

# EC330: Urban Economics

Andrew Dickinson

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Office Hours: **W 14:00-15:00 & F 10:00-11:00 PST**

Office: **PLC 417**

Class Hours: **T,R 10:00-11:20 PST**

Class Room: **CHI 128**

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Please take time to read through this document

## Course Description

Economics is all about people and incentives. Urban economics is about people, incentives, **and** their location choices.

This course will probe a broad array of topics related to phenomena that arise from cities. We will begin by analyzing basic economic principles that describe the existence of cities. The first half of the course will introduce students to various models and theories commonly used in urban economics. Equipped with these tools, we will cover intra- and intercity topics such as inequality, transportation, growth, and environmental issues. Students will be introduced to cornerstone models, theories, and practices in the field.

## Not Remote Learning

We are back for in-person learning! I am excited and hope you are too. I need to make two points clear. First, I am not going to record lectures for now. If you need to quarantine or test positive for COVID, I will provide you with additional course materials. I *may* post slides online. Second, we need to respect University policy on current COVID regulations. We should expect these to change— see [here](#) for the latest. I will enforce current University policy strictly (e.g. you will be asked to leave if you fail to comply with current guidelines)

## Academic Dishonesty

I want to emphasize the course and university policies on academic dishonesty. I am emphasizing these policies because I want to make it clear: I do not tolerate cheating. Please see the following from the University for some specifics.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](https://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without explicit permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas).

If there is any question about whether a particular activity constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the matter with the instructor before engaging in or attempting to engage in the activity. Please contact me with any questions you have about academic misconduct. Additional information about maintaining your academic integrity is available at [integrity.uoregon.edu](https://integrity.uoregon.edu). Information about plagiarism is available at [researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism](https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism).

– The Office of the Dean of Students

## Course Setup

### Prerequisites

You must have successfully completed **EC201** prior to taking EC330. Economic concepts are often presented in mathematical models. This course assumes proficiency in algebra and geometry. The models we will work with in this course will be graph based. Thus calculus is **not** required.

### Course Objectives

The goal of this course is for students to glean insight on models and topics related to urban economics. Successful students will be able to carefully articulate why cities exist, what drives differences in success across cities, and the efficacy of various place-based policies. Additionally, successful students will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the mathematical (algebraic and graphical) models developed in this course.

### Course materials

There is no official *textbook* for this course. However, you will be expected to read the entirety of Edward Glaeser's **Triumph of the City (TotC)** ([alternative link](#)). Exam questions will be based primarily on my lecture notes and TotC. Some of this course will follow *Urban Economics* by Arthur O'Sullivan, although the book is not required for this course. The Duck Store is not carrying it for this course (although it may be for EC432). I don't recommend that you purchase the 8th edition of O'Sullivan's *Urban Economics* at The Duck Store. (Note that the high prices there are the fault of the publisher McGraw Hill). Instead, if you'd like to have a version of the textbook as an additional resource purchase a used copy of the 7th edition (or older) on the internet. A copy

of the 8th edition is on reserve at the Knight Library and pdfs are easy to find online via Google.

The content of TotC will cover a lot of course material. It is the expectation that you keep up with the required reading that will be posted in lecture. Some class time will be dedicated to discussion of the required reading. TotC is a wonderful book that is interesting and easy to read. It presents much of the material of this course in an organized and accessible way that I cannot outdo in lecture. Thus the content of this book will be the subject of many questions on problem sets and exams and 10% of your grade will be based on a short book report that is due at the end of the term.

### Problem sets

All assignments will be submitted via canvas. Specific instructions for submission will be posted on canvas. Late assignments will not be accepted. You are encouraged to work on problem sets with other students, but all answers written on your problem set must be in your own words and turned in separately. Group sizes must be limited to three and you all must clearly indicate your group mates at the top of your assignment. Simply copying someone else's work is cheating. If such duplication is detected all problem sets involved will receive a zero, regardless of which student did the work and which did the copying.

The problem sets are intended to help students prepare for the exams. They will be a good indicator of your understanding and I will encourage you to use them as great study material to prepare for the two exams in this course.

**One** problem set may be dropped at the end of the quarter.

### Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam. The final exam will be comprehensive, but it will be more heavily weighted toward material presented in the latter half of the course. No make-up exams will be given. Let me know as soon as possible if you cannot make it to the midterm. If a serious illness or emergency prevents you from taking an exam at the scheduled date, contact me **before the exam** via email (adickin3@uoregon.edu).

Excused absences from the midterm will lead to a reweighting of the final exam to **70 %** of your grade. Excused absences will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances. An **unexcused** absence from the midterm will result in scoring a zero on that exam, with devastating effects on your course grade. An unexcused absence for the final exam will likely result in a failing grade. Make-up exams will not be given for any reason. In the case of a missed midterm due to unanticipated emergency situations, the student will be allowed to put the weight of the missed midterm on the final, provided notification is received as soon as possible and there is verification of the emergency. **DO NOT** take this class if you already know you cannot make one of the scheduled exams. The midterm will take place during scheduled class time on Thursday, November 4th and will cover all material prior to the midterm. The final will be cumulative and be held during class time during the final lecture.

## Book Report

As mentioned above, over the term you are expected to read Edward Glaeser's *Triumph of the City*. You will be asked to write a report based on your reflections on the content and themes of the book. The specific assignment and a detailed rubric for this written report will be provided early in the term, and the report itself will be due on Canvas on **Sunday, Nov 30th**.

## Grading Policy

There will be a total of 500 points available. The following gives the breakdown of how points will be allocated

- 40% Final exam (1x, 200 points)
- 30% Midterm exam (1x, 150 points)
- 20% Problem sets (4x, 25 points each)
- 10% Triumph of the Cities report (1x, 50 points)

Due dates for assignments and exam dates can be found on the class schedule starting on page 7. The economics department has a uniform grading standard. In 300 and 400 level classes, roughly 65% of the class will receive A's and B's. Your grade will be determined relative to your peers, so during the course, I will not be able to tell you what your exact letter grade is at any point in time, because it depends on the scores of everyone else at the end of the course.

## Course Policies

### Email Policy

This should go without saying, but when sending an email, you must have at least four parts:

- (1) A subject that is at-least somewhat relevant to the email (e.g. "EC330 HW1 Question")
- (2) A salutation (e.g. "Hi John," or "Hello John,")
- (3) The message itself (e.g. "I am having some trouble understanding what you meant by X on question Y. Can you please clarify?")
- (4) Sign-off with your name (e.g. "Best, your name", or "Thank you, your name" ,or even just "- your name")

On weekdays, I will endeavor to reply to (compliant) emails within 24 hours. If I don't, feel free to follow up. Please email the grader regarding questions about why you lost points on a particular question. I will have the final word on all disputes. For questions about content or dispute resolution, always email me. I will let you know who grades the assignment/test before it is posted. Email is my preferred method of communication though messages on Canvas also work.

I cannot stress enough how many redundant emails I receive as an instructor. This term there are 90 of you. Please read the syllabus to make sure you don't email me with questions that are already answered. Also please get in contact with a classmate so if you must miss class, you have a contact that will fill you in on the important information you missed that day.

## Attendance

It is my expectation that you all show up to class everyday. Of course, things happen and we all need to skip every once in a while. But do not make a habit of it. At the end of the quarter, if you are on a grade bubble, I will be much more inclined to move your grade up if you were a regular attendee/participant in class.

## During Lectures

**Remote learning:** Please be respectful during the zoom lectures. I will stop periodically to ask if anyone has questions. Feel free to use the “raise-hand” feature during a lecture to ask something. I reserve the right to kick people out of the lecture for any behavior I deem as inappropriate. If I ever move past a slide too quickly, please interrupt me and I will go back.

**Classroom learning:** Electronic note taking devices are fine in class. But I will require that all laptop users sit in the back or to the far left/right so that you do not distract any of your peers. Tablets used for writing are fine so long as they do not become a distraction. If you cannot understand my handwriting, please raise your hand and I will clarify.

## Copyright Notice

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture slides, exams, and problem sets are protected by copyright. You are granted permission to access materials and make copies and derivative works for your personal use. **You may not record the lectures.** You may not distribute course materials to any other person, regardless of student status, without express written permission from me. The sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University’s Student Conduct Code (Section V.2.f.F), which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students. Additionally, any unauthorized copying of class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in further action.

## Accommodations for Disabilities

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are any aspects of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. For more information or assistance, contact the Accessible Education Center: 164 Oregon Hall | 541-346-1155 | [aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu).

If you require special accommodations of any kind due to a documented disability please have the Accessible Education Center send me a letter verifying your need and detailing the appropriate accommodations. This is typically done automatically by the AEC at the beginning of a term. If there are new accommodations during a term or any changes to any existing accommodations please keep me advised as soon as possible.

If your accommodations involve any proctoring of exams at the AEC you will be responsible for scheduling those exams with sufficient anticipation with the AEC. Keep in mind that proctored midterms need to be scheduled at least seven days in advance and that proctored final exams

need to be scheduled by the 5:00pm of the Friday of week 8 of the course. As you can see on the next page, the exams for this course are already set. I recommend that you make the necessary arrangements with AEC now.

## **Diversity**

The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community. This course is committed to upholding these principles by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of distinct perspectives and diverse identities. All of us associated with the course—you included—are expected to value each class member's experiences and contributions and to communicate disagreements respectfully. Please notify me if you feel aspects of the course undermine these principles in any way. You may also notify the Department of Economics at 541- 346-8845. For additional assistance and resources, you are also encouraged to contact the following campus services:

- Office of Equity and Inclusion: 1 Johnson Hall | 541-346-3175 | [inclusion.uoregon.edu](http://inclusion.uoregon.edu)
- Center on Diversity and Community: 54 Susan Campbell Hall | 541-346-3212 | [codac.uoregon.edu](http://codac.uoregon.edu)
- Bias Education and Response Team: 541-346-1134 | [brt@uoregon.edu](mailto:brt@uoregon.edu) | [dos.uoregon.edu/bias](http://dos.uoregon.edu/bias)

## Schedule

Below is a rough course outline. Remember: TotC = Triumph of the City. Lecture topics and due dates are subject to change; however, the date and time of the final is set.

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### Week 1 *Introduction + Review*

- Lecture 1 (Sept. 28th): Welcome & Introduction to Urban Economics
- Lecture 2 (Sept. 30th): EC 201 Review & The 5 Axioms of Urban Economics

#### Action Items

- Read introduction of *ToTC*
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### Week 2 *Cities & Firm Clustering*

- Lecture 3 (Oct. 5th): EC 201 Review & The 5 Axioms of Urban Economics
- Lecture 4 (Oct. 7th): City Size

#### Action Items

- Read Chapter 1 & 2 of *ToTC*
  - PS01 posted - due Oct 14th
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### Week 3 *Land Use & Rents*

- Lecture 5 (Oct. 12th): City Size
- Lecture 6 (Oct. 14th): Firm Clustering & City Growth

#### Action Items

- Read Chapter 3 & 4 of *ToTC*
  - PS01 due (Oct 19th)
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### Week 4 *Neighborhood Choice*

- Lecture 7 (Oct. 19th): Rents & Urban Land Use
- Lecture 8 (Oct. 21st): Rents & Urban Land Use

#### Action Items

- Read Chapter 5 & 6 of *ToTC*
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**Week 5** *Local Labor Markets*

- Lecture 9 (Oct. 26th): Neighborhood Choice
- Lecture 10 (Oct. 28th): Local Labor Markets

**Action Items**

- Read Chapter 7 of *ToTC*
  - PS02 due Oct 28th
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**Week 6** *Midterm*

- Lecture 11 (Nov. 2nd): Introduction to Place-Based Policy
- Lecture 12 (Nov. 4th): **Midterm**

**Action Items**

- **Midterm Exam**
  - Read Chapter 7 of *ToTC*
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**Week 7** *Labor markets (continued)*

- Lecture 13 (Nov. 9th): Minimum Wage
- Lecture 14 (Nov. 11th): **Veterans day: no class**

**Action Items**

- Read Chapter 7 of *ToTC*
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**Week 8** *Place based policies*

- Lecture 15 (Nov. 16th): Minimum wage + Causal inference
- Lecture 16 (Nov. 18th): Causal inference + Placed based policies

**Action Items**

- PS03 due on Nov. 30th
  - Chapter 8 of *TotC*
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**Week 9** *Place based policies*

- Lecture 17 (Nov. 23rd): Place based policies
- Lecture 18 (Nov. 25th): **Thanksgiving Holiday: No class**

**Action Items**

- PS03 due on Nov. 30th
  - Finish TotC
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**Week 10** *Topics in Urban Economics*

- Lecture 19 (Nov. 30th): The geography of income inequality
- Lecture 20 (Dec. 2nd): The geography of income inequality

**Action Items**

- Study for the final
  - PS03 due on Nov. 30th
  - PS04 due on Sunday Dec. 5th at 12pm
  - **ToTC report due on Canvas by midnight on Sunday, Dec 5th**
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**Week 11** *Finals Week*

- **Final Exam December 8th @ 8:00 am PST at CHI 128**