Survey of Economics

Readings


Course Outline, 1st part

January 12  
Chapter 1 – An Introduction to Microeconomics
Chapter 2 – Supply and Demand

January 19  
Chapter 3 – The Theory of Consumer Choice
*Problemset #1*

January 26  
Chapter 4 – Individual and Market Demand

February 2  
Chapter 5 – Using Consumer Choice Theory (selectively)
*Problemset #2*

Course Outline, 2nd part

February 9  
Chapter 7 – Production

February 16*  
Chapter 8 – The Cost of Production
*Problemset #3*

February 23  
Midterm Examination

March 1  
Chapter 9 – Profit Maximization in Perfectly Competitive Markets
March 8    Chapter 11 – Monopoly

March 15   No class (spring break)

March 22   Chapter 12 – Product Pricing with Monopoly Power (selectively)
           Chapter 13 – Monopolistic Competition and Oligopoly
           Problemset #4

March 29   Chapter 13 – Monopolistic Competition and Oligopoly

April 5    Chapter 14 – Game Theory and the Economics of Information
           Chapter 15 – Using Noncompetitive Market Models (selectively)

April 12   Chapter 17 – Wages, Rent, Interest and Profit
           Problemset #5

**Course Outline, 3rd part**

April 19   Chapter 20 – Public Goods and Externalities

April 26* (?) **Final Examination**
Course Requirements and Grading

The final grade for the course will reflect combined performance in two exams, problem sets, and in-class participation. More specifically, the final examination will count for 50% of the grade, the midterm examination will count for 30% of the grade, and the problem sets will count for the remaining 20% of the grade. Your active presence in class may play a significant role in “marginal” situations.

Tips

• It is highly advisable that you try to keep up with the readings; last-minute cramming will probably result in frustration and less than satisfactory performance.
• Although there are no penalties for missing one or more lectures, you should make your best to be in class during all sessions as the lectures will be highly suggestive of the themes that are most important for you to know.
• Forming groups to work through the course material is probably a good idea. However, relying on your partners to do the work for you will prove counterproductive as in the end you will be judged by your individual performance. In other words, the best studying technique probably consists of the following step sequence, session after session: (a) individual study of the material; (b) group work to discuss the material and answer specific questions; (c) individual study of the material.
• While it is tempting to have the strongest member(s) of a group produce the answers to the problem set questions, this strategy will also prove counterproductive in the end. The 3-step strategy outlined above will probably prove most beneficial to all.
• Try to go quickly over the material to be covered in the next class session before the actual session. This way you will get the most out of the lecture, guaranteed.
• If you have questions, please ask them. There are no smart and stupid questions.
• If you know the math as a result of prior technical education, do not underestimate the material. Economics is a social science and like business and policy analysis has strong features of an “art” requiring frequently that you use your intuition in order to combine concepts whose complexity is many orders of magnitude higher than any problem that can currently be solved mathematically.
• If you don’t know the math, convince yourself that there is nothing scary in a graph or in an equation. Economists just use math as a convenient, shorthand language. It helps making your argument more concrete for others to understand and communicate back to you their opinion. While theories and math cannot represent reality, they provide a step towards understanding reality. Their value should not be dismissed.
• Although I must give individual grades at the end of the semester, please do not think of me as the Grand Inquisitor. I am here to assist all of you get the best grades. I get equally disappointed as you do with those who register less than satisfactory performance.
• Treat this course as a useful background course. It may not provide the exact answers to the specific questions of interest to you in your respective field of studies but it will certainly built a useful background to help understand socioeconomic behavior.