

Syllabus, fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Yariv Fadlon.

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office hours: Monday and Wednesday between 11am and 12pm. Tuesday and Thursday between 12:30pm and 1:30pm, or by appointment. In light of the pandemic, all office hours are done via Zoom. When you login to the Zoom, you will be placed in the waiting room. The Zoom meeting address is :

<https://muhlenberg.zoom.us/j/91235842664?pwd=cXdYWk16ZlJ5R283MjA0UjJkd3JHUT09>

Meeting ID: 912 3584 2664

Passcode: 687512

Overview: ECN339 serves as an introduction to the field of labor economics. We will investigate numerous aspects of the labor market including employees' labor supply, employers' labor demand, equilibrium in the labor market, immigration, and discrimination. In addition, we will examine how different government policies affect the labor market. The course focuses on the interplay between theory and empirical evidence. As such, at the beginning of the semester we will review inferential statistics and explain how to interpret a regression.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, it is expected that students will

1. Understand how labor markets function.
2. Be able to conduct an economic analysis and predict how changes in government policies affect the labor market.
3. Interpret regression estimates. Be able to evaluate economic theories and economic arguments using empirical evidence.
4. Craft an argument and support it with theoretical explanation/empirical evidence.
5. Develop skills for reading, writing, and presenting arguments and theories in economics.

The learning objectives in this course are consistent with the learning objectives of the economics program at Muhlenberg College. The general objectives of the economics program are:

1. Understand how market prices emerge from the decisions of individuals and institutions.
2. Explain why markets sometimes attain and sometimes fail to attain an efficient allocation of resources.

3. Understand how opportunity cost guides decision making.
4. Understand how specialization and exchange can improve economic well-being.
5. Understand the structure and performance of national economies and the government policies that influence that performance.
6. Understand the tradeoff between efficiency and equality.
7. Use empirical evidence and statistical techniques to evaluate an economic argument.
8. Critically evaluate economic policies from various perspectives.
9. Communicate effectively about economic concepts and issues.
10. Identify and respond to ethical dilemmas in economics.

Textbook: The required text for this class is Labor Economics by George Borjas, 8th ed. (ISBN 9781260484397). You are allowed to purchase a used copy, or the previous edition. You should consider the text to be a supplement to my class lectures. It is NOT a substitute. The text is useful as a reference tool, if you don't understand something from the lecture, the text may help clarify things for you. The problems at the end of the chapters are also useful for practice problems beyond those assigned in class.

Time and location: This class will meet Monday and Wednesday between 9:30 and 10:45am in Ettinger 212. In addition, you each must meet with the writing associate throughout the semester to review your writing style. I will also organize review sessions throughout the semester. In total, that will add one academic hour each week, on average.

Course web page: Homework assignments, handouts, announcements, and other information will be posted on Canvas. All the essays should be uploaded into Canvas.

Grades: The graded material in this class is divided into four parts: a midterm exam, quizzes, writing assignments, and two presentations. These parts will count toward your final grade as follow:

- Quizzes 25%
- Midterm 35%
- Essays 30%
- Presentations 10%

Homework: I'll assign homework problems almost every week, but only for you to practice. That is, you do not have to hand in your answers. The answers will be posted online.

Quizzes: There will be seven quizzes throughout the semester. The dates of the quizzes are reported in the table at the end of the document. There will not be make-up quizzes!

Midterm: The midterm is scheduled on November 10th. Please plan your schedule accordingly. If you must miss the midterm due to an officially sanctioned event, try to let me know at least a week in advance. Other than that, there will be no make-up exams.

Essay: There will be four writing assignments throughout the semester. Please upload your essay by the due date into Canvas. I intend to take notes on your essay. If possible, please upload a doc file (not a pdf file). I have posted a file in Canvas with the rules of the essays and the grading rubric. Following is a description and the due dates for the four essays:

- Essay 1 – diagnostic (2-3 pages long): Students are to locate an event of their interest from a newspaper, journal, news, or/and website and write a short paper describing the event and providing a simple economic analysis. The event does not have to be related to labor economics, but must be related to economics. For example, how the tariffs proposed by the previous administration on goods imported from China might affect consumers and producers in the US. Students will apply economic models/theory to explain the event and how it might affect agents (consumers, producers, government) in the economy. The first essay is due on **September 12th**.
- Essay 2 – markets (3-4 pages long): Students are to locate a specific labor market (e.g., taxi drivers in NYC) and describe and analyze it using economic concepts. The second essay is due on **October 10th**.
- Essay 3 – topics (3-4 pages long): Students are to locate a question that is related to labor markets (wages, employment, unemployment, benefits, etc.) and analyze it using the tools learned in class. If a student cannot come up with a question, I'll provide him/her with several options. The third essay is due on **November 15th**.
- Essay 4 – policy (5-7 pages long): Students are to choose a labor market policy question of personal interest, and describe and analyze it from an economic point of view. The description and analysis should rely on economic papers published in reputable journals. The paper should also include evidence to support the claims made in the paper. In the last week of the semester, students will present their papers in class. The fourth paper is due on Friday **December 10th**.

Presentations: Each student will be asked to present twice. The first presentation will be your answer/assessment/response to a list of questions/comments that I will provide. The second presentation will be at the end of the semester where each student is asked to present his/her final paper ideas/results. Both presentations should be relatively short (about 10 minutes). The second presentation should have the following outline: first, introduce the topic/question. Second, motivate the topic – why is it interesting/important. You can provide some references. Third, make your arguments by applying at least one of the models that was covered in class, or rely on empirical evidence. Finally, state the conclusions (you can also include other related questions that can probably follow the same logic as in your presentation).

Grade Scale: The quizzes and exams are graded on a curve. In general, the median grade would be around B. Your average final grade will be converted to a letter grade according to the following table:

- 90-100 A

- 80-90 B
- 70-80 C
- 50-70 D
- 0-50 F

Where each letter grade includes - and +.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory. Students must write the quizzes and the exam on the dates the tests are scheduled. If for some reason you cannot attend any of the lectures, please contact me ASAP. If you missed a class because of a medical emergency (e.g., sickness), I should be notified about it from the CARE team at Muhlenberg College.

Class Recording Policy: I will teach the class with my iPad and will record the lectures. The recordings will not be posted online! I will share the recordings only with students who were approved for absence by Muhlenberg's CARE team or by ODS.

Following is the general recording policy approved by Muhlenberg College: By enrolling and attending Muhlenberg College courses, students consent to the recording of classes within the scope of college policies. The purpose of recording a class is to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes and/or educational access, with the recording serving as a teaching/learning tool. In all cases where a recording will occur, the instructor must be notified in advance of the recording of a class session. An instructor may give students in the class access to a recording as part of the course curriculum or, alternatively, grant permission to select individuals (including proxy recordings). The instructor may rescind previously granted permission to record at any point during the course, provided that doing so does not compromise an approved accommodation. Any permitted class recordings made by students must be destroyed one week after the final grade is posted for the course, unless the student has received permission from the instructor to retain them or is entitled to retain them as an approved accommodation. Instructors may retain a class recording for other purposes on the condition that all identifying student audio and images are edited out of the recording unless permission has been granted. No instructor will be required to permit recording except under requirements of law. Class recordings may not be reproduced, transferred, distributed, or displayed in any manner. Students may not share authorized recordings from class in any way with anyone. This includes, but is not limited to:

- sharing recordings with other students;
- sharing recordings with parents or guardians;
- sharing recordings with friends;
- sharing recordings through social media;
- posting recordings online;
- emailing recordings to anyone; and
- retaining downloaded recordings.

Scientific and Professional Ethics: The work you do in this course must be your own. Feel free to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others but, when you do, make it known

whose ideas you are working with. You must explicitly acknowledge when your work builds on someone else's ideas, including ideas of classmates, professors, and authors you read. If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own, ask the course professor who will give you guidance. Exams must be completed independently. Any collaboration on answers to exams, unless expressly permitted, may result in an automatic failing grade and possible expulsion from the Program. Please review the Academic Integrity Code, which is found online at www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/dean-academic/integrity and in the student handbook.

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Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting classroom or course accommodations must complete a multi-faceted determination process through the Office of Disability Services prior to the development and implementation of accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Each Accommodation Plan is individually and collaboratively developed between the student and the Office of Disability Services. If you have not already done so, please contact the Office of Disability Services to have a dialogue regarding your academic needs and the recommended accommodations, auxiliary aides, and services.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC): ARC offers individual and small-group tutoring, course-specific workshops, peer mentoring, and professional academic coaching for all currently enrolled Muhlenberg students. Students may request to be assigned to work on a weekly basis with a tutor for the duration of the fall semester starting on Wednesday, September 8, 2021. A link to the online tutor request form is available on the ARC website: www.muhlenberg.edu/arc. Questions regarding the ARC or any of their services may be directed to arcstudent@muhlenberg.edu.

Financial Support: If you are experiencing financial hardship, have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or do not have a safe and stable place to live, and believe this may affect your performance in this course, I would urge you to contact our CARE Team through the Dean of Students Office for support. The webpage is: www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/deanst/careteam/. You may also discuss your concerns with me if you are comfortable doing so.

Course Outline: Following is the outline of the course. It is your responsibility to read the assigned chapters and come prepare.

Lecture	Day	Date	Topic	Chapter	Quizzes
1	Monday	30-Aug	Introduction	CH1 + Notes	
2	Wednesday	1-Sep	Data: Hypothesis testing	CH 1 - Appendix + Notes	
3	Monday	6-Sep	Data: interpreting regressions	CH 1 - Appendix + Notes	
4	Wednesday	8-Sep			Quiz 1
5	Monday	13-Sep	Labor Force and Unemployment	Ch12.1-12.2	
6	Wednesday	15-Sep	Labor Supply	CH2.1-2.8	
7	Monday	20-Sep	Labor Supply	CH2.9-2.13	Quiz 2
8	Wednesday	22-Sep	Labor Demand	CH3.1-3.7	
9	Monday	27-Sep	Labor Demand Continued	CH3.8-3.12	
10	Wednesday	29-Sep			
11	Monday	4-Oct	Labor Markets: Competitive	CH4.1-4.6	Quiz 3
12	Wednesday	6-Oct			
13	Monday	11-Oct	Fall Break		
14	Wednesday	13-Oct	Labor Markets: Noncompetitive	CH4.8	
17	Monday	18-Oct			Quiz 4
18	Wednesday	20-Oct	Compensating Differentials	CH5.1-5.6	
19	Monday	25-Oct			
20	Wednesday	27-Oct			Quiz 5
21	Monday	1-Nov	Human Capital	CH6.1-6.9	
22	Wednesday	3-Nov			Quiz 6
23	Monday	8-Nov	review		
24	Wednesday	10-Nov	Midterm		
25	Monday	15-Nov	The Wage Structure	CH7.1-7.6	
26	Wednesday	17-Nov			
27	Monday	22-Nov	Job Mobility	CH8	
28	Wednesday	24-Nov	Thanksgiving Break		
29	Monday	29-Nov	Discrimination	CH9.1-9.11	Quiz 7
30	Wednesday	1-Dec			
31	Monday	6-Dec	presentation		
32	Wednesday	8-Dec	presentation		

Please see me if you feel lost. Don't wait as things will only get worse! If you can't make office hours, see me after class or email me and we will set up a mutually convenient time.