

Course Syllabus

Economics 202: Introduction to Microeconomics



Northwestern University ♦ Spring 2026

Professor James A. Hornsten

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Room 3467, Kellogg Global Hub

ZOOM: <https://northwestern.zoom.us/j/7316183050>



Class Meetings, Attendance and Communication

We will meet 10:00 – 10:50AM on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays at Harris 107 (auditorium). Refer to the attached schedule for important calendar dates. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is expected and rewarded, and some material will be presented only during class or section (even if most of my PowerPoint slides are posted). If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to track down information (especially regarding homework or exams) you may have missed, typically by asking a classmate who attended. When making your rational attendance choice, remember second-hand notes may not be clear or complete, lectures are not repeated in office hours, and much can be learned from our collective classroom experience. Your best way to contact me is e-mail, which I check regularly and try to answer within 24 hours; please mention ECON 202 for a faster response. Check Canvas and your NU e-mail daily for announcements and materials.

Office Hours & Weekly Problem-Solving Session

I will be available in person on Tuesdays from 11:00AM – 12:00PM and 1:00 – 2:00PM @ my office (room 3467 in the Kellogg Global Hub). I will also host a weekly problem-solving session (PSS) Wednesdays, 11:00AM – 12:00PM at 555 Clark Street, Room B03. I will also be available for Zoom conversations by appointment; I periodically post a Google Sheet for sign-ups. Unless you request a private meeting, I usually allow multiple students to join in the discussion, as many folks have similar questions and students have found a collaborative approach to learning helpful. Office hours are a time to chat, not only about our course, but also about the ECON major, registration, careers, NU life, and whatnot.

Teaching Assistants and Discussion Sections

Our three graduate teaching assistants will lead weekly in-person 50-minute discussion sections at various times on Thursdays. I expect you to attend one of the sections beginning the first week of class. Attendance at sections is not formally required, but some important material will be covered only in sections, and that material is typically not available elsewhere, so if you miss that information, you should ask a classmate for notes. I usually post a set of problems for you to try before section, and then ask the TAs to present the answers with commentary, but the TAs may also present original material, review key ideas, discuss recent or upcoming exams, and/or answer your questions. Each TA will also hold office hours during which you can speak to them in person or via Zoom; an updated office hours schedule will be posted to Canvas. Feel free to attend any TA's office hours that fit your schedule; they are advanced students with many insights to share, so I encourage you to work with all of them. The TAs also will lead exam simulations and/or review sessions before the exams.

< Pictures, Contact Info, and Office Hours TBA soon >

Textbook, Readings and Equipment

There is no required textbook, but two recommended textbooks that I have used in recent years are

- Stevenson and J. Wolfers (2023) *Principles of Microeconomics*, 2nd edition, Macmillan, ISBN: 978-1319330163. “**S&W**”
- Acemoglu, D. Laibson and J. List (2017) *Microeconomics*, 2nd edition, Pearson, ISBN: 978-0134492049. “**ALL**”

New, used, and digital versions of the textbook are usually available at the Norris Center Bookstore for purchase or rent, and the University (Main) Library's main circulation desk should have at least one copy on reserve. Additional study guides, software (e.g., MyEconLab), and online resources are strictly optional; we will not use them, though you may find them helpful. For timely examples of economics in the news, I may post to Canvas PDFs of (or links to) recent articles from *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, and other newspapers or magazines.

Because you will be solving problems and drawing graphs frequently, it is wise to have a physical or virtual notebook, a 6-inch straight edge (your WildCARD may be too short for some exam questions J), and some writing utensils (perhaps multi-color pens) handy. Finally, a key learning objective is to improve your numeracy and problem-solving abilities. Economics requires practitioners to think about the world from a quantitative perspective and using numbers to make sense of the world is an important aspect of the field. Basic operations, including addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division serve as an essential component of understanding and conceptualizing how and why one arrives at an answer. Consequently, we will not use calculators on our exams, so practice solving problems without one.

Prerequisites

You should be (or get) comfortable working with graphs, tables, and equations at the level of high school algebra. Historically, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the class has already taken ECON 201 [Introduction to Macroeconomics], but it is not required as a prerequisite. If you are new to ECON, you should begin mastering the chapters on supply and demand immediately.

Course Overview, Goals and Objectives

Formally, economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources among competing ends. Informally, economics helps us understand how household, business, and government decision makers respond to incentives; the importance of properly functioning markets in a modern capitalist economy; and the role of government in alleviating various market failures. Microeconomics focuses on individual decisions (often using cost-benefit analysis) and the inner workings of specific markets. Picking up where macroeconomics leaves off, this course will introduce the principles of microeconomics and teach you how to apply these concepts to real world scenarios. Thus, this course is aimed not only at potential economics majors, but also at any student who desires an enhanced ability to understand the popular press, critically analyze government policies (or lack thereof), and use microeconomic literacy and numeracy to make better choices as a consumer, producer, investor, or voter. Specific course objectives are to:

- Help you understand and apply fundamental economic analysis

(Can we predict the effects of a sweetened beverage tax, a \$15 minimum wage, or free vaccines?)

- Familiarize you with jargon used by the media

(initial public offering, too big to fail, fixed rate mortgage, Chapter 11 bankruptcy)

- Dispel common misconceptions and carefully consider controversial topics

(Do monopolies rip off consumers?)

- Increase the breadth of your understanding with discussions of current and recent economic issues

(Should we cap prices to fight inflation or price gouging?)

- Prepare you for advanced study in economics, marketing, finance or related fields – and post-NU life

(How might election results impact investing, borrowing, and job seeking?)

Learning Outcomes

During this course you will use two basic tools of economic analysis (equilibrium and comparative statics) to model and study a variety of economic problems, including many involving market failures. After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Apply the model of supply and demand to critique a variety of government policies in markets that may or may not be characterized by market failures (i.e., violations of perfect competition)
 - Draw supply & demand curves and use them to analyze (dis)equilibrium in competitive markets.
 - Apply measures of elasticity to characterize the shapes of demand and supply curves.
 - Explain how the “Invisible Hand” leads to a social optimum with decentralized decision makers in a market free of market failures.
 - Analyze effects and efficacy of various forms of government intervention to address market failures in inherently competitive markets.
 - Explain why governments exist and how to provide the socially optimal level of public goods.
 - Graphically analyze positive and negative externalities and explain the relative merits of the numerous approaches we use to address them.
2. Evaluate the actions of profit-maximizing firms by using producer theory
 - Use a production function to characterize the technology available to a firm and show how much output a firm can produce with any given set of inputs.
 - Explain the relationships between technologies, costs, and supply decisions (e.g., shutdown)
 - Use cost curves and a (residual) demand curve to analyze the optimal production choices of a profit-maximizing firm in a variety of market settings: perfect competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition, and oligopoly.
 - Differentiate among cost concepts (accounting costs, economic costs, implicit costs, explicit costs, fixed costs, variable costs, marginal costs, and sunk costs) and know when to use each.
3. Predict the behaviors of rational buyers by using consumer theory
 - Use net present value to make financial decisions for a wide variety of investments, including business projects, stocks, bonds, mortgages, and retirement accounts.
 - Use probability to model decisions under uncertainty, explain why risk-averse people may buy insurance, and evaluate possible solutions to the problems of moral hazard and adverse selection.

Teaching Methodology and Philosophy

You will have many opportunities to engage the material, including reading the textbook, attending and actively participating in lectures and TA-led discussion sections, working on practice exercises or problem sets either individually or in a group, and attending office hours. The **readings** (from the recommended textbook and recent articles) are meant to familiarize you with vocabulary and concepts, inspire questions, and give you a chance to ponder the material before we present similar ideas in different packaging. **Lectures** will typically take the form of PowerPoint presentations and problems worked out on a tablet, though I will often ask you to participate. Posted lectures are intended to serve as a packet of course notes, so you should expect the PPTX slides to be unusually wordy and colorful. Moreover, I will not have time to cover all the slides, so you will need to peruse some of them outside of class. Graded **problem sets** give you a chance to practice solving problems and to prepare for both discussion sections and exams. Economics is much like math in that actively solving problems is an important part of mastering the material. I typically collect homework at 11:59PM and release the solutions shortly after midnight. We usually will cover the relevant material before the problem set, but occasionally you will need to read ahead and teach yourself some concepts. I encourage you to try the problems on your own, and then meet with classmates to discuss and compare answers. However, be sure that your collaboration is two-way; free riding on homework often leads to difficulty on exams, when you will have to solve problems on your own. For a simple test of your knowledge, try explaining a problem and its solution to a friend or try tinkering with assumptions to construct some problems (with answers) on your own. The teaching assistants will use the **discussion sections** to provide insight and extensions of the homework, help you prepare for exams, and field your questions. To help you understand what a time-constrained exam feels like, the TA's will host one or more **exam simulations** several days before each of the unit exams; at an exam "sim" you will have an opportunity to take a recent exam under realistic conditions and then a TA will go over the solutions and answer questions. The **exams** will test your understanding of microeconomics, including your ability to apply theory to economic problems. You should therefore focus on the systematic reasoning we are trying to develop, rather than on mere memorization. Economics does NOT lend itself to pulling all-nighters before exams. Later analysis relies on principles covered earlier, so the exams are cumulative implicitly, if not explicitly. In the spirit of transparency, I will post several recent exams for you to review. You will note that while the set of material rarely changes, each exam looks a bit different as I cycle through a variety of ways of assessing your degree of mastery. Class is much more enjoyable when there is active involvement by many students, so be prepared to speak up now and then, and to **participate** in a Goldilocks sort of way – neither too rarely nor too often. Students who are actively engaged tend to perform better. The TAs and I both hold regular **office hours**, and these are good times to talk about specific questions, general intuition, your standing in the course (with me), registration, the ECON major, careers, NU life, etc. You are welcome to attend any of our office hours. If you feel you are struggling, seek help early – there are many resources in place to help you, including ASLA's drop-in tutoring sessions. It is both my desire and job to help you learn, so please let me know if anything is frustrating your efforts so that I can try to remedy the situation. Part of your job as a responsible adult is to monitor your progress and seek help from your peers, the TAs, or me when necessary. Often it doesn't take much to get back on track if you take the first step by asking for assistance from a peer, TA, or me. Given how the course is designed, you should adopt an active approach

to learning: once you think you understand the material from the readings and lectures, work problems on old exams for practice and regularly ponder connections: how does all of our material fit together?

Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on your performance on weekly problem sets and three exams. The relative weights of these graded components and some important dates are as follows:

COMPONENT	IMPORTANT DATES	% of Grade
Participation	Throughout the course	For borderline cases
Problem Sets (best 7 of 9)	Due by 11:59PM on announced dates	7%
Unit 1 Examination	Friday, April 17 at 10AM	31%
Unit 2 Examination	Wednesday, May 6 at 10AM	31%
Unit 3 Examination	Friday, May 29 at 10AM	31%
Final/Makeup Examination	Tuesday, June 9, 3-4:30PM (90-minute exam)	31%*
(Can replace a unit exam)	@ Harris 107 (regular classroom)	
	(After counting best 3 exam scores) TOTAL	100%

Exams: The course is divided into three units, each followed by a unit exam. There is also an optional, cumulative final exam that you can use to replace or improve upon a unit exam. We will count your three highest exam scores, so you can take either three or four exams, but you must take at least three exams to pass the course. Exams feature a diversified portfolio of questions and topics designed to test your ability to apply economic theory. Old exams with detailed solutions will be posted; I strongly suggest you use them to better understand the types and difficulty levels of problems you will be asked to solve, as well as how quickly you will be expected to work. Due to the substantial difficulties of administering additional examinations, there will be no make-up exams. Please note that we offer this course every quarter (including the summer) and there is another ECON 202 course this quarter in case you have frequent time conflicts this quarter. If you know you are going to miss an exam, please let me know so that we neither worry about your absence nor waste paper. At the end of the exam, you will submit your work electronically via Crowdmark.

Final Exam Policy: According to WCAS policy, “The College forbids administering a final examination to individual students in advance of the assigned time. You are required to take the final examination at the designated time. If you are unable--for sufficient reason--to take a final examination at the designated time, you should apply for an incomplete in the course.” Since University policy requires us to administer the final exam at the appointed time, **PLEASE DO NOT ASK TO TAKE THE FINAL AT ANY HOUR OTHER THAN THE ONE ASSIGNED BY THE REGISTRAR**, which is 3:00PM on Tuesday, June 9. In the unlikely case that you cannot take the final exam at the regular time and missed one of the unit exams, I will assign an incomplete grade of “X” (which is what you would receive if you were ill and didn’t show up for the final). If the WCAS Dean’s office (1908 Sheridan Road) and I agree to the “X” option, we will schedule a make-up exam for the future, either the next quarter or the next time I teach the course. Take the three unit exams to avoid this issue; if you have taken the three unit exams, then you do not need to take the final and there would be no reason for an incomplete.

Problem Sets: Your answers to the weekly five-question problem sets must be submitted by 11:59PM Chicago time (unless a new deadline is announced). To be fair and consistent, we will not accept ANY late submissions received after 11:59PM. Crowdmark records when you upload your work; be sure to hit Submit! I encourage you to set a weekly “Micro Homework” alarm to submit your work by 6:00PM so that you avoid Wi-Fi interruptions, heavy Internet traffic, malfunctioning devices, or forgetting the deadline. Each question will be graded on a 3-point scale, where 3 = perfect or minor error(s) / 2 = good try / 1 = attempt with some value added / 0 = missing or no value added. To be flexible, we will drop your lowest two out of nine scores, and then scale appropriately so your seven best problem sets are worth 7% of your grade. I encourage you to collaborate, especially by trying each problem on your own and then discussing your answers with a classmate; much can be learned if your answers or approaches differ. Many of the problems are taken from old exams, so they are meant to be challenging; because you will be doing problems and drawing graphs by hand, you should expect weekly homework to take an hour or two to complete.

Policy of Dropping Lowest Scores: Students occasionally face real-world complications that make it difficult or impossible to take an exam or complete a problem set. Some examples of real-world complications that arise are illness, concussion, mental health, doctor's appointment, job interview, travel delays, family events, holidays, fatigue, and personal concerns (roommate, significant other, pet). To give you the flexibility to miss important elements of the class, we allow you to drop your lowest two out of nine problem sets, as well as your lowest performance from the four exams; I automatically do this for you. Importantly, you do not need to justify or explain your absence (though if you will not be taking an exam, it is nice if you let us know so we neither print an exam for you nor worry about your whereabouts).

Religious Observance Statement: Northwestern is committed to fostering an academic community respectful and welcoming of persons of differing backgrounds. To that end, the [policy on academic accommodations for religious holidays](#) stipulates that students will not be penalized for class absences to observe religious holidays. Students for whom observance of a religious holiday conflicts with a class meeting, exam, or assignment deadline, should consult with their instructor by the end of the second week of the term. Our exams were scheduled to avoid common religious holidays, and problem sets are posted well in advance of due dates, so there should be ample time to work around holidays.

Grades: The course grade that you earn will reflect the degree to which you have mastered the material, as signaled by your performance on exams and problem sets (and in borderline cases, your participation). In economics, we grade to the curve in accordance with departmental recommendations. In practice, this means that my colleagues and I strive to be consistent across instructors and quarters, giving roughly the same percentages of each type of grade in ECON 202. I do not use an absolute percentage standard (e.g., 94% = A, 90% = A-, etc.), so an exam score of 80 out of 120 must be interpreted in context: if it were the highest score, it would earn an A, and if it were the lowest score, it may map to a C- or lower. Your course grade will be based primarily on your exam performances (a helpful signal is your approximate grade on each exam), but I also take into account performance trends (improvement) and the difficulty of the exams, and I may adjust scores on the exams to reflect relative difficulty (e.g., if the distributions of scores are substantially different). The mean and median grade in ECON 202 across many years has been a B. We strive to return graded work within one week. You are responsible for monitoring your scores and status in the course. Once the term is over and a grade has been posted, no additional work may be submitted unless the student has been approved for an incomplete.

Re-grading: We spend a lot of time grading and try hard to grade accurately, but occasionally we make mistakes. If you suspect that your exam has been incorrectly scored, please email to me the specific question section (such as Q3d) within one week of the release of exam results. You may explain your concern, but we grade only what you originally wrote, not additional elaboration. Economists expect overuse of a free resource, so to encourage only serious requests (i.e., with a clear discrepancy between the grading rubric and your score), the cost of an unsuccessful regrading request is one point per section requested. This is common: an appeal to instant replay not resulting in an overturned call costs a time-out or delay of game penalty in many sports, and an unsuccessful challenge in Scrabble either costs a turn or reduces one's relative score. It is common for regrade requests to be unsuccessful, so please read and consider the solutions carefully. We do not pre-approve regrade requests.

Drops or Withdrawals: The Registrar's deadline for dropping the course without any advisor's approval is Friday, May 8. Usually, you can do this using CAESAR up until 11:59PM, though

the Registrar's Office closes at 5:00PM. It may be possible for you to withdraw from the course as late as Friday, May 29; to do so, you must communicate with your advisor in your home school and complete the applicable withdrawal petition procedure by 5:00PM on that date.

Submitting Your Work Through Crowdmark: We will use Crowdmark to streamline the grading and recording of your problem sets and exams. You submit your work through an emailed link, dragging PDF/JPG/PNG files into fields, and then we read these online, insert grading comments, automatically send your score to Canvas, and allow you to peruse a digital version of your graded work. For an introduction, see <https://crowdmark.com> [Links to an external site.](#) iPhone & iPad users may need to convert files from HEIC to JPG (you can change settings or email to yourself). Remember that you haven't submitted your work until you hit Submit! If you are having difficulty submitting your problem set via Crowdmark, you can email the snapshots of your work to j-hornsten@northwestern.edu before the deadline so that there is evidence it was completed on time. At the exams, please do not leave until you are certain that all of your work has been submitted properly. If you do not submit your work properly (uploading the proper file types into the proper boxes, and then then hitting SUBMIT), we may not see it, and thus we are not obligated to grade it.

Academic Support and Learning Advancement (ASLA): Most students find their coursework especially challenging at times. If you are experiencing challenges related to your academic work, I encourage you to take advantage of resources available through [Academic Support and Learning Advancement](#) (ASLA), which offers [advice](#) on learning strategies, [consultations](#) to help you pinpoint difficulties and plan solutions, peer-facilitated [tutoring and study groups](#) in selected courses, and [individual and group academic peer coaching](#) to help students navigate their academic paths and refine their study strategies.

Peer-Guided Study Groups (Registration Required for this Quarter-Long Opportunity): If you would like to study with other students in this class, consider joining a Peer-Guided Study Group. Participants will meet weekly with 5 to 8 other students and a peer facilitator, a student who has already taken ECON 202 and performed well. During the two-hour sessions, students review concepts, work through practice problems (or the homework), bring their questions, and work together to develop answers. Past participants report that this program helped them stay on track, solidify their understanding of course concepts, and increase their confidence – all in a comfortable atmosphere. Students register for the full quarter on CAESAR and attendance is expected weekly. The six Study Group sessions are listed on CAESAR below course lecture and discussion sections as ECON 202-SG - Peer-Guided Study Group: Introduction to Microeconomics. Feel free to contact Borislava at borislava.miltcheva@northwestern.edu with any questions. Provided through Academic Support & Learning Advancement. *This quarter's tentative PGSG table meeting times and locations are Tu 5-7pm @ University 112, We 4-6pm @ Kresge 2-425, and Th 1-3pm @ University 112. The study tables will be led by Aileen Bai Yang,*

Hannah Choi, and Abby Li. The Mentored Study Program (MSP) is similar to PGSG but begins later in the quarter for students who struggled on the first exam. *The MSP tables will be led by Carter Sampson and Ari Arceo.*

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. Covers ECON 202 and many introductory courses in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Engineering, Math, Physics and Stats. ECON 202 tutoring takes place 8:00 – 10:00PM on Sundays (at Shepard B25), Mondays (Shepard B25), Tuesdays (Schapiro 101A), Wednesdays (Shepard B25), and Thursdays (Schapiro 101A). Feel free to contact Valerie at valerie.wolf@northwestern.edu with any questions. Provided through Academic Support & Learning Advancement. For additional info on dates/times/locations, see <https://www.northwestern.edu/academic-support-learning/course-support/drop-in-peer-tutoring.html>. *This quarter's drop-in tutors are Grace Fan (senior tutor), Ken Wang, Rebecca Berman, Holly Sae Zhang, Ellie Cho, Arthi Venkatesh, Maya Mubayi, Anna Zheng, Agathe Robert, John Raftus, and Tara Kabir.*

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled in Northwestern courses are required to comply with Northwestern's academic integrity policy. All work (problem sets, exams, and case study projects) submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. Any form of cheating, including improper use of content generated by artificial intelligence, constitutes a violation of Northwestern's academic integrity policy. To find Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide go to <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html> Suspicion of academic integrity violations will be referred immediately to the Academic Dean's office; University rules prohibit subsequent discussion of the situation with the student.

Professionalism: I expect a reasonable degree of professionalism, broadly defined to include those things that generally contribute to an environment that is conducive to learning by being courteous to us and to your classmates. This is especially true in the pandemic era for maintaining the health of our community and protecting one another. Please be mindful of your neighbors, and if you are feeling ill, please stay home. Do things that generate positive externalities, such as attending, participating and helping your peers. Avoid generating negative externalities in the classroom via tardiness, naps, noisy chatter, offensive language, etc. (Potential employers tend to frown upon these inappropriate behaviors, so now is a good time to smooth out some of the rough spots.) Please plan your restroom stops around class, and if you must enter or leave during class, do so unobtrusively. During exams, please refrain from

potentially distracting behaviors (e.g., pen-clicking, coughing). Serious disruptions will not be tolerated.

Belonging: In this course, we respect and embrace the unique experiences that brought each person here, including backgrounds, identities, learning styles, ways of expression, and academic interests. The broad spectrum of perspectives represented by our students enrich everyone's experience, and we strive to meet each perspective with openness and respect.

Technology in the Classroom: Pedagogical research shows students learn better when they take notes by hand, and that their learning suffers when they are distracted, so to maintain a focused learning environment, no cellphones or laptops will be allowed during class; put them away where they will not distract you or your peers. You may use a tablet in class just for taking notes, but you need to keep it flat on your desk so that you do not distract your peers. I post detailed lecture slides that contain most of the essential information; you may find it helpful to print these and take notes on them. No electronic devices (calculators, phones, smart watches, headphones, ear buds, AirPods, etc.) may be used during exams. NOTE: If you have a documented disability requiring the use of a laptop, please contact me so we can make arrangements.

Northwestern's Common Syllabus: This course follows the [Northwestern University Syllabus Standards](#), which address policies regarding Academic Integrity, Academic Support and Learning Advancement, Accessibility, Course Details Subject to Change, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Exceptions to Class Modality, Guidance on Class Recordings, Pregnancy-Related Accommodations, Providing Display/Preferred Names and Pronouns, Prohibition of Recording of Class Sessions by Students, Religious Observance, Support for Wellness and Health, Undergraduate In-Person Arrival and Course Engagement, The Writing Place, and Use of Generative AI Systems. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this information (online at www.registrar.northwestern.edu/registration-graduation/northwestern-university-syllabus-standards.html) as well as the Student Code of Conduct and other policies in the most recent [Student Handbook](#). I will elaborate on some policies below.

Accessibility & Accommodations: Northwestern University is committed to providing a supportive environment for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu or 847-467-5530) to move forward with the university's established accommodation process. If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so that I can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational

Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I encourage you to use accommodations for which you qualify. ANU students typically take the exams at the ANU Testing Facility at or very close to the regular exam time, which requires making reservations with sufficient advance notice. If ANU is unable to host all students, then I will reserve a quiet room to accommodate those with additional time.

Athletic Accommodations: A student on a varsity athletic team who expects an academic conflict due to an official NCAA event should ask Colin Runt in Academic Services < colin.runt@northwestern.edu OR 847.491.8805 > to contact me on your behalf as soon as possible.

Reading Assignments: The following schedule is provided as a guide and may be subject to slight changes as our pace naturally varies. Each lecture will make apparent our progress in the textbook. Please mark on your calendars the important exam and due dates, which will only change under extreme circumstances and with sufficient warning. Do your best to keep up with the suggested readings, which will complement the lectures, and as you read, jot down your questions. If you find yourself getting bogged down in math, focus on the intuition and main ideas, then address the detailed economic methods later. Remember that economics tends to be cumulative in nature, so regularly ponder how each chapter adds to previous chapters.

For the most up-to-date information as we move through the course, check Canvas.

Spring 2026 ECON 202 Expected Topics, Important Dates & Recommended Readings

Lecture Topics and Important Dates

Week #

Date

Recommended Chapters from S&W 2/e and ALL 2/e Microeconomics Textbooks

UNIT 1: Welfare Analysis & Applications of Supply and Demand

- 1 M, Mar 30 Introduction & Logistics (Syllabus)
S&W 1 ALL 1-3 [Discussion sections begin this week; office hours next week,]
- 1 W, Apr 1 Supply & Demand (Curves, Shifters, Equilibrium)
S&W 2-4 ALL 4-6
- 1 Section Th, Apr 4 Supply & Demand
- 1 F, Apr 3 Govt Interventions in Competitive Markets: Price Controls and Welfare Analysis
S&W 6-7 ALL 6-7
- 2 M, Apr 6 Govt Interventions II: Per-Unit Taxes & Subsidies and Elasticity
S&W 5-6 ALL 5,7,10 Monday is Add Deadline
Problem Set #1 (S&D) due Tuesday, April 7, by 11:59PM
- 2 W, Apr 8 Taxes 101
S&W 6-7 ALL 10
Problem-Solving Session 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03
- 2 Section Th, Apr 9 Government Interventions
- 2 F, Apr 10 Public Goods and Public Choices
S&W 10 ALL 9
*Problem Set #2 (Gov't Interventions) due by 11:59PM on **Sunday, April 12**)*

- 3 M, Apr 13 Externalities & Transactions Costs
S&W 10 ALL 9
- 3 W, Apr 15 Unit 1 Leftovers & Review
Problem Set #3 (Exty & Pub Goods) due by 11:59PM
PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03
Optional Exam Simulation 4-6PM @ University 102 with TA TBA
- 3 Section Th, Apr 16 Public Goods & Externalities; Recent Exam Questions
- 3 F, Apr 17 **UNIT 1 EXAMINATION – Friday, April 17, 10:00–10:50AM**
[Exam covers Weeks 1–3]
ANU students shd make arrangements to take exam at ANU Testing Facility

UNIT 2: Input Markets, Asymmetric Information, and Financial Decisions

- 4 M, Apr 20 Labor Markets: Productivity, Wages, Hiring Rules
S&W 11-12 ALL 11

4	W, Apr 22	Inequality and Income Redistribution <i>S&W 13 ALL 11,18</i> <i>PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03</i>
4 Section	Th, Apr 23	Labor Markets & Inequality
4	F, Apr 24	Uncertainty, Probability, Managing Risk with Insurance <i>S&W 19 ALL 15,16</i>
5	M, Apr 27	Asymmetric Information (Moral Hazard & Adverse Selection) <i>S&W 20 ALL 15,16</i> <i>Problem Set #4 (Labor Mkts & Inequality) due by 11:59PM on Tuesday, April 28</i>
5	W, Apr 29	Fundamentals of Finance: Using Net Present Value to Evaluate Projects <i>S&W n/a ALL 15</i> <i>PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03</i>
5 Section	Th, Apr 30	Insurance, Asymmetric Information, and NPV

- 5 F, May 1 Capital Markets: Applying NPV to Stocks, Bonds, Loans, IRAs

 S&W n/a ALL 15

 Problem Set #5 (Insurance & Asymm Info) due by 11:59PM on Sunday, May 3
- 6 M, May 4 Unit 2 Leftovers & Review

 Problem Set #6 (Finance & NPV) due by 11:59PM

 Optional Exam Simulation 4-6PM @ University 102 with TA TBA
- 6 W, May 6 **UNIT 2 EXAMINATION – Wednesday, May 6, 10:00–10:50AM**

 [Exam covers Weeks 4–6]

 ANU students shd report to ANU Testing Facility

 We will try very hard to have this exam graded & returned by early Friday afternoon

UNIT 3: Choices of Profit-Seeking Firms in Four Market Structures

- 6 Section Th, May 7 Cost Concepts: Total, Average, Marginal, Accounting, Opportunity
- 6 F, May 8 Cost Concepts and Curves: From Production to the LR Cost Pitchfork

 S&W 14,15 ALL 6, 12
 Deadline *Drop*

7	M, May 11	SR & LR Decisions of Perfectly Competitive Firms (Shutdown) <i>S&W 14,15 ALL 6, 12</i>
7	W, May 13	Monopoly <i>Problem Set #7 (PC Firms) due by 11:59PM</i> <i>S&W 14,15 ALL 12</i> <i>PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03</i>
7 Section	Th, May 14	PC Firms and Monopoly
7	F, May 15	Price Discrimination and Monopolistic Competition <i>S&W 14,16 ALL 12,14</i>
8	M, May 18	Game Theory and Strategic Choices. <i>S&W 18 ALL 13</i> <i>Problem Set #8 (Monopoly, MoCo, 3DPD) due by 11:59PM</i>
8	W, May 20	Oligopoly Models of Firm Rivalry; Business Strategy <i>S&W 14-15,18 ALL 13,14</i> <i>PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, Room B03</i>
8 Section	Th, May 21	Games and Oligopoly
8	F, May 22	Collusion, Mergers and Antitrust

*S&W 16 ALL 13,14
Deadline*

Friday is P/NP

9	M, May 25	No Class Meeting – Happy Memorial Day! :-)
9	W, May 27	Unit 3 Leftovers & Review; Course Summary <i>PSS 11AM-12PM @ 555 Clark, B03</i> <i>Optional Exam Simulation 4-6PM @ University 102 with TA TBA</i> <i>Problem Set #9 (Games, Oligopoly, M&A) due by 11:59PM</i>
9 Section	Th, May 28	Recent Unit 3 Exam
9	F, May 29	UNIT 3 EXAMINATION – Friday, May 29, 10:00–10:50AM <i>[Exam covers Weeks 7–9]</i> <i>ANU students shd report to ANU Testing Facility</i> <i>Withdrawal Petition Deadline</i>
10	M, Jun 1	Optional Review of Recent Final Exam at regular time & place with TA TBA <i>[No discussion sections this week. Regular office hours will be held.]</i>
Reading	W, Jun 3	Optional Review of Recent Final Exam at regular time & place with TA TBA
Reading	F, Jun 5	Optional Review of Recent Final Exam at regular time & place with TA TBA
Finals	T, Jun 9	FINAL EXAMINATION – Tuesday, June 9, 3:00–4:30PM (90-minute exam) LOCATION: Harris 107, our regular classroom

[Exam is comprehensive/cumulative, covering entire course]

[Final Exam is optional, can replace a Unit Exam score]

According to WCAS policy, the final exam date & time are non-negotiable.

A syllabus is a contract between the instructor and students that provides information about the course and provides a commitment device to prevent arbitrary behavior. I will assume that you are familiar with, and agree to, all policies in this contract. If you object to, or do not understand, any part of this contract, please contact me immediately for clarification.

Course Summary:

Course Summary		
Date	Details	Due
Thu Apr 16, 2026	Calendar Event Radhika Presents TA Session 2 Problem 1	12pm to 1pm
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 1	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 2	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 3	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 4	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 5	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 6	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 7	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 8	
	Assignment S26 IM Problem Set 9	
	Assignment S26 IM Unit 1 Exam	
	Assignment S26 IM Unit 2 Exam	
	Assignment S26 IM Unit 3 Exam	