

American University

Department of Economics

ECON 200.005
Microeconomics
Fall 2008
M, Th: 8:30am – 9:45am
Ward 3

Aaron Pacitti
Office: Roper 207
Email: aaron.pacitti@american.edu
Office Hours: W 10:00am – 11:15am
(and by appointment)

– Syllabus –

Course Objectives

This course will provide an introduction to the basic principles of microeconomics. While macroeconomics looks at the economy as a whole, microeconomics focuses on individual economic actors (consumers and producers) and their decision making process. It seeks to explain why and how people make choices and what effects these choices have on market outcomes. We will discover how prices are formed and how these prices serve to allocate society's resources. The goal of this course is to get you thinking like an economist. Economic analysis is a very powerful tool that has applications to not only the economy, but to public policy, government, history, and virtually every aspect of modern society.

Required Textbooks

David C. Colander, *Microeconomics*. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2008.

General Education Requirements

ECON 200 Microeconomics is one of nine second-level courses in Curricular Area 4 (Social Institutions and Behavior), Cluster 1 (Institutions) in American University's General Education Program. It is the second of a two-course sequence. For students who have taken ECON 100 Macroeconomics, this course satisfies the General Education requirement for Social Institutions and Behavior. For more information regarding the General Education program, please see <http://www.gened.american.edu>.

Academic Integrity

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm>). By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. The minimum sanction for violations of the academic integrity code is an F for the course. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

Course Requirements

Exams – Two exams will be given: a midterm on **Thursday, October 16th** and a final on **Monday, December 8th (8:30am – 9:45am)**. The final exam will not be cumulative. No make-up exams will be given (except in the case of documented medical or other emergencies).

Papers – There will be two writing assignments that require you to apply concepts we have discussed in class to relevant current economic events. Paper 1 is a short graphical exercise and is due on **Monday, September 22nd** and paper 2 is research oriented and is due on **Thursday, November 6th**. Papers must be submitted as typed hard copies: no assignments will be accepted via email. All assignments must be turned in on the due dates listed above.

Grading

A student's final grade is determined by their performance on the four above-listed assignments. I do not give extra credit assignments for any reason. Class participation is an important part of this course and a student's involvement in

discussions can help them if they fall between two grades at the end of the semester. Significant improvement in a student's performance during the semester will be weighed on an individual basis upon final evaluation. The specific weights of assignments that will determine your final grade are as follows:

Midterm: 35 percent
Final: 35 percent
Paper 1: 10 percent
Paper 2: 20 percent

Evaluation of a student's performance in this course will be determined by the following criteria:

A: demonstration of superlative work in fulfillment of course requirements
A: 93 – 100; A-: 90 – 92

B: excellent work in fulfillment of course requirements
B+: 87 – 89; B: 83 – 86; B-: 80 – 82

C: satisfactory work in fulfillment of course requirements
C+: 77 – 79; C: 73 – 76; C-: 70 – 72

D: assigned work is not satisfactory or not completed
D: 60 – 69

F: failure to meet minimum course requirements
F: 0 – 59

Attendance

You are expected to attend all of the classes during the course of the semester. You are expected to be in class on time. Absences will be excused for medical reasons or extenuating circumstances only. Attendance will be taken at random. You will not be penalized for one absence. However, each additional absence prior to an exam will subtract two points from your test score.

Supplemental Instruction (SI)

This course will participate in the Academic Support Center's SI program. SI is an interactive program facilitated by a student who has previously done well in the class. SI review sessions are one hour long and occur twice per week. They focus on both course content and study strategies. The sessions are student-run and student-driven and the names of participants are kept confidential. Refer to the following website for more information:
<http://www.american.edu/ocl/asc/supplementalinst/supplementalinst.html>.

Course Schedule

The dates for each section are tentative. Additional readings may be added throughout the semester. Readings other than the required texts can be accessed through the course's Blackboard site.

1. The Economic Approach (Aug. 25, 28, Sept. 4)

Colander, chs. 1, 2, 3

Note: No class on Monday, Sept. 1

2. Supply & Demand (Sept. 8, 11, 15)

Colander, chs. 4, 5

3. Elasticity (Sept. 18, 22, 25)

Colander, chs. 6, 7

Paper 1 due Monday, Sept. 22

4. Choice & Demand: Consumer Behavior (Sept. 29, Oct. 2, 6)

Colander, ch. 8

5. Production & Costs: Firm Behavior (Oct. 9, 13)

Colander, chs. 9, 10

Midterm: Thursday, Oct. 16 (Sections 1-5)

Note: No class on Monday, Oct. 20

6. Market Structure (Oct. 23, 27, 30, Nov. 3)

Colander, chs. 11, 12, 13, 14

7. Competition & Policy (Nov. 6, 10)

Colander, chs. 15, 16

Paper 2 due Thursday, Nov. 6

8. Labor Markets & Income Distribution (Nov. 13, 17)

Colander, chs. 17, 18

9. Market Failure & Government (Nov. 20, 24)

Colander, chs. 19, 20

Note: No class on Thursday, Nov. 27

10. International Trade & Globalization (Dec. 1, 4)

Colander, ch. 21

Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 8 (Sections 6-10, 8:30 – 9:45am)