

UEP Economics for Planning and Policy Analysis Summer 2011

Instructor

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Class Meetings

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 – 12:30

Office Hours

Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:00 or by appointment (1st Floor, 44 Teele Ave.)

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide a basic understanding of economics as a tool for planning and policy analysis. Ideally, this one-semester course will help you to understand the economic context in which you work, and provide you the necessary tools for assessing policy options. The emphasis of this course will be on microeconomic policy tools, although macroeconomic issues will also be discussed.

The course will discuss economic theories and techniques that can inform current policy debates such as global climate change, health care, unemployment, and economic inequality. The class will also demonstrate the limitations of economic analysis in guiding policy making. While a variety of opinions is expected and welcomed, the class is intended to promote objective thinking based on defensible theories and valid data.

Course Website

A Blackboard course site has been developed for this class that will provide student access to general course information, all course readings (including chapters from the textbook we will use), PowerPoint slides from the lectures when available, homework sets, and other materials throughout the semester. It can be accessed from <http://blackboard.tufts.edu>. Follow the instructions on the website for Tufts students to obtain your username and password.

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on two exams and homework sets. Weekly homework sets will be assigned during the semester, due every Tuesday at the start of class. Your course grade will be determined based on the following allocation:

Exams – 30% each

Homework sets – 30%, calculated as the average grade for all six assignments

Discussion Participation / Presentation – 10%

Exams

There will be two exams during the semester, a mid-term and a final. The exams will only test material covered during that section of the course and therefore will not be cumulative. However, realize that some concepts presented during the second half of the course will build upon previously-learned material, and this knowledge of the material from the first half of the course will be needed to do well on the final exam.

Homework Sets

Homework sets are to be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Exams may be submitted in hardcopy or e-mailed to Brian. If you want, you can hand in some parts of a homework in hardcopy (such as graphs) and the rest electronically. If you anticipate that you will not be able to submit an assignment, you may contact Brian **at least one full day before it is due** for a possible extension, but realize that extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. The penalty for late homeworks is 20 points per day, including the day it is due.

Discussion Participation / Presentation

During most class meetings, some time will be set aside for discussion of one or more articles. This will allow us to interact in a discussion group / seminar format as opposed to a formal lecture. For each discussion section, a student will be assigned to be the discussion leader. The leader will present a summary of the reading(s) along with his or her reactions, including any critiques or points of agreement / disagreement. As a rough guide, the presentation might be about 10 minutes. Then the rest of the discussion session will be an open seminar with a general discussion. Note that all students are expected to have read the reading(s) prior to class, not just the presenters. Your discussion grade will be based on both your presentation and your participation in the general discussions.

Other Course Information

A proficiency in basic algebra is a prerequisite for this class. No knowledge of more advanced mathematics, such as calculus, is needed. If you need help with basic algebra beyond the available office hours, you are required to obtain such assistance on your own, such as hiring a tutor.

All students are expected to maintain a high standard of academic honesty according to the pamphlet "Academic Integrity at Tufts." While you are welcomed and encouraged to work in groups on homework assignments, all interpretations and final answers must represent your own work.

If you need accommodations due to a disability, please contact Brian as soon as possible to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Course Outline – Subject to Revision

Note: Each class meeting is divided into two sections, typically with different topics. MIC is the course textbook; these chapters as well as all other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Homework Due
July 5 (I)	Introduction	None	
July 5 (II)	Economic Activity in Context	MIC, Ch. 1	
July 7 (I)	Supply and Demand	MIC, Ch. 4	
July 7 (II)	Supply and Demand	MIC, Ch. 4	
July 12 (I)	Working with Supply and Demand	MIC, Ch. 5	HW #1
July 12 (II)	Welfare Analysis	Posted on Blackboard	
July 14 (I)	Markets without Market Power	MIC, Ch. 11	
July 14 (II)	Markets with Market Power	MIC, Ch. 12	
July 19 (I)	Corporate Power in a Global Economy	Posted on Blackboard	HW #2
July 19 (II)	Distribution: Exchange and Transfer	MIC, Ch. 9	
July 21 (I)	Consumption and the Consumer Society	MIC, Ch. 10; Posted on Blackboard	
July 21 (II)	The Core Sphere and The Public Purpose Sphere	MIC, Ch. 15; MIC, Ch. 17	
July 26 (I)	TEST #1		HW #3
July 26 (II)	Public Finance and Taxation	Posted on Blackboard	
July 28 (I)	Environmental Economics	Posted on Blackboard	
July 28 (II)	Environmental Economics	Posted on Blackboard	
Aug. 2 (I)	Climate Change Economics	Posted on Blackboard	HW #4
Aug. 2. (II)	Urban Economics	Posted on Blackboard	
Aug. 4 (I)	Urban Planning	Posted on Blackboard	
Aug. 4 (II)	Labor Economics	MIC, Ch. 13	
Aug. 9 (I)	Policy Analysis	Posted on Blackboard	HW #5
Aug. 9 (II)	Policy Analysis	Posted on Blackboard	
Aug. 11 (I)	Macroeconomic Topics	Posted on Blackboard	
Aug. 11 (II)	Macroeconomic Topics	Posted on Blackboard	