

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
FALL 2004

ECON 150: LABOR ECONOMICS

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CLASS MEETINGS: Section 1 – Call No. 41552
M,W,F 1:00–1:50 pm, AMD 217
OFFICE HOURS: M,T,W 10:00–11:00 am or
email to arrange an appointment

Course Description The economic analysis of labor markets, with special reference to education, employment, and wage determination. Strategy for learning involves a combination of active learning through graphical and mathematical problems and the development of reading/writing skills using current news and journal articles.

Required Textbook *Labor Economics* by George Borjas, 2nd or 3rd edition
I encourage you to explore online used textbook sellers like www.half.com and www.directtextbook.com. To insure that you get the right book, search by the ISBN number 0072311983 (for the 2nd edition) or 0072871776 (for the 3rd edition).

Grading	Homework	25%
	Exam I	25%
	Exam II	25%
	Comprehensive Final Exam	25%

The actual letter grade you earn in this course will be based on a grading scale to be determined *after* the final exam. This scale may or may not resemble the 10-point scale that many of you are used to (*e.g.*, 90-100% is some sort of A, 80-89% is some sort of B, etc...) because I reserve the right to curve. I will provide feedback over the semester on how to interpret your homework and exam scores so that you know how you are progressing in the course.

NOTE ON THE CONTENT OF THIS COURSE SYLLABUS

I view the information on this syllabus as a contract with my students. I try to be very clear about my expectations and policies so that everyone knows the basic rules and we all go home happy every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and, ultimately, at the end of the semester. Please read the following carefully.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at lecture is left up to your discretion, although I obviously believe that spending 2½ hours with me each week will have a positive effect on how much you learn and your final grade. I will not take roll, but that does not mean that I am without eyes and the ability to observe who is there on a regular basis and who is not.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

The homework assignments in this class are designed to develop a variety of skills. Some assignments will focus on graphical and mathematical skills needed to work with models of the labor market. Other assignments will develop your ability to analyze (through writing) labor market issues that appear in the news media and economics journals. All homework assignments will be equally weighted and available online at website listed above.

EXAMS

The exam dates listed below are carved in stone. Put them in your calendar immediately because there are no makeup exams and very few acceptable excuses for missing one. Acceptable excuses include a death in the family, a University-sponsored event or excursion, or a serious illness documented by a doctor. Exams are all closed-book, closed-note, and closed-friend/neighbor. The format of the test will be discussed in the class meeting prior to the exam.

Exam I	Friday October 1, 2004	(in class)
Exam II	Monday November 22, 2004	(in class)
Comprehensive Final Exam	Monday December 13, 2004	12:45 – 2:45

Exam questions will reflect the material covered in class, homework and reading assignments, and the textbook.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS & INFORMATION

- I know about the traffic/parking nightmares on campus and am sympathetic, but I do request that you **be on time** if you choose to attend. If you arrive late, please come in quietly, settle quickly, and at least muster an apologetic expression for me. It is your responsibility to get any material that you miss. I will not provide lecture notes under any circumstances, so I recommend that you find a study-bud or two in the class.
- Please make sure that all cell phones and pagers are shut off during lecture. At a minimum, put these devices in silent mode and refrain from answering calls/pages/text messages during class.
- If you have a physical or learning disability that requires accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible and contact Services to Students with Disabilities at (916) 278-6955 to get the proper documentation well in advance of the first exam.
- Don't cheat. Neither of us really wants to have to deal with this situation, but my job is to teach you economics and give you a grade that reflects your knowledge of the subject. If you cheat, you force me to assume that you know zero, and that is precisely the grade you will get.
- It is useful to clarify the difference between acceptable group work and unacceptable sponging off of your unsuspecting neighbor. **I encourage you to work together on assignments, although every student is responsible for submitting his/her own answers.**
- There are some online resources available from the publisher of the Borjas textbook. These can be found at <http://www.mhhe.com/economics/borjas/> and http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072871776/student_view0/.
- This is not the type of class where you can learn the material on your own by looking through the textbook and someone else's notes the night before the exam. You have to keep up with the work and seek help when you don't understand something. Utilize class time, my office hours, and email to get your questions answered. Although I have specific office hours set aside, I maintain an open-door policy for students in my upper-division classes. If I'm in my office, I'll make time for you if at all possible, so please **BE PROACTIVE** and stop by.
- I am interested in your feedback and would prefer *not* to rely on the seven generic and basically useless evaluation questions that I am only able to read after the semester is already over. I am happy to listen to suggestions and criticisms in person or via email, but if you feel uncomfortable telling me what you really think, I've set up an anonymous feedback form on my website at www.csus.edu/indiv/h/howellj/econ150/overview150.htm. Yes, it's really anonymous. All I ask is that you make some attempt to be constructive when using this option and realize that, if you're looking for a direct response from me, you'll have to reveal your identity.