

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Principles of Microeconomics (Econ 201)

CRN 32022 – Spring 2009

Mentor: Prof. Glen Waddell

Course webpage: www.uoregon.edu/~waddell/201

Course Objectives: The words of John Maynard Keynes are quite fitting here... “The theory of economics does not furnish a body of settled conclusions immediately applicable to policy. It is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of the mind, a technique of thinking which helps its possessor to draw correct conclusions.” In teaching this class, my goal is for you to come away with an understanding of how economists analyze decisions made by individual agents – this “apparatus of the mind.” The course is designed to provide you with a solid foundation for further study in economics and insight into human decision-making and the behaviour of firms. By the end of the semester you should understand these principles, be able to formulate economic hypotheses and critically evaluate evidence that relates to these hypotheses. If we succeed together, you may just be able to find the truth behind a newspaper article better than the journalist who wrote it.

Prerequisites: Experiences and a willingness to share them.

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 1200 – 1320, PLC 180. Of course, lecture attendance is at your discretion. However, in an attempt to maintain a positive learning environment, when you do choose to attend please be on time and do not leave early. (As needed, costs may be imposed on those who impose costs on others.) **Discussion Sections:** You must register for both the lecture and a discussion section. In an attempt to assist you with the integration of material into your world view, weekly discussion sections will be held where you can practice and review new skills and have additional opportunity to discuss the relevance of the issues we cover in class to your observations of the world outside the classroom. While attendance is at your discretion, you must enroll in one of these sections. Implicit in their design, material from these sections will contribute to examinations.

Use of email: It continues to be increasingly easy for us to initiate communication electronically. However, at the same time, it has not necessarily become easier to communicate. Some communications are made moot simply with the passage of time (e.g., opening an email on Tuesday to find a request for a Monday meeting). Others are resolved simply due to them being sent in close proximity to a scheduled meeting (e.g., a general announcement in lecture that covers the query sent by email). Still others are without need as the information is available elsewhere at much lower cost (e.g., in this syllabus, the Registrar’s exam schedule). Faced with the reality of having to handle such contacts and trying to do so efficiently, I have opted again for a strategy that has worked well in the past. In short, **you should send all email correspondence to your discussion-section leader**. I have charged section leaders with the responsibility of keeping up with the flow of email and *replying to all relevant email correspondence within three days of receipt*. There is no formal decision-making authority represented in this team of leaders, so correspondence requiring any real authority will be forwarded to me. This mechanism has worked well in the past so my hope continues – that this policy provides you with less uncertainty and, overall, leads to a more-efficient use of email

communication.

Textbook: While I see my lectures and our associated discussions as the primary source of information, you should consider purchasing *Principles of Microeconomics* by Stiglitz and Walsh. The latest incarnation is the fourth edition, but any of them will suffice. In fact, in the past I have not singled out a text but have suggested that students supplement my lectures with various texts, depending on some combination of strengths, preferences and objectives. See me if you want to talk about such options. Below, I have also provided a break down of other common texts. It is difficult to organize multiple books into distinct categories. So, the table provided at the end of this syllabus is a rough approximation of the requisite material for this term and only a guide to organizing your reading.

Office Hours: The current schedule of office hours that are to be kept throughout the term is available at the course webpage.

Grading Policy: Grades will be based on two midterm exams, assignments and/or quizzes and a final exam. The final will be comprehensive. No student will leave within the first 30 minutes of the commencement of an exam and no student will be given an exam more than 30 minutes following the commencement of the exam in question. The weights are as follows:

30%	Midterm 1, Tuesday of week 4
30%	Midterm 2, Tuesday of week 8
40%	Final Exam (Please confirm the date and time of the final exam with the official university exam schedule.)
Bonus 4%	Chapter/Article summaries (accepted only before Tuesday of week 8)

No makeup exams will be given for any reason. If any one of the examinations is missed, a typewritten petition fully explaining and documenting why the exam was missed must be submitted within three days of the exam in question. If the petition is approved, then the weight of the missed exam will be added to the original weight of the final exam. The alternative is for the earned zero to be recorded for the missed exam. An excused absence is one supported by official documentation bearing proof of university business, serious injury or illness, or a death in the family. Note that no exams will be provided to those arriving for an exam more than thirty minutes late. In the event that one is more than thirty minutes late for any exam, a zero will be earned for the exam in question. Those students taking this course pass/fail must earn a “C-” in the course in order to receive a passing grade. A necessary but not sufficient condition for requesting a grade of “Incomplete” is a “B-” on all completed tasks.

Book/Chapter Summaries: Note that the extra credit is available under the rule above. Up to a maximum of 4%, one percentage points will be awarded for the submission of a summary of a book chapter or article (e.g., New York Times, Slate, Wall Street Journal, etc.) that you can make relevant to the class (e.g., scarcity, competition, diminishing marginal utility, unconstrained optimization, profit maximization, etc.). This relevance will be demonstrated with an original, typewritten 400-word summary of your thoughts on the article (word count should be included with summary). Point allocation will be at the discretion of your section leader under my consultation. Note that such articles will only be accepted earlier the day of the second

midterm.

On cell phone use: I reserve the right to award points to students assisting me in the control of cell phone usage during lectures. I also reserve the right to withhold extra credit from those who use a cell phone in class in any disrespectful way. If there is a legitimate reason for you to be within reach during class times, please see me prior to using your phone. All cell phones must be turned off during examination periods.

Grade Appeals: Any requests for re-grading on an exam must be submitted in writing within *one week* of when the exam is handed back. If you do not pick up your exam when it is handed back, you still must make any re-grading request within a week of when the exam was originally handed back. A re-grading request should include an argument for why you feel your answer was correct. I reserve the right to re-grade the entire question when a request to re-grade part of a question is made.

Academic Integrity: You may have a pen or pencil, a ruler or straightedge, and a non-programmable hand-held calculator at your desk while taking an exam. Any other forms of assistance or sources of information are prohibited unless specifically authorized. Any violations of academic integrity will result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, an incident report will be filed with the University's Hearing Board. As it is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an assignment to another person (ORS 165.114) or to falsify the authorship of a work product (ORS 165.037), any such action will be held in violation of these statutes and reported to the appropriate authorities.

The submission of all exams will require the presentation of a valid UO ID card without exception. All cell phones must be turned off during examination periods.

Topic:	Stiglitz / Walsh	Parkin	Colander	Case/Fair	Hall / Lieberman	Silberberg	Bade / Parkin
Introduction, Basic Concepts, Markets	Chs 1, 2	Chs 1, 2	Chs 1, 2	Chs 1, 2	Chs 1, 2	Ch 1	Chs 1, 2, 3
Demand and Supply	Chs 4, 5	Ch 3	Ch 4, 5	Ch 3	Chs 3, 4	Ch 2	Ch 11
More Consumer Theory	Ch 6	Ch 7, 4	Ch 8	Ch 4	Ch 5	Chs 3, 4	Ch 5
Working with Markets		Ch 5, 6	Ch 5			Ch 5	Chs 7, 8
Cost and Production	Ch 7	Ch 10	Chs 9, 10	Chs 6, 7	Ch 6	Chs 6, 7	Ch 12
Supply in Competitive Markets	Chs 8, 10	Ch 11	Ch 11	Ch 11	Chs 7, 8	Ch 8	Ch 13
Monopoly	Ch 12	Ch 12	Ch 12	Ch 12	Ch 9	Ch 11	Ch 14
Imperfect/Monopolistic Competition	Ch 12	Ch 13	Ch 13	Ch 13	Ch 10	Ch 12	Ch 15
Property Rights						Ch 9	