

ECON 310-1: Intermediate Microeconomics I

Spring 2025

TuTh 2:00-3:20, Harris Hall 107

Maxim Sinitsyn, msinitsyn@northwestern.edu

Office Hours: M noon-2 in KGH 3227

Discussion Sessions (**no sessions first week**):

21 M, 4:00-4:50, Tech LR4

22 W, 4:00-4:50, Tech L251

23/25 M 5:00-5:50, Tech L150

24/26 W 5:00-5:50, Tech M128

TAs (**No OHs or sessions first week**):

Yifan Mao (yifanmao2029@u.northwestern.edu)

(Office hours: Tu 5pm-7pm in KGH 3198)

Pedro Melgare (pedromelgare2027@u.northwestern.edu)

(Office hours: Tu 9am-11am in KGH 3198)

Course Description: The first part of the intermediate microeconomic sequence is a formal and rigorous introduction to the core microeconomic concepts. These include consumer theory and the derivation of demands, producer theory, and analysis of equilibria in competitive and monopolistic markets. The course will make heavy use of differential calculus.

Textbook: The textbook for this course is Microeconomics by Besanko and Braeutigam (6th edition), but you can use any other intermediate micro textbook for reference.

Weekly Homeworks: Each week, I will post practice problems on Canvas. Each problem set includes “basic problems,” which are relatively straightforward and test your ability to solve standard problems. The remaining “non-basic problems” require deeper thinking and assess your ability to apply concepts to unfamiliar scenarios.

The basic problems will be graded, so you must submit your solutions before they are covered in discussion sessions (Mondays at 4 p.m.). There will be 11 problem sets, with your top 10 scores counting toward your grade.

Non-basic problems are not graded, so submission is not required. However, practicing them independently is crucial for success in this class. Simply reading the solutions will not adequately prepare you for exams. The best approach is to form study groups, first attempt the problems individually, and then review them together. While collaboration on problem sets is allowed, each student must submit their own solutions.

Grading: Grading will be based on problem sets (10%), two midterms (25% each), and a final examination (40%). The final exam will be cumulative. You must take both midterms. The dates for the

midterms are May 1st and May 22nd. The final exam is Friday, 06/13, at 9am. There is no alternative date for the final exam. All exams are closed book, and you may not use calculators.

Easter Egg: I planted an intentional mistake into the solution of one of the problems in one of the problem sets. This is a significant conceptual error and not a typo. The first student to find this mistake, successfully explain why the solution is wrong, and offer the correct solution during my office hours will have their score for the final exam multiplied by up to 1.2.

Quarter-Long Study Group Opportunity – Registration Required:

If you would like to study with other students in this class, consider joining a [Peer-Guided Study Group](#). Participants will meet weekly with about 5 to 8 other students and a peer facilitator, a student who has already taken and done well in the course. During sessions, students review concepts, work through practice problems, bring their questions, and work together to develop answers.

Students register for the full quarter on CAESAR, and attendance is expected weekly. Study Group sessions are listed on CAESAR below course lecture and discussion sections (when searching for study groups, enter “SG” in the Course Number field in CAESAR to get a complete list of sections). Feel free to contact Borislava at pgsg@northwestern.edu with any questions. Provided through [Academic Support & Learning Advancement](#).

Drop-In Peer Tutoring – No Appointment Needed:

Students are welcome to stop by [Drop-In Peer Tutoring](#) to get support with a specific question or issue, or just talk through course materials with others. Tutoring is offered for this course and many introductory courses in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Engineering, Math, Physics and Statistics. Tutoring takes place Sundays through Thursdays. **Check specific times, courses, and locations on the [Drop-In Peer Tutoring website](#).** Feel free to contact Valerie at valerie.wolf@northwestern.edu with any questions. Provided through [Academic Support & Learning Advancement](#).

Additional Academic Support Options:

ASLA offers [individual and group peer academic coaching](#), as well as [consultations](#), to help students navigate their academic paths and refine their study strategies.

Wondering how to become a peer leader with ASLA? Click on this link to find out more: <https://www.northwestern.edu/academic-support-learning/peer-leadership/peer-leader-opportunities.html>

Schedule (Textbook Chapters in Parentheses)

Week 1	Elasticity (2.2, 2.3, Appendix in Ch. 2);
Week 2	Level Curves; Consumer Preferences: Indifference curves and Utility Functions (3.1-3.3);
Week 3	Budget Constraints (4.1); Constrained Optimization (Math Appendix A.8);
Week 4	Derivation of Demand Functions (4.2, 4.5);
Week 5	Income and Substitution Effects (5.1, 5.2); Welfare Measures: Compensating and Equivalent Variations, Consumer Surplus (5.3);
Week 6	Short-Run and Long-Run Production (6.1-6.5);
Week 7	Short-Run and Long-Run Cost Functions (7.2-7.5; 8.1-8.2);
Week 8	Perfect Competition (9.2-9.4);
Week 9	Monopoly (11.1, 11.2, 11.5);

Northwestern University Syllabus Standards: This course follows the [Northwestern University Syllabus Standards](#). Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this information.