

Economics 100A: Economic Analysis – Micro

Lecture: Tuesday, Thursday, 5:00 – 6:30, Wheeler Auditorium

Course Description:

This course will teach you the core microeconomic models of consumers, firms, and markets, and how to use those models to analyze real-world economic situations. The emphasis is on analysis: how do we take a set of simplistic assumptions about human behavior, transform them into a simple mathematical model, and then use the model to analyze the economic consequences of consumer or firm choices and/or government policies. In addition to learning how to do analysis, you will learn some of the basic and generalizable insights that economists have derived from these basic models. Along the way you will become comfortable using math, both as a tool for problem solving, and as a language for communicating ideas.

Prerequisites and Math:

The prerequisites are: ECON 1, 2 or C3, or ENVECON 1; MATH 1A or 16A; MATH 1B or 16B; or equivalent. If you do not have these prerequisites, do not enroll in this class. The class involves a considerable amount of calculus, some of which may be new to you. We will support you in learning whatever math you need, but some of you will need to work hard to acquire the necessary math proficiency.

Enrollment:

Please direct ALL enrollment questions to the departmental head GSI, Preston Mui: headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu. (Including instructor approval requests.) His office hours are posted on his office door, 548 Evans.

As per department policy, in order to remain enrolled in the course you must attend the first two sessions of your assigned section. If you do not attend section by that deadline, you will automatically be dropped from the entire course.

Instructor Office Hours:

- OH for problem sets and exams: Fridays, 2:00-4:00pm, 597 Evans. Group format.
- OH for everything else: Mondays, 3:00-4:00pm, 358 GSPP. One-on-one format.

In my one-on-one OH, I welcome questions about any aspect of economics, college, career, or life.

Email:

My address is acland@berkeley.edu. Feel free to email me about anything *except* problem sets and exams. Please maintain professionalism: begin each email with “Dear Prof. Acland”, use complete words, sentences, and paragraphs, and include your name.

bCourses and Piazza:

The bCourse site for the course is “Intermediate Microeconomics (Fall 2019)”. We will use bCourses for posting assignments and sending announcements. It is your responsibility to read all announcements carefully.

In addition, we will use Piazza to answer questions about problem sets and exams. Post questions related to problem sets, sections, exams etc. to Piazza instead of emailing me or your GSI. You are encouraged to post answers to classmates’ questions. The GSIs will monitor Piazza, flag good answers, and offer their own responses.

Please note that your posts are not anonymous to the instructor and GSIs.

Sections and GSIs

Your GSI will review material from lecture and help prepare you for the problem sets and exams. You must attend the section that you are officially enrolled in. You may not attend office hours for any GSI other than your own.

For questions about problem sets and exams, use Piazza. If you send questions about problem sets and exams to your GSI, they will send you to Piazza. For other questions and issues, email your GSI. If you have concerns or constructive criticism about your GSI, please let me know. I will preserve your anonymity wherever possible.

Course Capture:

Course capture recordings of the lectures will be available on bCourses.

Multi-tasking:

I do not allow multi-tasking during lectures. Please observe the following rules: No laptops or tablets. (Unless you feel you need to be exempted, for which you must have a DSP accommodation, or permission from me.) No texting. No use of smart phones or any other portable electronic devices. No outside work. No talking. (Very brief, whispered comments on the material are okay.) I will enforce these rules with mild public embarrassment.

Book and iClicker:

The textbook is Hal Varian, “Intermediate Microeconomics, A Modern Approach” 9th edition. It is available at ASUC or online. There is more than one Varian book. Make sure you get the right one. If you get a previous edition, the chapter/section numbers may not be the same. It is up to you to figure out what readings to do.

In addition, you will need an iClicker. You can buy an iClicker at ASUC or online. To register your iClicker, use the bCourses iClicker tab. **Do not register on the iClicker website.** Do not borrow a clicker from a friend.

Class Participation:

You will be graded on participation in lecture. You can earn one participation point per lecture. To earn a participation point you must participate in every iClicker activity in a lecture. Participation grading will begin on Tuesday, Sept 3. You will get four “free passes” on lecture participation over the course of the semester.

You are responsible for registering your iClicker. If your iClicker is not correctly registered, you will not get participation credit. If you forget your iClicker or it stops working, that will count as one of your free passes. There are no exceptions, even if your clicker stops working or runs out of battery.

Having someone else use your clicker for you, or using someone else’s clicker for them, are not allowed.

Problem Sets:

There will be a problem set every week. Upload problem sets to Gradescope. There will be no excused problem sets due to not being able to upload. You must figure out how to create a pdf and upload it. The first twelve problem sets are due at 5:10 on the Tuesday after they are assigned. The final problem set is due on the last day of class. Extensive solutions will be posted after the due date. The solutions are required reading.

I encourage you to work with a study group, but each student must work on each problem. There is a Piazza post about forming study groups. I *strongly* encourage you to attempt each problem on your own before meeting with your group. Excellent exam scores will require that you be able to tackle problems you have not seen before, and the best way to prepare for this is to try as hard as possible to solve the problem sets on our own.

Problem sets will be scored on a 1 to 10 scale, and will be graded primarily for completeness. Late problem sets will not be accepted. If you have a documented, university approved excuse, a problem set may be dropped. Your lowest problem set will be dropped. Copying any part of a problem set from another student, or any other source, is not allowed. Your work must be your own. See “Academic Honesty” below.

Exams:

There will be two midterms and a final. The final will be cumulative. Exams will include some questions similar to the problem sets, and some problems that will be less familiar to you. To receive excellent scores on the exams you will need to be able to tackle the less familiar problems.

There are no make-up exams. If you need to miss a midterm you must contact me before 8:00 am on the day of the exam with an excuse that meets University standards¹ Please be prepared to provide whatever documentation is necessary to support your excuse. I will give you an additional assignment. If it is completed satisfactorily,

¹Religious holidays must be recognized by the University or accompanied by a letter from a religious leader. A death in the family must be documented. Illness or injury must be accompanied by a note from a physician or clinic, on their letterhead. Please note that extreme stress and other psychological symptoms can count as a legitimate medical excuse. The Tang Center can provide you with documentation.

your other exams will be reweighted. If you do not have an appropriate, documented excuse, or if you do not complete the alternative assignment satisfactorily, you will receive a zero for the midterm.

If you miss the final with a University approved excuse, you will receive an incomplete for the course and will be required to take the final for the course in spring, summer or fall of 2020 in order to receive a letter grade. Please note that travel plans are not an approved excuse for missing an exam. If you make travel plans that conflict with the final for any reason other than a University approved excuse, you will receive a zero for the final.

The midterms will be held at the regular lecture time and location. See course outline for dates. If there is a fire alarm during an exam we will continue the exam outdoors, rain or shine.

Student-athletes and musicians must be familiar with the policy on academic conflicts.² Written notification of scheduled or potential conflicts must be sent to the 100A Head GSI (jimmy.narang@berkeley.edu) by Sept 6.

Grades, Grading, and Regrading:

Your grade will initially be weighted as follows: Lecture participation, 10%; Problem sets, 15%; Midterm 1, 20%; Midterm 2, 25%; Final, 40%. These numbers total 110%. The weight for your weakest exam (the one for which you rank lowest) will then be reduced by 10% so that the final weights will total 100%. For example, if your final is your weakest exam it will count for only 30% of your grade.

Omissions or clerical errors on exams will be corrected upon request. Substantive re-grade requests for midterms must be submitted in writing to your GSI within one week of getting your graded exam back. Your entire exam will be regraded —by me — and your grade may go up or down. There will be no re-grades on problem sets.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating is dishonorable and causes harm to others. It is also a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

- Cheating on an exam will result in an F for the course. Incidences of cheating will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct, which may administer additional punishment.
- Copying any part of a problem set will result in a zero for all problem sets and a reduction of one full letter grade (e.g. from A- to B-) in your final grade for the class.
- Using someone else's clicker, or having someone use yours, will result in a zero for all lecture participation and a reduction of one full letter grade (e.g. from A- to B-) in your final grade for the class.

Special Accommodations:

If you require disability-related accommodations you must obtain a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) from Disabled Students' Program (<http://dsp.berkeley.edu>, 260 César Chávez Center). DSP's Proctoring Service requires notice of participants at least two weeks in advance of an exam. Request for exam accommodation must be received and acknowledged by me or the course head GSI (jimmy.narang@berkeley.edu) at least two weeks before an exam, which is DSP's own internal deadline for scheduling the proctoring of exams. If your letter is not received by this deadline, we will not be able to accommodate you.

Additional Resources / Tutoring:

There are 3 additional tutoring resources which you can read about at the department's tutoring websites

1. Econ 100A Tutors: Econ PhD students hold additional office hours which all students may attend.
2. A list of tutors-for-hire (about \$50/hour) is also available on the website.
3. Finally, the Student Learning Center (SLC) offers free Study Group and Drop-in Tutoring for Economics 100A.

Asking for Help:

Everyone needs help sometimes. Feel free to approach me about anything that is affecting your learning, your academic success, or your happiness. You are unlikely to have any difficulty that has not been shared by thousands of students before you, and I guarantee you, whatever it is, I won't be surprised or shocked.

² <http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/guide-acad-sched-conflicts-final-2014.pdf>

Course Outline

1	Th, Aug 29	Introduction	No reading assignment
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Consumption

2	Tu, Sep 3	Budget Constraint	Ch 2
3	Th, Sep 5	Preferences	Ch 3
4	Tu, Sep 10	Utility	Ch 4
5	Th, Sep 12	Choice	Ch 5
6	Tu, Sep 17	Demand	Ch 6
7	Th, Sep 19	Slutsky Equation	Ch 8

Tu, Sep 24	Midterm 1	Regular room and time	
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8	Th, Sep 26	Consumer's Surplus	Ch 14
9	Tu, Oct 1	Market Demand	Ch 15
10	Th, Sep 3	Equilibrium	Ch 16
11	Tu, Oct 8	Labor Supply	Sec 9.8, 9.9
12	Th, Oct 10	Uncertainty	Ch 12

Production

13	Tu, Oct 15	Technology	Ch 19
14	Th, Oct 17	Profit Maximization	Ch 20
15	Tu, Oct 22	Cost Minimization	Ch 21
16	Th, Oct 24	Cost Curves and Firm Supply	Ch 22, 23

Tu, Oct 29	Midterm 2	Regular room and time	
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17	Th, Oct 31	Industry Supply	Ch 24
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Market Failure and Game Theory

18	Tu, Nov 5	Monopoly	Ch 25
19	Th, Nov 7	Monopoly Behavior	Ch 26
20	Tu, Nov 12	Game Theory	Ch 29
21	Th, Nov 14	Game Theory Applications	No reading
22	Tu, Nov 19	Oligopoly	Ch 28
23	Th, Nov 21	Public Goods	Ch 37
24	Tu, Nov 26	Externalities	Ch 35
25	Tu, Dec 3	Adverse Selection	Ch 38
26	Th, Dec 5	Conclusion	

Tu, Dec 10	Review for final exam	Usual time and location	
Th, Dec 19	Final exam	11:30–2:30 pm, location TBA.	