Economics 152: Economics of Education
Spring 2020

Dr. Brittany Bass

Class time: MW 3:00-4:15pm, Alpine Hall 138
Office hours: Wednesday 1:30pm-2:30pm; Thursday 2:00pm-3:00pm (and by appointment)
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Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the economics of education. It applies the tools of economic analysis to educational policy and problem solving. Topics include empirical tools of education economics; the foundations of education production and investment, including the returns to education; the signaling vs. human capital debate; education production functions; elementary and secondary education policies, including the financing of local public schools and the relationship between educational inputs and outputs; and higher education.

Learning Objectives:
The main objective of this course is for students to be able to discuss the role of education in the field of economics. This course will lay out the evidence regarding education policy as clearly as possible and provide students with the empirical and theoretical tools necessary to draw their own conclusions. After completing this course, students will have developed the skills needed to apply economic ideas and principles to core questions and problems in education and be able to think rigorously about how a specific type of policy impacts students, schools, and society.

Textbook and Readings:
Required text: Economics of Education, by Michael Lovenheim and Sarah Turner

Additional readings will be posted to Canvas or handed out in class periodically throughout the semester. It is also important to keep up with current education news via The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, USA Today, CNN, The New York Times, etc. We will often have class discussions regarding the additional readings, and questions may appear on any exam concerning our discussions.

Lecture Notes:
This class will be taught through a combination of slides and lecture notes written on the board. After each chapter, I will post the slides to Canvas. Please do not think that you can get by in this class by just relying on the lecture slides. They are not comprehensive, and much of the material that I will say in class or write on the board will not be covered in the slides. They are simply an outline of the chapter for you to follow.

Homework:
There will be 5 short homework assignments. Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas at least 1 week before they are due. Homework assignments should be submitted *as a hard copy* at the beginning of class on the day they are due. I will not accept late assignments or assignments turned in via email. No exceptions. Homework solutions should be submitted individually, but you are permitted and encouraged to work on the homework assignments together.

Group Presentations:
Throughout the semester, groups of students will be assigned to present on a published research paper in education economics. I will randomly assign the groups and assign each group a unique paper. The presentations will be 10-15 minutes in length, and every group member must present on a section of the paper. More details regarding the presentations will come as they approach. Students not presenting on the days of group presentations are required to come to class and read each paper being presented. The papers being presented will show up on your exams!

Exams:
There will be 1 midterm exam and 1 cumulative final exam in this course. The exams will include short answer and essay questions. The exams will require the use of a pen or pencil and a calculator. *You may not use your cellphone as a calculator*. There will be no make-up exams permitted in this class except in the most extreme of circumstances as determined by me. For medical situations, appropriate documentation must be provided. There may be extra credit questions on each exam.

Attendance and Participation:
Attendance is not mandatory, but it is *highly* encouraged. It is important that you understand that not attending this class will likely lower your grade and your understanding of the material. If you are not present, you cannot participate. If you do not participate, your grade will suffer (see below). There are many ways to participate in class and outside of class. You can participate in the class discussions of assigned readings, ask relevant questions during the lecture, ask follow-up questions via email, or stop by my office hours. *Please note that if you miss class, it is solely your responsibility to get any lecture materials from that day.*

Grading:
Your grade in this course will be based on the following distribution:

Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 30%
Homework: 20%
Group Presentation: 20%
Participation: 10%

Grading Scale (subject to change):
A: 90-100 D: 60-69
B: 80-89 F: ≤ 59
C: 70-79

Communication:
I will regularly communicate with the class via Canvas. This is where all of your homework assignments and your readings will be posted. Please check Canvas daily so you are up-to-date on all class activities. I recommend downloading the Canvas App and turning all of your notifications on. Please let me know, or the IT department know, as soon as possible if you cannot access Canvas, or are having any navigation issues.

Academic Integrity:
Academic dishonesty and cheating are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. Violations of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, unauthorized assistance on an exam, plagiarism, misappropriation of research materials, and unauthorized access of an instructor's files. Please familiarize yourself with the CSUS Standard for Student Conduct (https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/).

Accommodating Disabilities:
If you have or acquire any sort of disability that may require accommodation, please feel free to discuss it with me at your convenience. If you have a disability that does require immediate accommodation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall, Room 1008, (916) 278-6955. https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/

Tutoring services:
The Department of Economics has an on-site tutor for all economics classes. I will provide you with their information as soon as it becomes available to me. Additionally, please visit the Peer and Academic Resource Center (PARC) in Lassen Hall, Room 2200, if you have any advising or tutoring needs.

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change!):

Week	Date	Topic	Homework
1	1/22/20	Introduction/Ch 1 - Why Do Economists Study Education Policy?	
2	1/27/20	Ch 2 - Structure and History of Education Markets in the US	
	1/29/20	Ch 2 - Structure and History of Education Markets in the US	
3	2/3/20	Ch 3 - Empirical Tools in Education Economics	
	2/5/20	Ch 3 - Empirical Tools in Education Economics	
4	2/10/20	Ch 4 - The Human Capital Model	
	2/12/20	Ch 4 - The Human Capital Model	HW 1 Due
5	2/17/20	Ch 5 - The Signaling Model	
	2/19/20	Ch 5 - The Signaling Model	
6	2/24/20	Ch 6 - The Returns to Education Investment	
	2/26/20	Ch 6 - The Returns to Education Investment	HW 2 Due
7	3/2/20	**Group Presentations #1**	
	3/4/20	Ch 7 - The Education Production Function	
8	3/9/20	Ch 7 - The Education Production Function	
	3/11/20	**Midterm Exam**	HW 3 Due
9	3/16/20	Ch 8 - Financing of Local Public Schools	
	3/18/20	Ch 8 - Financing of Local Public Schools	
10	3/23/20	Ch 9 - Does Money Matter?	
	3/25/20	Ch 9 - Does Money Matter?	
11	3/30/20	No Class - Spring Break	
	4/1/20	No Class - Spring Break	
12	4/6/20	Ch 10 - School Choice	HW 4 Due
	4/8/20	Ch 10 - School Choice	
13	4/13/20	Ch 11 - Test Based Accountability Programs	
	4/15/20	Ch 11 - Test Based Accountability Programs	
14	4/20/20	Ch 12 - Teacher Labor Markets	
	4/22/20	Ch 12 - Teacher Labor Markets	
15	4/27/20	Ch 14 - Student Financial Aid Policies & Collegiate Enrollment	
	4/29/20	Ch 14 - Student Financial Aid Policies & Collegiate Enrollment	HW 5 Due
16	5/4/20	**Group Presentations #2**	
	5/6/20	Extra Topics/Final Exam Review	
17	5/11/20	**Final Exam from 3:00pm-5:00pm**	