

Economics Principles for Non-Majors

Course Description and Learning Objectives

The course will combine coverage of central insights from economics and how they apply to current topics of interest. We will rely heavily on case studies that focus on applications of economic theory to these topics.

This course will be taught in an online asynchronous modality. The asynchronous format will allow you to watch videos, and immediately apply what you have learned to economic contexts. Because the material builds on itself, you will have the opportunity to view the entire course in Canvas. You should use prior videos as reference as you move through each module. The videos are searchable, allowing you to review a topic prior to watching subsequent videos. The set of weekly assessments gives you the necessary foundation to move to the next topic and module. The weekly Canvas quizzes should serve to inform you of your mastery of the course material, as they are graded immediately.

The course will culminate in a project that asks you to evaluate the economic development of several countries. In working on your answer, I encourage you to use the searchable videos to help build your understanding and make your argument.

Our Learning Objectives include:

- **Define economics and explain the important role it plays in our global society.**
- **Define microeconomics and macroeconomics and distinguish between them.**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the application of supply and demand concepts as basic microeconomic analysis tools.**
- **Explain the economic arguments for and against government intervention in the economy due to market failures such as externalities and public goods.**
- **Understand the concept of opportunity cost and how it relates to global trade.**
- **Learn and practice applying marginal analysis to decision making.**
- **Understand government policymaking, the tax system and income distribution in the economy.**
- **Learn the process of measuring income in an economy, and understand the forces behind economic growth and development.**
- **Understand the role of institutions in the differences in patterns of growth between nations.**
- **Understand how empiricism is central to the study of economics.**
- **Understand resource allocation, the role of prices, and the role of profits in a market economy.**
- **Understand the role of productivity in the determination of wages.**

Coursework and Grading

Each week you will have several videos to watch along with a reading assignment. You will be prompted to answer questions as you work through the videos. You can work through the Myeconlab assignments as you read the text. You will have weekly quizzes on the lecture videos in Canvas. The coursework will consist of lectures, textbook and case study readings, on-line homework, online participation in games and/or polls, quizzes, exams, and a writing project. The final exam is scheduled for Thursday or Friday, July 26th or 27th. Your final grade will be based on your performance as follows:

- **Online homework (myeconlab.com): 15% of your grade.**
- **Online quizzes (myeconlab.com): 15% of your grade.**
- **Writing collaboration project: 5% of your grade.**
- **Active Learning Quizzes in Videos 5% of your grade**
- **Canvas quizzes: 40% of your grade.**
- **Final Exam: 20% of final grade.**

Schedule

Week 1: Why Study Economics?

The Principles and Practice of Economics/Economic Methods and Economic Questions

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapters 1-2.

Case Studies:

1. "How Western Civilization Could Collapse," Rachel Nuwer. BBC.com, April 18, 2017.
2. "These Hilarious Charts Will Show You Exactly Why Correlation Doesn't Mean Causation," Dina Spector, Business Insider, May 9, 2014.

Optimization

"Doing the Best You Can"

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 3.

Case Studies:

1. "The Sunk-Cost Fallacy," Barry Schwartz, The Los Angeles Times, September 17, 2006.
2. "The Upside of Quitting," Stephen J. Dubner, Freakonomics Radio Podcast, September 30, 2011.

Podcast link:

<http://freakonomics.com/podcast/new-freakonomics-radio-podcast-the-upside-of-quitting/>

Full Podcast Transcript:

<http://freakonomics.com/2011/09/30/the-upside-of-quitting-full-transcript/>

Sunday: WEEKLY QUIZ IN CANVAS: see Canvas for link

Week 2: Markets

Supply and Demand/Perfect Competition and the Invisible Hand

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapters 4 and 5.

Case Studies:

1. "Here's Why an Economist Thinks We Should Consider Paying People to Give Up Their Body Parts," Rafi Letzter, Business Insider, September 28, 2016.
2. "New Legislation Encourages States to End Discriminatory 'Money Bail' Practice," Jamiles Lartey, The Guardian, July 20, 2017.
3. "Should We Legalize the Market for Human Organs?" Richard Knos, NPR.org, May 21, 2008.

Trade

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 6

Case Studies:

1. Free trade agreements, the TPP agreement, winners and losers
Kevin Granville, [The Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Deal Explained, New York Times](#), May 11, 2015.
2. "A Little Noticed Fact About Trade: It's No Longer Rising," Binyamin Appelbaum, The New York Times, October 30, 2016.

Sunday: WEEKLY QUIZ IN CANVAS: see Canvas for link

Week 3: Market Failure

Externalities and Public Goods (Market Failure)

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 7.

Case Studies:

1. "Americans Think National Parks Are Worth US \$92 Billion, But We Don't Fund Them Accordingly," Linda J. Bilmes and John Loomis, The Conversation, July 10, 2016.
2. "How to Calculate the True Cost of Energy," Brad Plumer, The Washington Post, April 25, 2012.
3. "Making Climate Agreements Work," Christian Gollier and Jean Tirole, The Economist, June 1, 2015.

Sunday: WEEKLY QUIZ IN CANVAS: see Canvas for link

Week 4: The Government and Inequality

The Government in the Economy: Taxation and Regulation, Income Distribution and Welfare Economics

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 8

Case Studies:

1. "7 Facts About Government Benefits and Who Gets Them," Derek Thompson, The Atlantic, December 18, 2012.
2. "Is Income Inequality Inevitable?" Stephen J. Dubner, Freakonomics Podcast, April 19, 2017.
3. "It's Not the Inequality, It's the Immobility," Tyler Cowan, New York Times, April 3, 2015.
4. "For Richer," Paul Krugman, The New York Times Magazine, October, 20, 2002.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/20/magazine/for-richer.html?pagewanted=all>

5. "The Upside of Income Inequality," Gary Becker and Kevin M. Murphy, aei.org, May 7, 2007.

The Minimum Wage

Markets for Factors of Production

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 9

Case Studies:

1. "Would a Higher Minimum Wage Help or Hurt Workers?" Andrew Soergel, U.S. News and World Report, March 28, 2016.
2. "The \$15 Question," Jordan Weissmann, Slate, July 6, 2017.

Sunday: WEEKLY QUIZ IN CANVAS: see Canvas for link

Week 5: Economic Growth

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 10

Case Studies:

1. "Book Review: Enrico Moretti's 'The New Geography of Jobs,'" John Tamny, Forbes, July 22, 2012.

Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?

Core Readings: Acemoglu, et. al. Chapter 11

Case Studies:

1. Ted Talk: "The Voices of China's Workers," June 2012.

Final Exam: Friday/Saturday July 26th/27th.

Course Materials

We will be reading selected chapters from D. Acemoglu, D. Laibson and J. List, Economics, Pearson, 2015. A custom version of this text is available on the myeconlab.com website for purchase. Course id is TBA. If you would like to have a copy of the textbook, any edition will work, but you will need both the micro and the macro texts. Weekly polling sessions will draw from textbook material. Weekly quizzes will draw from lecture videos.

Other Important information

My office hours will be held on zoom on Mondays at 7 p.m. (PT) and by appointment. My email address is jhgonzal@ucsc.edu. We will be using Canvas for our online question forum..

Hours Expected (PER WEEK)

Reading 4

Lecture/Quizzes 4

Pearson Homework/Quizzes 2

Review Problem Videos 2

Section 1

Studying 2

Writing Collaboration .5

Disability Accommodations

The Disability Resources Center (<https://drc.ucsc.edu/>)

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please affiliate with the DRC. I encourage all students to benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. For students already affiliated, make sure that you have requested Academic Access Letters, where you intend to use accommodations. You can also request to meet privately with me during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible. I would like us to discuss how we can implement your accommodations in this course to ensure your access and full engagement in this course.

Academic Integrity

All work must be completed independently. The homework is designed to give you multiple attempts to improve. The quizzes are taken once. Books can be used for either of those assignments. No textbooks should be used during exams. No student should be sending emails or texts to students in the class during the exam, or posting anything to piazza. The exams are timed and meant for you to complete entirely on your own. Any student that requests course materials from previous quarters is assumed to be attempting to cheat. If it is found that a student has made such a request, they will receive an F in the course.

All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the Academic Integrity Page at the Division of Undergraduate Education (<https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html>)

Title IX

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the online reporting page, applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#), and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu.

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our online reporting link.

Student Services

[Counseling and Psychological Services](https://caps.ucsc.edu/) <https://caps.ucsc.edu/>

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Student Success and Engagement Hub](https://studentsuccess.ucsc.edu/) <https://studentsuccess.ucsc.edu/>

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

[Tutoring and Learning Support](https://lss.ucsc.edu/) <https://lss.ucsc.edu/>

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

[Slug Support Program](https://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/slug-support/program/index.html) <https://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/slug-support/program/index.html>

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction. To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

[Slug Help/Technology](https://its.ucsc.edu/index.html) <https://its.ucsc.edu/index.html>

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts [https://www.ucsc.edu/help/Slug Help/Emergency Services](https://www.ucsc.edu/help/Slug%20Help/Emergency%20Services). For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, start [here](https://www.ucsc.edu/help/) (<https://www.ucsc.edu/help/>). Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.