



ECON 312 A01

Urban Land Economics

9:30-10:20 TWF, Cornett A221

CRN: 11103

1.5 Units, 3 contact hours

UVic Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəṇən (Songhees and X̱wsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəṇən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Instructor Name: Martin Farnham

Office: BEC 354

Method of contact and availability: mfarnham@uvic.ca

I can't always respond to student inquiries immediately. I will try to respond reasonably quickly, but sometimes may take as many as two business days to respond. If you haven't heard from me within two business days, please send me a reminder email. Note that I won't respond to inappropriate emails (see email policy below)

Office Hours: In person. Tuesdays 1:30-3:00pm, BEC 354

TA Name: Kevin Chen

Office: TBA

Email: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Teaching and assessment modality statement

This course is face to face and all exams are held in person.

Course Content

This course provides a general introduction to urban land economics. We will use economic analysis to explain why cities exist and where they develop, how cities grow, and how economic activity is distributed within urban areas. We will examine determinants of land prices and rents, consider market failures associated with land use and discuss appropriate policy remedies. We will explore urban problems such as poverty, high housing costs, segregation, congestion, pollution, and crime. Throughout the course, current issues relevant to Canadian cities will be discussed. In addition, some international cases will be discussed.

Most economics courses discuss production and consumption without discussing *where* that economic activity takes place. One of the things students find interesting about this course is the focus on where economic activity occurs (downtown vs. suburbs vs. rural areas) and the fact that they can observe the city(s) they live in and compare what they observe in the real world with the models presented in the course.

Course prerequisites/corequisites

Note: Credit will be granted for only one of ECON 312, ECON 412, and ADMIN 445.

Prerequisites: One of ECON 103, ECON 103C, ECON 180.

Textbook

1. **Required Textbook:** The textbook for the course is “Lectures on Urban Economics” by Jan Brueckner. The UVic library has a license for this text, so you can read it for free online by searching here: <https://www.uvic.ca/library/> under “Books and Media”. Put the book’s title in quotes and search for it. It is also available online for purchase as a hard-copy or e-book (viewable on a Kindle, the Kindle App for iOS, or other e-readers). Note that if you want to “rent” the textbook for 4 months (rather than purchase it outright), you can do so at the link here: <https://mitpress.ubliish.com/book/lectures-urban-economics#purchase> (pricing may be in US dollars). But you *may* be able to use it entirely for free through the UVic library.
2. **Optional Textbooks.** Edward Glaeser’s “Triumph of the City” (available in hard copy in the UVic library main collection) takes many of the theoretical points in the course and shows where they apply in the real world. In the past, I have made this required for the course. This term, it is optional. For those who prefer a more traditional textbook treatment of the material, Arthur O’Sullivan’s “Urban Economics” is a useful reference.

Brightspace

Brightspace is used extensively for the course. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system. The lecture notes will be posted in *Brightspace*. Please note that the lecture notes online are only outlines of the actual lectures.

All announcements will be posted in *Brightspace*. Students are advised to check it frequently.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how to use the Basic Urban Model to analyze the spatial distribution of economic activity within and across cities. They will also learn how to use partial equilibrium models to analyze the effect of various policies that affect urban residents, including housing subsidies, rent control, and cash grants to poor residents.

Course Structure, Assessments, and Grading

Statement about learning components

Lecture notes will be posted online, but students will benefit additionally from attending lectures in person. In general, I don't record and post lectures.

A series of ungraded problem sets will be distributed throughout the course. While these will not be graded, you are strongly encouraged to work through the problem sets to develop and gauge your understanding of the material. Most students will find that careful practice solving problems significantly increases their understanding of the material. Students are encouraged to work on these problems in groups after first attempting them individually.

Grading Scheme

The course grade is determined as follows:

Best of 2 midterms (no makeup midterm exams will be given):	50%
Final Exam:	50%

Mandatory/Essential Course Components

The final exam is essential and thus deferrable.

Midterms are not mandatory and therefore not deferrable. *Students who fail to complete at least one midterm will receive a midterm score of zero, no exceptions.* If you miss both midterms (for any reason including illness) you should drop the course and take it in a later term. To maximize your grade in the course, you should take both midterms. Skipping the first midterm leaves you extremely vulnerable to sickness or missing the bus on the day of the second midterm, so don't play with fire.

Dates of Assessments, Due Dates of Assignments

Assignments: There are no graded assignments in this course.

Midterms: The midterm exam(s) is/are scheduled for

Midterm #1: Friday October 3 (in class, in person), Topics 1-4

Midterm #2: Friday October 31 (in class, in person), Topics 5-7

Final exam: In person. All topics

All exams are closed book, closed notes. Students who reference materials or electronic devices (other than a non-programmable calculator) during an exam are committing a violation of academic integrity.

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. Students do not qualify for an academic concession if travel plans conflict with the examination.

Grading Scale

A+	90-100%
A	85-89%
A-	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
C+	65-69%
C	60-64%
D	50-59%
F or N	0-49%

Students should review the University's more detailed [summary of grading](#).

Missing Assessments

Should students encounter a situation where they miss the final, they may qualify for an academic concession. Students are required to indicate the specific grounds on which they are requesting an academic concession and provide a justification outlining the impact of the circumstances on their ability to complete course requirements. In case you miss the final exam, fill in a [request for a deferral](#). I will not respond to informal requests of academic concessions.

If you miss a midterm, you will receive a grade of 0 on it. Since your midterm grade for the course is the better of your two midterm grades, your score on the other midterm will determine your midterm grade. If you miss both midterms, you will receive a score of 0 for the midterm component of your grade. In such a case, to pass the course you would need to receive 100% on the final.

Waitlist Policies

- Instructors have no discretion to admit waitlisted students or raise the cap on the course.
- Students on the waitlist should discuss with the instructor how to ensure they are not behind with coursework in the event they are admitted.
- Registered students who do not participate as specified in this outline during the first 7 calendar days from the start of the course may be dropped from the course.
- Registered students who decide not to take the course are responsible for dropping the course and are urged to do so promptly out of courtesy toward waitlisted students.
- Waitlist offers cease after the last date for adding courses irrespective of published waitlists.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University.

The University reserves the right to use a plagiarism software to detect violations of academic integrity.

Appeals

Depending on the nature of your concern, the order in which you should normally try to resolve the matter is:

1. Me, the course instructor
2. the Associate Chair: econassoc@uvic.ca
3. the Associate Dean of Academic Advising
4. the Senate.

If you're seeking a formal review of an assigned grade, you should also consult the regulations in the academic calendar regarding [review of an assigned grade.](#)"

I only respond to grading inquiries in writing. You must file your question within 1 week of issuance of your grade and the release of the answer key. Do not approach me after class to discuss grading concerns.

University Policies and Statements

Please note that this course is executed in a manner consistent with these University statements and policies.

- a. University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
- b. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- c. [Academic Integrity](#)
- d. [Academic Concession Regulations](#), [Academic Concession and Accommodation](#), Academic Accommodation – [Policy AC1205](#)
- e. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- f. [Student Conduct](#)
- g. [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- h. [Accessibility](#)
- i. [Diversity / EDI](#)
- j. [Equity statement](#)
- k. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- l. Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)

Resources for students

- a. [Student wellness](#)
- b. [Centre for Accessible Learning](#)
- c. [UVic Learn Anywhere](#). UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
- d. [Library](#) resources
- e. Centre for Academic Communication ([CAC](#))
- f. Learning Strategies Program ([LSP](#))
- g. [Academic Advising](#)
- h. Economics Undergraduate Advising: ecadvice@uvic.ca
- i. [Student Awards and Financial Aid](#)
- j. [International Student Advising](#)
- k. Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
- l. [Student groups and resources](#) including UVic [Ombudsperson](#)

Student Experience of Learning (SEL) Survey

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential SEL survey regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future.

Course Structure

Lectures will be much easier to follow if you do readings ahead of lecture.

Lectures Outline (subject to change)

Topic/Key Dates	Week (First day of class is a Wednesday so weeks start on Wednesdays)	Text Readings
1) Introduction Why do Cities Exist?	1	Chapter 1
2) Urban Spatial Structure	2	Chapter 2
3) Modification of the Basic Urban Model	3	Chapter 3
4) Urban Sprawl and Land-Use Controls	4-5	Chapter 4
Midterm 1 (October 3 in class) Topics 1-4		

5) Freeway Congestion	6-7	Chapter 5
6) Housing Demand and Tenure Choice	8	Chapter 6
7) Housing Policy	9	Chapter 7
Midterm 2 (Oct 31 in class) Topics 5-7	10	
8) Neighbourhood Segregation; Local Public Goods and Services	11	Chapter 8
9) Urban Poverty and Crime	13	Chapter 10
Extra topics (time permitting)		
Final Exam (all topics): Timing to be determined		

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the term.

Email Correspondence

Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the course name and number in the subject line. Questions on course material should be asked during office hours or in class, not by email. The standard format for writing a letter must be used. This means it should begin with a salutation (e.g. Dear....), include full sentences and it must conclude with a signature that includes your **full name and V#**. Text message lingo should not be used. If you send an email that asks a question that is covered on the syllabus or was addressed during lecture or on Brightspace, I reserve the right to ignore it. Please do your part to reduce email spam.

Electronic Devices

Please do not use electronic devices in a way that is distracting to anyone else in the classroom. Lectures may only be recorded (audio or video) with the instructor's written permission.