

EC330: Urban Economics

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Office Hours: TBD

Office: PLC 523

Class Hours: MW 15:00-16:20

Class Room: 220 CHA

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.

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. I don't recommend that you purchase the 8th edition of O'Sullivan's *Urban Economics* (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 xxx% 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 as a pdf. 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 the most important study material to prepare for the two exams in this course. Some students may find the problem sets difficult. I recommend that everyone start the problem sets early and come to class and office hours with questions—I can help you navigate past difficulties you may have.

The lowest scored problem set will 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 re-weighting of the final exam to 75% 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 XXX 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, Dec 4th.

Grading Policy

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

- 45% Final exam (1x, 225 points)
- 30% Midterm exam (1x, 150 points)
- 15% Problem sets (3x (1 is dropped), 25 points each)
- 10% Triumph of the Cities report (1x, 50 points)

Rough 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 two parts:

- (i) A subject that is at-least somewhat relevant to the email (e.g. "EC330 HW1 Question")
- (ii) The message itself (e.g. "I am having some trouble understanding what you meant by X on question Y. Can you please clarify?")

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.

I cannot stress enough how many redundant emails I receive as an instructor. 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

Attendance is not recorded but the expectation is that you attend every lecture. Of course, things happen and some may need to skip class every once in a while. But do not make a habit of it. In my experience, the relationship between attendance and exam grades is clear. Almost every student I have received a failing grade in this class did not attend lecture regularly. This class does not require much math, but economics at its heart is a mathematical discipline. Lectures will be a mixture of slides and in class examples that directly translate to the problem sets which are written to help you with the exams. Furthermore, 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. I cannot give you any benefit of the doubt if I have never seen you before.

During Lectures

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.

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.

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.

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) 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. Information about plagiarism is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

– The Office of the Dean of Students

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
- Center on Diversity and Community: 54 Susan Campbell Hall | 541-346-3212 | codac.uoregon.edu
- Bias Education and Response Team: 541-346-1134 | brt@uoregon.edu | dos.uoregon.edu/bias