

SYLLABUS

Economics 200B:

Sacramento State University, Department of Economics

Spring 2015

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Advanced Microeconomic Theory

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!Please read this information carefully. It describes important course policies and deadlines, and I will assume that you are familiar with them!

Lectures: Th 5:30 – 8:20pm, Amador Hall 217

Office hours: Tu 3:00 – 4:00pm, Tahoe Hall 3011
Th 11:00 – 12:00noon, Tahoe Hall 3011
(Th 4:30 – 5:30pm, Tahoe Hall; Graduate Student Advising)
Please feel free to schedule appointments with me at other times as well. The best way to meet me outside of office hours is to email me and schedule a time. If you have any problems with this course, or with any other matters that may affect your work in this course, please contact me as soon as possible and we can try to work out a solution.

Course overview:

This course provides a comprehensive and accessible graduate-level introduction to the foundations and most important theoretic models used in modern microeconomics. By stressing the mathematical structure that is common to many microeconomic theories coupled with intuitive explanations, this course will facilitate your journey through the graduate program and beyond. It will also prepare you to better access the professional literature that builds on the many theoretical results derived in this course.

3 units.

Prerequisites: Econ 100B, Econ 100A, Econ 200M

Learning objectives:

This class will allow you to:

1. Understand the foundations, basic framework, and complexity of microeconomic theory.
 2. Recognize the contribution and limitations of traditional consumer and producer theories.
 3. Explore newer economic theories and modeling of more complex situations such as household production processes, decisions under uncertainty, models of imperfect competition, and the economics of information.
 4. Apply introduced theories in a discussion of your research interests.
 5. *Deepen your understanding of microeconomic theory.*
 6. *Sharpen your analytical and critical thinking skills.*
 7. *Improve your academic reading skills.*
- ⇒ Strengthen your academic research skills!

Required Text: Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions, Walter Nicholson and Christopher Snyder (11th ed.)
*Note: You can buy the textbook as a hard copy for \$261.95, rent for \$113.99, or use the ebook for \$78.49 directly through Cengage (<http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/>).
You can also use an earlier edition of the book or another book of similar content in order to reduce costs. However, you will be responsible for comparing the contents with the required text.*
Additional readings will be posted on our SacCT (<http://www.csus.edu/sacct>) class website.

Grades and exam policies:

Midterm: There will be one midterm exam given in class on **Thursday, March 12th**. The midterm will consist of a variety of types of questions and will require a solid understanding of the material covered in class and homework assignments. I grade exam answers based on the correctness, and the quality of the economic reasoning in the answer. Sometimes students give a correct answer but do not explain their answer well enough or write down all the steps, and sometimes students give an incorrect answer that shows solid economic reasoning, but with one or two minor mistakes, or typos. Thus, I give partial credit for all questions. Please check your schedule to ensure that you can attend the midterm. **There will be no make-up exams, and no early or late sittings for this exam.**

Final Paper: Instead of a final exam, you will be required to write a final paper. I will provide more information about the final paper throughout the semester. In the ideal case, this can be the start of your theory chapter of your Master's thesis. At a minimum, this should be a critical discussion of a published paper with sufficient theory content and connection to the material covered in class. The final paper is due on **Thursday, May 21st at 5:00pm**.

Participation: This is a graduate-level class. You are expected to be actively involved in the class, stay current on all of the assigned readings, be able to answer my (or other students) questions, and ask insightful questions of your own. I would like you to treat this class as a seminar or workshop where we learn together and from each other.

Homework: There will be five homework assignments. They will be introduced in class and are due the following week. I encourage you to work in groups, but the final submission should be your own work. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

<u>Final grade breakdown:</u>	Midterm:	20%	(100 points)
	Final Paper:	20%	(100 points)
	Participation:	10%	(50 points)
	Homework:	50%	(250 points)
		100%	(500 points)

The approximate final grade distribution is:

Percent	Grade
93 – 100%	A
90 – 92%	A-
85 – 89%	B+
75 – 84%	B

If you decide to withdraw from this class, make sure you do so with the registrar. If you withdraw without permission, you will be assigned a failing grade. A “WU” grade does affect your GPA unless you can petition to have it removed.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is expected as this class will be conducted in strict observance of the **Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures available in the University Policy Manual** (<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>). It assigns specific responsibilities to both faculty and students. Please review your responsibilities carefully and adhere to these rules. I encourage you to work together on problem sets and study in groups as I strongly believe it supports the learning process. However, work submitted for a grade must be your own.

Courtesy:

As a courtesy to me and your fellow students, please be on time for class. Please **turn off all cell phones and devices**. The use of laptops is not necessary during lecture. If you need to use your laptop during class, please let me know.

Disabilities:

If you have a learning disability or a physical disability that requires accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. All needs that have been verified through the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) will be accommodated.

Tentative Course Timeline:

Week	Topic	Readings (Nicholson and Snyder, 11th ed.)
Week 1 (Th 1/29)	Introduction, Course Overview, and Review (Economic Models and Mathematics of Optimization)	Chapter 1 and 2
Week 2 (Th 2/5)	Preferences, Utility Maximization and Demand	Chapter 3 and 4
Week 3 (Th 2/12)	Income and Substitution Effects and Consumer Welfare	Chapter 5
Week 4 (Th 2/19)	Demand Relationships among Goods, Household Production and Attribute Models	Chapter 6
Week 5 (Th 2/26)	Uncertainty	Chapter 7
Week 6 (Th 3/5)	Game Theory, <i>Review</i>	Chapter 8
Week 7 (Th 3/12)	Midterm	
Week 8 (Th 3/19)	Production Functions	Chapter 9
Week 9 (Th 3/26) Spring break: no class on 3/26		
Week 10 (Th 4/2)	Cost Functions and Profit Maximization	Chapter 10 and 11
Week 11 (Th 4/9)	Competitive Markets and Analysis	Chapter 12
Week 12 (Th 4/16)	Monopoly and Price Discrimination	Chapter 14
Week 13 (Th 4/23)	Bertrand and Cournot Models, Collusion and Product Differentiation	Chapter 15
Week 14 (Th 4/30)	Input markets: Labor Markets and Labor Supply (Capital Markets)	Chapter 16 (and 17)
Week 15 (Th 5/7)	Economics of Information	Chapter 18
Week 16 (Th 5/14)	Economics of Information (cont.)	Chapter 18
May 21st 5:00pm	Final Paper due	

I hope you will enjoy this class and I wish you a great, successful semester.