ECON 370 - Labour Economics
University of Victoria, Department of Economics

Location: COR B108
Times: Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 3:30-4:20 pm
Website: Course Spaces

Instructor: Prof. Maggie Jones (maggiejones@uvic.ca)
Office: BEC 392
Office Hours: Mondays, 11am-12pm

Teaching Assistant(s): Kate Fairley (kfairley@uvic.ca)
TA Office Hours: TBA

Description
This course provides a general introduction to labour economics. We will begin by developing an understanding of the neoclassical models of labour supply, demand and their interaction. Weaknesses of these models in terms of their ability to describe labour market outcomes will be examined. Students will be presented with extensions to and departures from the basic model with a focus on understanding wage and employment outcomes in the labour market. Throughout the course current issues relevant to the Canadian labour market will be discussed. In addition to examining models of the labour market we will also discuss empirical evidence regarding the predictive powers of these models.

Course Goals
By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Work through the mathematical derivations and theory behind the labour market models presented.
2. Interpret, analyze and critique basic labour market principles in economic journal articles and news articles.
3. Be able to discuss concepts in labour economics in an informed way.

Readings
The textbook is Labour Market Economics, 8th edition, by Benjamin, Gunderson, Lemieux, and Riddell. An online version can be purchased here:
Other journal articles that we will be touching on will appear on course spaces.

**Evaluation**

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to the numerical score equivalencies used at UVic:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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The following weighting will be used to determine grades.

1. **Exams (60%)**: We will have a midterm and a final:
   
   (a) Midterm: Thursday, February 13th (20%)
   
   (b) Final: TBD (40%)

2. **News Discussion (10%)**: One of the course goals is to have you apply the concepts we learn in class to current events and to be able to discuss these events from an informed and critical perspective. To assist with this goal we will have an online discussion board where students will post a discussion about two news articles each and reply to two classmates’ posts. Of course, please feel free to respond to more than two of your classmates’ posts. The instructions for this exercise are as follows:

   - I ask that each student follow the news and take note of articles that are related to our course material
   - If an article is of particular interest to you, please start a discussion on Course Spaces with the following information:
     - subject: “title of newspaper article”
     - body: 1) link to article; 2) 2-3 sentences describing the article; 3) 2-3 sentences explaining how it relates to what we are learning in labour economics; 4) 2-3 sentences of personal reflection
   - Please follow the discussion board regularly and respond to 2 of your classmates’ posts

The ground rules for this exercise are:

- Please be courteous to your classmates, i.e. if you disagree with their comments, do so in a way that is respectful.
- The articles you choose to discuss have to be current: i.e., they must have been posted in the week you choose to discuss them (i.e., if you post an article on February 17th, 2020, it cannot be from March, 2018).
- The first article must be posted before the midterm (i.e., prior to February 13th)
• In order to receive a grade for your response, you must post under your classmate’s discussion within 1 week of their original post or within 1 week of the last comment below their original post.

• The discussion board will be closed on April 3rd at 11:59 pm.

Each discussion you post will be worth 3 points and each reply will be worth 2 points.

3. **Paper discussions (15%)**: 3 of our classes will be reserved for in-class discussions of journal articles or news articles relating to our course material. I ask that you spend one paragraph summarizing what the paper was about and then to come up with 2 relevant questions related to the articles. Please type your questions on a computer and use both grammar and spell check software before submitting a **printed copy** at the beginning of class. I will not accept discussion questions that have not been printed.

When you submit your questions at the beginning of class I will draw a set of questions at random for groups to discuss. A representative from each group will act as the liaison between groups to facilitate a classroom discussion. Grades will be assigned based on the following rubric:

• summary of the paper = 2 points
• *showing up* and submitting the questions on time (i.e. no later than the start of class at 3:30 pm) = 1 point
• quality of question (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, exceptional) = 2 points

The dates of our in-class discussions will be:

(a) D1: January 30th 
(b) D2: March 5th 
(c) D3: March 26th 

Please note that the content of your questions will be taken seriously when grading. Questions like, “what is the paper about?”, are not acceptable. You know what the paper is about as you just read it. You have to show that you have thought deeply about the paper. I encourage you to visit office hours before the in-class discussion questions are due to check your questions with me. I am happy to provide feedback ahead of time.

4. **Policy evaluation (15%)**: At the end of the term I ask that you submit a brief essay outlining a recent (within the last year) policy proposal from North America (An e.g. of a past policy proposal is Elizabeth Warren’s universal child care plan). If you wish to discuss a policy proposal outside of North America, please come and discuss with me in office hours before submitting. Due on Friday, April 3rd by 5pm in the class dropbox. An outline of this exercise is as follows:

• Part 1: discuss the details of the policy proposal (i.e., tell me what is being proposed, who is proposing it, what country, who is being targeted, why the policy is being proposed, etc.)
• Part 2: use the economic framework we have learned throughout the semester to work through the expected “effects” of the policy. Summarize whether any empirical papers have looked at similar policies in other contexts.
• Part 3: provide an analysis of the policy. This should reflect your opinion on the policy (what will be the outcomes, will it be successful, are there aspects of your setting that will lead to a more or less effective implementation compared to other similar settings, etc.) You may also wish to suggest ways in which this policy could be improved upon.

Some comments regarding the grading of this assignment:

• The essay should be no more than 1,500 words.
• I should be able to find information on this policy proposal online.
• You may work in groups of up to 3.
• Papers have to be typed, spell checked and edited. Please consult the writing centre if you need some assistance with editing.
• Late papers will not be accepted.

Course Outline

***Note that the outline is subject to change depending on how quickly we cover the material***

1. Introduction
2. Labour Supply
3. Labour Demand
4. Labour Supply and Demand Together
5. The Determination of Relative Wages

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 exams
• Travel Plans
• Waitlists

Course Website

Please note that the material for this course is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in Economics 370. The material for this course may be downloaded for a registered student’s personal use, but shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in Economics 370. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity. This means that posting my notes on course hero or other similar websites is a breach of my copyright and could constitute a breach of academic integrity.

Email Response Policy

I will be checking course related emails twice per week as outlined above under the “Email Response Hours” headline. Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend 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. 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. I will not respond to emails about material I covered in class unless you were unable to attend class for a legitimate reason.

Graded Material

Some comments regarding my grading policy:

• I will notify the class when any graded material is ready to be picked up. You will have 14 days from that date to retrieve your graded material and discuss with me any issues related to grading. Please note that this means you need to be proactive with respect to picking up and reviewing your material in a timely manner.

• I will not be changing any grades after the final grades are submitted. This is against university and department policy and an unwarranted grade change for one student undermines the academic integrity of the course and university more broadly. If you are struggling in the class, please discuss this with me early in the course so that we can determine the best course of action to help you succeed in the course.

Examinations

Attendance: Attendance at all scheduled examinations is mandatory. Consideration for missed examinations will be given only on the basis of documented illness, accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed final examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar. 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. There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.

**Headgear:** Caps and hats that interfere with eye contact should not be worn during exams.

**Beverage and Washroom Policies:** Please do not bring beverages other than water to an exam. Containers should plain, with any labels removed. It should not be necessary to use the washroom during a midterm exam, so avoid consuming diuretics such as coffee and pop immediately prior. If a medical condition necessitates frequent washroom use, this can be accommodated through the Resource Centre for Students with a disability.

**Supplemental, Deferred, and Makeup Exams:** Supplemental exams are not given in this course. Deferred final exams are given only on the granting of a formal university academic concession, normally only for documented medical reasons; deferred exams are normally given in July. Similarly, a makeup midterm exam normally requires documentation of an incapacitating medical condition. Be aware that the University of Victoria does not schedule its affairs around students’ outside commitments, including work schedules, travel plans, sports activities, and care for family members. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that outside commitments do not interfere with course obligations. See below for an explanation of the medical documentation required for an academic concession.

**English Language Skills**

English is the language of instruction at the University of Victoria; your enrolment is taken to imply that you are functionally literate. All written work must use complete sentences and be organized in a logical, coherent manner. The mark you receive will be determined by the quality of your written response as well as by the content of your answer. Dictionaries (both paper and electronic) are not permitted in examinations. It is not practical during exams with large classes for invigilators to check dictionaries to ensure that extraneous information has not been entered.

As outlined in the University Calendar: “Student work, as defined by the Policy on Academic Integrity, submitted in any course may be refused a passing grade if they do not meet an appropriate level of English language proficiency for the course in question. Students who are concerned about meeting English standards should consult with the Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) for resources and support services.”

**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 show up in the first seven 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. Review What is Plagiarism for the definition of plagiarism. Note: Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

**University Policy on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness**

The University is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. See General University Policies.

**Accessibility & Health Resources**

**Centre for Accessible Learning:** 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 CAL staff 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.

**Health Services:** University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.

**Counselling Services:** Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.

**Elders’ Voices:** The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

**Course Experience Survey (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) 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. 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.

- What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

Electronic Devices

In general, I discourage the use of electronics in the classroom; however, exceptions will made for students with accessibility concerns, or if you are using the device to take notes. There is mounting evidence that students learn best when they disconnect from electronic devices, but ultimately this choice is up to you. All lecture slides and notes will be posted online. As such, I do not permit photographs, videos, and voice recordings to be made of class lectures. If you object to this for reasons related to accessibility, please speak to me in office hours.