

Online Microeconomics (Econ 1B) – Winter 2009

Economics - everything we know in a language we don't understand.

Instructor: Brian Evans

Office: 1940

To Contact me: In Etudes go to Discussion and Private Messages and click on Private Messages (near the top of the screen); then click on the "newpm" icon. Finally you must scroll down to my name (Evans, Brian) on the list of students. Please *don't* use my school email for class related stuff... but here it is just in case: evansbrian@fhda.edu

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Print and *read* this syllabus. You will refer to it many times over the next three months.

Course Overview: Over the past twenty years many countries have adopted a "market economy." What does this mean? How does it all work? What are the problems with a market economy? Can we do anything to correct these problems? This course attempts to answer these fundamental questions from a microeconomic perspective. Outside material will be used to connect the textbook to the real world around us. No prior knowledge of economics is assumed but we do use some algebra and analyze lots of graphs.



Testing: There will be 3 open-book online multiple-choice quizzes and 1 closed-book in-person comprehensive short-answer final exam. The 3 online quizzes are 2 hours each and may be taken anytime between 1 - 11:45 PM on the day of the quiz. Quiz dates are listed in the study schedule toward the end of this syllabus. **Dates and times are NOT NEGOTIABLE** as I can't accommodate everyone's schedule. Sorry to be rigid - hope you understand.

The final is in-person at Foothill College. If you do not live near Foothill then you can find an educational institution/library that, with my approval, can proctor the exam. *If you need to arrange this please inform me no later than 3 weeks into the quarter.* If I have not approved a proctor for you by **the end of the 8th week of classes** then you will not be able to take the final off-campus. This means an F for the final.

When you come to the final please bring a simple calculator (no cell phones), *8 quarters for a parking permit.* and *a valid drivers license or passport for ID.* I will NOT accept school IDs (including Owl Cards), work IDs, astronaut application forms, or any other random piece of identification as your primary ID (although they may be helpful as secondary IDs). Be prepared to prove to us that you are you. If another student poses as you then you both risk expulsion (as well as, of course, failing the class). By taking this class you agree to abide by the Foothill College Academic Honor Code (which you have the option of reading every time

you enter Etudes). By the same token, you are expected to take all online tests alone - if I discover you are collaborating then you risk expulsion. It is NOT worth it.

Required textbook: Either Colander, Microeconomics: 5th edition (ISBN# 0-07-254936-X) or 6th edition (ISBN# 0-07-322296-8).

The 5th edition is the cheapest... so, all else equal, go for that one. There is a 7th edition but that is more expensive - it will work but you might as well save money. The 5th edition should be about \$5 online (half.com, amazon.com, alibris.com...). Order ASAP as delivery takes time. There are also copies on reserve at the Foothill library.

Optional textbook: If you want another explanation go to freeloadpress.com, register and download the Principles of Microeconomics by Tim Taylor. It is a good and ... free!!

Required Study guide: Colander, Microeconomics: 5th edition (ISBN# 007-255-2077) or 6th edition (ISBN# 007-302-6948). The 6th edition study guide will be easier to find and works fine with a 5th edition book. You will not hand in your answers to study guide problems - but you will do much better on the final if you have done them.

The book's web page (<http://www.mhhe.com/economics/colander5/index.mhtml>) also has practice quizzes and other stuff. Click on the Micro book - no need to register- just go to the Online Learning Center - Student Edition (left side of screen). Choose a chapter to find practice quizzes.

Required Aplia: Aplia is an internet-based learning tool that we will be using heavily. It costs \$35. You have 3 weeks to pay - so sign up even if you think you might drop the class. Aplia does not give refunds. If you have not signed up within 10 days of the start of the course *you will be dropped from the class*. Aplia will be used for the following:

- Online quizzes: 3 of 'em.
- Graded problem sets: Each week there will be problem sets due. The first one is **due this week!** Log into Aplia to see the homework schedule.
- Practice (optional) problem sets and quizzes.
- Online experiments: **We will have one-hour experiments starting at 7 PM PST on Thursday 1/22/08 and Thursday 3/05/08.** Each one will up your final grade 1.5%. Thus, if you participate fully in both your grade will move up 3%. In addition, the experiments are fun. As with the tests, however, dates and times are firm - if you live in Sweden and want to participate then you will just have to wake up at 4 AM (or whenever). Sorry.

Signing up with Aplia - first time users:

1. Go to www.aplia.com.
2. Complete the Configuration Test.
3. Register using the SAME NAME that you used for Foothill College registration.
4. Enter the Aplia course key: EKGD-NJGN-MVUC (you will only need to do this once).

Signing up with Aplia - returning users:

1. Sign in using your usual e-mail address and password.
2. On your home page click "Enroll in a New Course."
3. Enter the course key (above).
4. To switch between courses, use the [Switch Course] link at the top of the screen, or use the "My Account" tab, then click on "My Courses."

For technical problems please contact Aplia at support@aplia.com.

Grades:

Your final grade will be determined by a weighted average as follows:

- Aplia - 18% weight
- Quizzes - 2 quizzes worth 13% each (= 26% total quiz weight)
- Final Exam - 56% weight

The curve:

- A weighted average of 90% or more is guaranteed at least an A-.
- A weighted average of 75% or more is guaranteed at least a B-.
- A weighted average of 60% or more is guaranteed at least a C.
- A weighted average of 50% or more is guaranteed at least a D.

The curve may be adjusted downward depending on the class (but it will in no case be adjusted upward). If the entire class scores above 90% then you will all get "A"s and I will be extremely happy. That never happens. The 60% cutoff for a C is pretty rigid. Those that work hard from the start do fine generally. Those that don't take the course seriously fail. A comprehensive in-person final worth over $\frac{1}{2}$ your grade is my way of making sure you have learned something.

Other important notes

- I understand that you may have occasional computer problems - a computer crash / a slow connection / a server being down / your little brother refusing to get off his chat lines.... Obviously it is difficult for me to verify the validity of events like these - and I don't want to play detective. My solution is that I will drop your worst quiz score (that is why only 2 quizzes entered into the grading weights above). If your computer happens to crash during a quiz then that will be the quiz you drop. You can only drop one quiz though - so don't work on crash prone computers!!

- There are 300 graded Aplia points (aside from the quizzes). You can work on them *anytime* before they are due, so computer "crashes" are not a concern here (except to say don't wait until the last minute to do the assignments). However, I realize you may forget to do an assignment, or you may think a particular question is unfair or poorly worded. Aplia grading, done by computer, is sometimes picky. For example, if the answer is 8000 and the directions say "answer in thousands" then the correct answer is 8. If you put in 8000 it is incorrect. Also, for graphing... if you put a point on the y-axis when it is undefined (such as "average cost") then it will be marked wrong even if you have essentially done it correctly. Finally, late-adds can NOT make up missed Aplia assignments. To partially alleviate these concerns, I am giving you 40 "flex" points. So when I calculate your Aplia score I will calculate out of 260 points (not 300). Thus, say you miss 50 Aplia points this quarter (to end with 250 points). Your Aplia score will be $250/260 = 96\%$. The most you can get on Aplia is 100%. And now you know my answer when you complain about an Aplia problem ("flex points").
- On the left margin of your Etudes window are several areas: Home, announcements, modules, discussion and private messages, chat room, and site info. Use them as follows:
 - Modules: Read entries in the order they appear as the quarter progresses.
 - Discussion and Private Messages: Here you interact with me and your classmates. There are 3 areas you can use:
 - Questions: Post questions about the class, study guide, aplia, etc. Keep these posts (and responses) directly related to things in the class.
 - Class Discussions: Relate the class to the world around you, talk about newspaper articles... use this area as you try to apply economics to real life.
 - Student Lounge: This area can be anything you want... completely unrelated to class. I will ask everyone to post an introduction here during the first week of class.

The forums are valuable if you guys use them. Students that make good use of the forum area will earn **bonus points** based on quality and quantity. For this reason please be sure to use your real name when posting. If you read something interesting in the newspaper/online that relates to class then please tell your classmates about it. For articles, rather than just putting up a link please first summarize the article and explain why it is interesting or, perhaps, what your questions are... *then* put up the link. You may also ask each other about Aplia / study guide questions. To get lots of bonus points you should make a serious effort to post something significant at least every week (if not more). Again, I tend to sniff out posts that are there *just* to try to get some bonus points ... so give a little bit of thought to your posts. (This doesn't mean they have to be brilliant insights... just honest.) In summary, participation in the forums will a) make the material more interesting, b) make the material easier, and c) earn you bonus points.

- Chat Room: Chat with your classmates if you would like. I may check in here on and off during quizzes to see if you have questions about the meaning of a question. (Obviously you can not discuss the questions with each other during exams.)

- Always use proper netiquette:
 - Have fun... but be courteous. Remember that sarcasm is hard to detect online.
 - Offensive or attacking language will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to delete entries that I deem inappropriate. I may invoke a point penalty (e.g. dropping your final grade by 5% or more) and I have the right to drop students who I deem to be disruptive, combative, or disrespectful. (Unfortunately some think it is ok to be disrespectful behind the shield of online anonymity. Don't be that guy. If you would not make your comment in a face-to-face setting then don't make it in an online setting.)
- Drops: It is *your* responsibility to drop or withdraw from the course if necessary. If you miss a drop date you will NOT be granted a drop from the instructor after the fact.
- The quiz questions are not based on the Aplia assignments in style or weighting. The quizzes are based on the material from the book and my lecture notes. The final exam questions are similar to the worksheets I provide and the study guide questions.
- **Important:** Taking a class online puts the onus on YOU to learn the material. That works well with the self-disciplined, motivated crowd but causes trouble for those (of us) that need more structure. Do not assume that taking a class online will be easier because you can do the work "in your free time." That attitude quickly gets you in trouble because your "free time" never comes. Most students will find this class *harder* online than in the classroom. Therefore, I urge you to treat this class AS IF we were meeting on a regular basis. **Block out some time each day (or every other day) during which you ... (surprise) study economics.** You might want to initially schedule five 2-hour study sessions per week and then adjust it as needed. Don't forget this IS a 5-unit class. I am here to answer questions and I really try my best to help students that seek help. I suggest that you:
 - **Fill in some time blocks in the study schedule below during which you will close (lock?) your door, turn off MTV, not pet your dog, and study economics.**
 - **Post the study schedule on your bedroom wall and stick to it!!**
- **Super important:** All the online stuff as simply preparation for the final. Every quarter I have students who lean too heavily on the book during quizzes and then fail the final (and perhaps the class since the final is over half of your grade). Their complaints fall on deaf ears. The final is where you prove what you have learned. The wise amongst you will take this paragraph seriously. If you do not try *during the quarter* you will **not** be able to walk in and do well on the final. **So be prepared** for the final by taking all the assignments seriously - understand the study guide questions as well as the worksheets I post in my lectures. It is way too much to cram for in the last week. If you do keep on top of things the final will be very manageable.
- If you don't like "the rules" then don't take the class. Most students appreciate my efforts to prevent cheating and maintain order. I thank you for your support in these matters.

Econ study schedule!!!

(what could possibly be more fun?)

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Study Hours							

Important dates:

Date	Event	PST	Chapters	Location & Format
Th 1/22/09	Experiment	7 PM sharp	Experiment	Aplia
Th 1/29/09	Quiz 1	1-11:45 PM	1 - 5	Aplia; open book; MC
Th 2/19/09	Quiz 2	1-11:45 PM	6 - 10	Aplia; open book; MC
Th 3/05/09	Experiment	7 PM sharp	Experiment	Aplia
Th 3/12/09	Quiz 3	1-11:45 PM	11 - 13, 15, 18	Aplia; open book; MC
Monday, 3/23/08	Final	2 - 3:50 PM	Above, 17	Foothill College Rm 8403; closed book; SA Don't forget <u>8 quarters, valid ID, & a calculator (no cell phones)</u>

PST = Pacific Standard Time, MC = multiple choice, SA = short answer

Economists: people that are good with numbers but don't have enough personality to be accountants.

Reading schedules



Dates	5 th edition reading assignments	6 th edition
1/05 - 1/29	1. Economics and Economic Reasoning - all 2. Trade, Trade-offs, and Government Policy - read up to "The Benefits of Trade" on pg 30; read appendix 3. The Evolving US Economy... - read pg 53-59 and appendix 4. Supply and Demand - all 5. Using Supply and Demand - all (including appendix through page 126)	Ch 1: all Ch 2: p 23-30; appendix Ch 3: p 58-63; appendix Ch 4: all Ch 5: all; p 133
Th 1/29	Quiz 1	
1/30 - 2/19	6. Describing Supply and Demand: Elasticities - all 7. Taxation and Government Intervention - all 8. The Logic of Individual Choice (read appendix ONLY) 9. Production and Cost Analysis I - all 10. Production and Cost Analysis II - all (skip appendix)	Ch 6: all Ch 7: all Ch 8: appendix Ch 9: all Ch 10: all (skip appendix)
Th 2/19	Quiz 2	
2/20 - 3/12	11. Perfect Competition - all 12. Monopoly - all (skip appendix) 13. Monopolistic Competition, Oligopoly, and Strategic Pricing - you can skip "the kinked demand curve" model (Figure 13-3, pg 296); also the duopoly example on pg 299-300 is not worth the effort so you can skip it. 15. Antitrust Policy and Regulation - all 18. Government Policy and Market Failures - all	Ch 11: all Ch 12: all (skip appendix) Ch 13: all except p 308; 311-312 Ch 15: all Ch 18: all
Th 3/12	Quiz 3	
3/13 - 3/23	17. Who Gets What? The Distribution of Income - all Review everything	Ch 17: all
Mon. 3/23	Comprehensive Final Exam at Foothill College	

Micro Colander Study guide problems

The questions for the 5th edition are listed at the end of each chapter – but here is a concise list (along with the 6th edition problems). You do not hand these in - but you will do much better on the final if you understand them. There are several types of questions in the study guide. I use these abbreviations:

Short-answer questions = SA

Matching the terms = Matching

Problems and Applications = P&A

Brain Teaser = Teaser

Multiple Choice = MC

Potential Essay Questions = Essay



Chapter	5 th edition	6 th edition
1	SA # 3,4,7; P&A # 2; MC # 5,6,10,12,14-17; Essay # 3	SA # 3,4,7; P&A # 2; MC # 5,6,10,12,14-17; Essay # 3
2	SA #3; P&A # 1,2; Teaser; MC # 1-10, A1-A6	SA #3; P&A # 1,2; Teaser; MC # 1-10, A1-A6
4	SA #1-3, 6-8; P&A # 4,5,6; Teaser, MC # 1-23	SA #1-3, 6-8; P&A # 4,5,6; Teaser, MC # 1-25
5	SA # 3-5, P&A # 3, A1; MC # 8-10, 13, A1	SA # 3-5, P&A # 3, A1; MC # 8-11, 14, A1
1-5 pretest	1-7, 16-25	1-7, 16-25
6	SA # 1-4, 7; P&A # 1-3, Teaser, MC # 1-11, 15-17	SA # 1-4, 7; P&A # 1-3, Teaser, MC # 1-11, 15-17
7	SA 1,2; P&A 1,6; Teaser; MC 1-7	SA 1,2; P&A 1,7; Teaser; MC 1-9
8	P&A # A1, A2; MC A1, A2	P&A # A1, A2; MC A1, A2
9	SA #1-11, Matching, P&A # 1,2,4; Teaser; MC 1-17	SA #1-11, Matching, P&A # 1,2,4; Teaser; MC 1-19
10	SA # 1-3; P&A 1-4; MC 1-14	SA # 1-3; P&A 1-4; MC 1-14
6-10 pretest	1-3,5,7-8,11,16-25	1-3,5,7-8,11,16-25
11	SA # 5-10; P&A # 1-4; MC # 1-18	SA # 5-10; P&A # 1-4; MC # 1-18
12	SA # 3-8; Matching; P&A # 1-4; Teaser; MC # 1-14	SA # 3-8; Matching; P&A # 1-4; Teaser; MC # 1-15
13	SA # 1-8; Matching (I don't care about #11); P&A # 1-5; MC 1,2, 4-15; Essay # 1,2	SA # 1-8; Matching (I don't care about #11); P&A # 1-5; MC 1,2, 4-11, 13-16; Essay # 1,2
15	SA # 1,6,8; Teaser; MC # 9-14; Essay # 1,2	SA # 1,6; Teaser; MC # 10-14; Essay # 1,2
11-15 pretest	# 1-15, 18-21,24,25	# 1-15, 18-21,24,25
18	SA # 1-8; Matching; P&A # 1-4; MC # 1-15; Essay # 1,2	SA # 1-8; Matching; P&A # 1-4; MC # 1-15; Essay # 1,2
17	SA # 1,2,7,8; P&A 1; MC # 1-7; Essay # 1,2	SA # 1,2,7,8; P&A 1; MC # 1-2,4-8; Essay # 1,2

Warning: Some questions have typos... if you see something fishy let me and your classmates know.

Ready?

Go.