” nos. 1 - 4 and “Problems” nos. 1, 3-5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 22-23 and 25-30. [Quiz 2 held on Friday, Oct. 12]
Week 3	3 to the end and 4, sections 4.1-4.3	Ch. 3: “Review Questions” nos. 5-9 and “Problems” nos. 16, 20-21, 24; Ch. 4: “Review Questions” no. 1, and “Problems” nos. 1, 2, 3a, and

		4. [Quiz 3 held on Friday, Oct. 19]
Week 4	4 to the end (and Review for the First Exam)	Ch. 4: "Review Questions" 2-6, 8, and 10, and "Problems" 5-10 and 12.
Week 5	Ch. 5- section 5.1	Practice Questions for the First Exam: All the previously assigned questions (complete set of practice Qs under <i>Announcements</i> on the website) and a set of <i>Practice Questions for the First Exam</i> on the course website. For Ch. 5: "Review Questions" 1-2, and "Problems" 1-9. First Exam held on Tuesday, Oct. 30, 8:30-9:45 am
Week 6	5, sections 5.2-5.3	N/A Ch. 5: "Review Questions": nos. 3-4 and "Problems" nos. 10, and 12-18, 22-24, 26, 27, 29, 30-34, 36, and 39
Week 7	5 to the end and 6, sections 6.1-6.6 (excluding "quasi- rent")	Ch. 5: "Review Questions": Nos. 5-6 and "Problems": Nos. 19-21; Chapter 6: "Review Questions" nos. 1-5, and "Problems": Nos. 2-7, 8, 10, 14-15, 18-20, 24, 25 (parts a. and b.), and 26 (parts a. and b.) [Quiz 4 on Friday, Nov. 16]
Week 8 (Thanksgiving Week)	6 to the end and 7, section 7.1	N/A Ch. 6: "Review Questions" no. 6 and "Problems" no. 13; Chapter 7: "Review Questions" no. 1 and "Problems" no. 1; also nos. 1 and 2 from "Some Extra Questions for Ch. 7" under <i>Files</i> and then <i>Practice Questions for Exams</i> on the course website.
Week 9	7 to the end	Ch. 7: "Review Questions": nos. 2-5 and "Problems" nos. 2-5, 8-9, 11-12, 14-15. Also problem numbers 3-5 in, "Some Extra Questions for Ch. 7" under <i>Files</i> and then <i>Practice Questions for Exams</i> on the course website. [Quiz 5 on Friday, Nov. 30]
Week 10	Review for the Second Exam	Second Exam on Thursday, Dec. 6, 8:30-9:45 am Practice Questions: All the previously assigned questions (mainly from chapters 5-7) and a set of <i>Practice Questions for the Second Exam</i> on the course website.

Grading and the grade scale:

In calculating your course grade we will drop your lowest individual quiz grade and count the rest towards your grade.

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. You can find the (preliminary) grade scale for econ 200 on the course website.

Make-up Exams: We will take the best 4 quiz grades and count them towards your course grade. Therefore, any one quiz you miss, that would be the one you drop. If you miss another quiz in addition to the one you already missed, **and** present a doctor's note in reference to that quiz, we will take the average of your other quizzes and enter that average for your second missed quiz. We will only write a make-up quiz if you miss more than 2 quizzes **and if** you present documentation from the clinic that verifies you were unable to attend your quiz section and had to miss your quiz a third time. Please note that we will require both the phone number and address of the doctor/clinic in order to verify the authenticity (as well as the date) of the documentation you provide. For the First Exam, we will write a make-up again with proper documentation from a clinic or a doctor. There is no make up for the Second Exam. If you miss the Second Exam **and** have a legitimate reason with documentation, you may earn an *incomplete* grade for this course. Otherwise your will receive a grade of zero if you miss the Second Exam. In that case, we submit your course grade incorporating the zero grade you have earned in the Second Exam.

If you are on a university sports team and off to compete in a tournament, and, have a note from your coach stating that you will have to miss more than one quiz, your TA will make the appropriate provisions for you to take a make-up test (quiz and/or First Exam) as needed.

How to study effectively:

- a. Read the relevant parts of chapter(s) carefully before each lecture. Try to get a good idea of both the questions asked and the approach (the concepts and the reasoning process) to addressing the questions in the textbook.
- b. Print the Session Notes for each lecture and bring it along (or access it on your laptop during the lecture). The Session Notes are in Word form so you can easily change the margins or make more space in there to add your own notes during our lecture session. You want to pay attention and also answer a few audience response questions as well as other questions during our class session. (You are welcome to ask clarifying questions, present points of debate, etc. during class.)
- c. After the lecture, attempt the problems and make sure you fully write down the answer to each question using the relevant concepts (including the graphical analysis) and the reasoning process you have learned. In order to successfully answer a question, ask yourself the following: i) what does the question want me to address? ii) What relevant information does the question provide? iii) How do I go from the given information to the answer? You want to use the concepts and tools for thinking—that you have learned—to answer the question.

Note 1: The best way to receive a good grade in this course is for you to cultivate a desire for practicing the economic way of thinking and do the problems for each chapter/week regularly.

The less effective way of getting a good grade is to make your primary incentive for studying the material earning a good grade. Students who desire to learn and do the problems and exercises thoughtfully, will generally also receive good grades. Those who just learn enough to get a good grade may commit short cuts just to earn a grade and their grades usually do not live up to their expectations. These students may finish the quarter disappointed with their grades.

Note 2: There will be no extra papers, assignments, or other ways for you to increase your grade anytime during or after the quarter. In case you aim for a certain grade, in order to prevent the chance of a disappointingly low grade, you should aim about a 0.4 grade higher than the minimum grade you desire. For example, if you want to make sure you receive a 3.0 in this class please aim for at least a 3.4. We have no policy of assigning extra work in order to increase a grade you are not happy with once you commit yourself to attending and completing this course.

Note 3: We will not weigh any of your tests in a different manner from the general rule. [We sometimes encounter this type of request after the first exam.] Please do not ask us to possibly weigh some of your tests more or less.

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 or a scientific calculator may be used during an exam. Graphing calculators 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 bring 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.
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Academic Honesty

- 1. Exams are individual work and cheating will not be tolerated. Looking at a neighbor's exam is considered cheating. If a student is seen committing this act, they will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct on campus for a hearing. A student who may be facilitating the act of cheating will be also referred to the same office.

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. Again, a student suspected of this act may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

3. Audience Response points are part of the graded assignments in this course. Using more than one device while answering questions in the lecture is considered cheating. Students who bring their absent friend's phone or other device to class to record answers and earn grades for them will be duly penalized.

4. 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 the Dept. of Economics policy at:

<https://econ.washington.edu/policy-academic-conduct>

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 available from UW Human Resources.

UW Safe Campus

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 Night Walk 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 Safe Campus website at

www.washington.edu/safecampus