University of Victoria, Spring 2019
Econ 203 – A02: Intermediate Microeconomics I (CRN 20971)

Course Outline

Class: TWF 1.30–2.20, DSB C118.
Teacher: Dr. Paul Schure, Office: BEC 336, Email: schure@uvic.ca
Office hours: Fri 10.30-11.15am & by appointment.
Appointments: Make by email. Suggest three possible 15-minute time slot that work for you & I will pick one of them
Emails: Check at least once a day. Emails (i) must have logical subject headers starting with “Econ 203” and (ii) include your name and student number in the body of the message. The expectation is that emails are answered within 24 hours (both by the student and the teacher).
Course website: http://web.uvic.ca/~schure/econ203/econ203.html

In practical terms… make sure to buy one of the following two options:
1. Loose-leaf textbook + Connect access, ISBN 978 125 9357107 (around $128 in bookstore?). [You’re probably able to use the LL text in Econ 313 later on]
2. Connect access only, ISBN 978 126 0193206 (should be around $86.- in the bookstore)

About the Course

This is the first of two intermediate micro courses offered in Economics. Much of the material introduced in Econ 103 will be reworked, with an emphasis on technique besides results. The goal is to master the concepts and basic tools used by economists, and to be able to apply these to set up and solve economic problems in a variety of contexts, including in contexts that are strictly speaking new to you. You will encounter many of the applications of the “Econ 203 skill set” in upper-level econ classes.

Predictions of economic theories are frequently ambiguous; understanding the underlying assumptions and the analytical methods used by economics is essential in assessing policy statements of governments and think tanks. Consequently, understanding the material in this course means being able to frame and solve problems; learning as well as testing your understanding by trying problems is essential, yet always realize these problems are only examples and the task is to distill the general lessons.

Understanding the course concepts means you can explain them on tests in three ways: algebraically, graphically and intuitively. Train yourself to motivate and clarify the steps you follow (comprehensively, but concisely) when answering questions, as this is also the standard requirement for questions on all tests. Indeed, unless stated otherwise, providing
only answers on test questions, without clarifying the steps you took to arrive at your answer, will typically not earn you any marks.

This is a course that takes some students by surprise. Some students feel they get it (and they may have gotten decent marks on Econ 103 and other courses), but struggle to get good marks on Econ 203. Yet, most students that stick with it and work consistently throughout the term will end up doing well. Also, I have yet to meet a student who tells me s/he has worked hard consistently and failed the class. Remember you may need more than just a pass: to major in Economics you need a minimum grade of 60%.

Labs

Labs are an integral part of the course. They are designed to help students learn the material covered in the lectures, usually through problem solving. The Lab TA will not hold any office hours. In a way the labs themselves are something like extended office hours. Register for any of the labs below. Labs will begin in the second week of classes and will be run by a TA.

Details lab sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab Section</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B01 (CRN 20972)</td>
<td>Tuesdays, 3:30-4:20pm</td>
<td>CLE D131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B02 (CRN 20973)</td>
<td>Tuesdays, 4:30-5:20pm</td>
<td>CLE D126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B03 (CRN 20974)</td>
<td>Tuesdays, 5:30-6:20pm</td>
<td>DSB C128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B04 (CRN 20975)</td>
<td>Tuesdays, 6:30-7:20pm</td>
<td>DSB C128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment

To pass this course a student must obtain a minimum score on the final exam of 42 percent. Provided you satisfy this requirement, your final grade is computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (actual dates in “Outline” below!)</th>
<th>Weight in grade calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect assignments (See the info below the outline)</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic micro test</td>
<td>2+1 percent (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math test (no calculator)</td>
<td>2 percent (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem sets</td>
<td>3x2 = 6 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best 2 out of 3 midterms</td>
<td>2x15 = 30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worst midterm</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>45 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade concerns. Students that have questions or concerns regarding their grade on any test should email the instructor asap (see “Emails” above). All concerns should be initiated with within one week after the grade was returned. After one week your grade is final.
Provided you score at least 42 percent on the final exam, your percentage grade translates to a UVic letter grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment details:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of the term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation.** The diagnostic micro test and the math test are mandatory.

You will hand in three problem sets for marks. About 70% of your grade for each problem set will be for completeness, effort, and following instructions; the remaining 30% (approximately) for correctness of the answers. I expect answers will often be incomplete. This is only normal given that the questions can be quite hard. Correctness will be judged based on a small selection of the questions (perhaps 1 or 2 questions). You are to work in groups of three or four students. Groups working on a problem set are not allowed to simply “divvy up” the questions. Each of the group members carries the responsibility for possible “issues” with answers, including possible issues of academic integrity. Completion of the problem sets will require a big time investment, while they carry a relatively small weight. The idea behind assigning merely a small weight on the problem sets is to encourage students to work on practice problems, while at the same time minimizing anxiety levels if these practice problems prove hard to solve. Trying to do the problem sets well is probably a student’s core strategy to prepare well for the midterm exams and the final.

The final exam is cumulative. Again, to pass the course, you must obtain at least 42.5% on the final. Calculators: You can only work with one type of calculator, the Sharp EL-510R/RN/RNB.

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1 Deviations from the 3-4 students rule may be possible, but not because you “like working by yourself” or with that one friend. I like the interaction to happen! If you have a good reason then ask me for permission by email asap (at least 7 days before the deadline of the problem set).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Problem sets</th>
<th>Tests / Midterms</th>
<th>Labs (Tuesdays)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 8 Jan: Ch.1 - Introduction  
9 Jan: Ch.2 Review  
11 Jan: Ch.2 Review | | | No Labs |
| 2    | 15 Jan: Math Lecture #1  
16 Jan: Diagnostic micro test  
18 Jan: Ch.3, 3A Consumer Choice | | Diagnostic micro test [Mandatory!]: Wed 16 Jan | Math lecture #2 |
| 3    | 22 Jan: Ch.3, 3A Consumer Choice  
23 Jan: Ch.3, 3A Consumer Choice  
25 Jan: Ch.4, 5 Deriving Demand | | See labs | Math Test [Mandatory!]
| 4    | 29 Jan: Ch.4, 5 Deriving Demand  
30 Jan: Ch.8, 8A Production Techn.  
1 Feb: Ch.8, 8A Production Techn. | PS1 due Fri Feb 1 @ 4:00pm (course box) | Individual and Market demand | |
| 5    | 5 Feb: Flex class  
6 Feb: Ch.9 Cost of Production  
8 Feb: Ch.9 Cost of Production | | See labs | MT1: Tue 5 Feb (Chapters 1-5) |
| 6    | 12 Feb: Ch.9 Cost of Production  
13 Feb: Ch.10 Perfect Competition  
15 Feb: Ch.10 Perfect Competition | | | Cost of Prodctn |
| 7    | Reading Break (No classes & UVic closed on Monday 18 Feb) | | | |
| 8    | 26 Feb: Ch.10 Perfect Competition  
27 Feb: Ch.11 Monopoly  
1 Mar: Ch.11 Monopoly | PS2 due Thu 28 Feb @ 4:00pm (course box) | | Perfect competition |
| 9    | 5 Mar: Flex class  
6 Mar: MT2  
8 Mar: Ch.11 Monopoly | | MT2: Wed 6 Mar (Chapters 8-10) | TBA |
| 10   | 12 Mar: Ch.12 Game theory  
13 Mar: Ch.12 Game theory  
15 Mar: Ch.12 Game Theory | | | TBA |
| 11   | 19 Mar: Flex class  
20 Mar: Ch.13 Oligopoly, pp.427-37  
22 Mar: Ch.13 Oligopoly, pp.427-37 | PS3 due Thu 21 Mar @ 4pm (course box) | | TBA |
| 12   | 26 Mar: Flex class  
27 Mar: MT3  
29 Mar: Ch.13 Oligopoly, pp.427-37 | | MT3: Wed 27 Mar (Chapters 11-12) | TBA |
| 13   | 2 Apr: Ch.17, pp. 567-73  
3 Apr: Flex class  
5 Apr: Course Review / exam prep | | | TBA |
Connect assignments

As indicated in “Assessment” you are asked to complete several McGraw-Hill Connect assignments. Please, realize that any information you submit when registering for McGraw-Hill Connect is stored outside British Columbia. Specifically, McGraw-Hill Connect would normally ask for your name, school, instructor, class, and login information such as email. However, nobody at UVic can ever require you to disclose personal information to technologies or organizations which may store information on servers located outside of Canada. Disclosure of personal information to vendors, systems or services storing or accessing that personal information outside of Canada is restricted by section 30.1 of BC’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). [Personal information is information about an identifiable individual; for example, your name or your email address].

If you are uncomfortable submitting your personal information to McGraw-Hill Connect then that is not a problem whatsoever. In that case please contact me by email by Thursday 17 January at the latest (use header “Econ 203: Connect alias”) and I will provide you with an alias that allows you to register without surrendering any personal information. In connection to these options, let me share what McGraw-Hill provided about Connect:

“McGraw Hill Connect only collects the information we require to provide, maintain and improve the digital learning solution you use. When you register, or are registered within Connect, we collect your name, school, instructor, class, and login information such as email. Once you begin using Connect, we collect your input to questions, technical specifications, and other information about how you use Connect.

Connect servers are located outside of Canada in Northern Virginia. All buildings require keycard access, with additional authorization to enter restricted areas where servers are kept. McGraw Hill Education takes the utmost care in establishing and preserving security around all systems related to data being collected. Firewalls are in used, and Connect has active IDS protection.”

Feel free to also read what UVic TIL says in this regard: https://hlsvod.uvic.ca/vod/USEC/Tip-Sheets/Privacy-toolkit-for-teaching-Tip-Sheets.pdf
(See Module 4) Please let me know if you have any question or concern.
Research project based on this course

Econ 203 has traditionally included a lot of hands-on assignments. This class is no exception and contains assignments in the form of the problem sets and the Connect assignments.

Dr. Lijun Zhang, my coinvestigator, and I would like to be able to do a research project based on this class and the parallel section of Econ 203. To do so we have obtained Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research at the Human Research Ethics Board at UVic. We intend to use the (anonymized) data on the performance of the students in the 203 classes to research the question of how to implement the assignments the most effectively in the course. Specifically, the working title of our project is “What is the Best Way to Integrate Course Assignments” and we are interested in finding out if and how the effectiveness of assignments depends on the timing of their deadlines and whether they are mandatory. Our statistical analysis of the student performance data will be useful to advance the knowledge on how to incorporate assignments best and may therefore also help improve the structure of this and other courses in the future.

Please, realize that whether you participate in our research project does not impact your workload. Also, we are convinced that working on the assignments is anyway a core strategy to success in this course (As indicated, Econ 203 has always included a lot of hands-on assignments.) While we would use your performance data, that data will not be associated with your name while doing the research.

Furthermore, should there be a potential conflict at any moment between my roles as an instructor and a researcher, the instructor role always takes the priority. In fact, I personally find it hard to imagine when such a conflict would even arise: I will only assume the role of researcher after your grades have been posted. At that stage student identifiers have been removed.

While the assignments are required course components for every student in the course, your participation in the study is NOT required for the course. We cannot and would not want to force you to participate, and your decision to participate or not does not make you lose marks or penalize you otherwise. I'll ask for you permission a couple of times. Even after you give permission and then change your mind then fill out the opt-out form that is posted in CourseSpaces. We will set up a special box at the assignment dropbox area by BEC 360 and you can submit your opt-out form there before April 20. But again, we won’t even know who you are when we do the statistical analysis and whichever is your participation decision, you are expected to do the assignments.

Please, let me know if you have any questions or concerns about our research project and/or your participation in it. Thanks!
Course policies

This course adheres to the Undergraduate Course Policies of the Department of Economics that deal with the following issues:

- Academic concessions
- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Late adds
- Late assignments
- Repeating courses
- Review of an assigned grade
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists

The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance.

**Repeating Econ 203** (or Econ 103, 104, 204, 245, 246, 313 and 345)

The UVic Calendar states:

> A student may not attempt a course a third time without the prior approval of the Dean of the Faculty and the Chair of the Department in which the course is offered unless the calendar course entry states that the course may be repeated for additional credit. A student who has not received this approval may be deregistered from the course at any point and may be asked to withdraw from his or her declared or intended program.

In order to request permission to attempt this course for the third time, you must follow the instructions provided at [http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/course%20policies/index.php](http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/course%20policies/index.php)

Failure to obtain permission will result in deregistration from the course by the Economics Department (not by the instructor).

**CourseSpaces and Course Website**

- We use CourseSpaces in this course & students are expected to be fully functional with the system. All announcements will be posted in CourseSpaces. Students are advised to check it frequently.
- Lecture notes will be posted on the Course Website. Please note that the lecture notes online are only outlines of the actual lectures. At times lecture notes will be updated.

**Academic integrity (including on problem sets)**

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 (http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html) in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University. Please browse What is Plagiarism for the definition of plagiarism. Questions to you: Q1: Which are potential issues with academic integrity in connection to the problem sets? Q2: Can I be duped by others who I worked with on the problem set? Answer Q2: Yes, potentially, but likely not if you do your due diligence properly, which is the requirement.

**Late assignments:** Late assignments will normally not be accepted.

**More on tests and missing a test**

- **What to submit for a test?** Students that write a test must submit the question sheets, answers, as well as scrap paper, if any before leaving the room. **No duplication in any form of any of the material is allowed.**
Missing a test & make-up tests.
  o Make-up mid-term exams are not a right, unlike popular opinion among students. They are possible however on the basis of a serious illness or family affliction that is documented by a relevant professional (e.g. a GP in case of an illness). The documentation must provide specific detail (e.g. clear start and expected finish dates of the illness) to be acceptable.
  o A second necessary condition for being able to write a make-up midterm is that the situation is reported (a) timely and (b) correctly. Students must (a) contact (see below) the instructor no later than the time or due date of the test or assignment; (b) to supply the instructor with both a phone number and an email address. Contact the instructor by either by email (schure@uvic.ca) or leaving a voice mail message (250-721-8535). As indicated earlier, students are expected to answer on any emails helpfully within 24 hours. Students that do not stick to these rules will find their options run out very fast.

Academic concession part 2: the final exam. In the event of a missed final examination, please follow again the “missing a test” steps. In this case the instructor will normally have to ask you to submit a Request for Academic Concession (RAC) to Undergraduate Records with the required official documentation from a health professional within 10 working days of the end of the examination period. The RAC form is available on the Undergraduate Records website (http://registrar.uvic.ca/undergrad/records/forms/forms.html).

University Policy on Working Environment: The University of Victoria is committed to promoting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

University Policy on Examinations and Travel Arrangements: Students are advised not to make 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 after the end of the examination period (see the University Calendar). There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.

Accessibility
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, you are free to approach me; however, you must register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) for formal arrangements to be made. The staff at CAL are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

The only permitted calculator:

Course Experience Survey (CES): Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey provides feedback to me and the department regarding the course and my teaching and helps the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to the CES log-in. You will use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be completed on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. What specific suggestions do you have as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively? (Have you tried to communicate these to the instructor during the term as well ?)
3. What specific other suggestions do you have as to how this course could be improved.