

# *Notes for ECON 25100 - Microeconomics*

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These are lecture notes for spring 2024 ECON 25100 at Purdue. Modify, use, and distribute as you please.

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## *Course Introduction*

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of the principles that govern individual economic decision-making and the interactions within markets.

## *Introduction to Economic Principles*

*This section will briefly define several important terms, topics, and principles relevant to the rest of this class.*

Economics is the study of allocation of scarce resources to meet the unlimited human wants.

- Microeconomics: decision making by individual economic agents such as firms and consumers.
- Macroeconomics: aggregate performance of the entire economic system.
- Empirical economics: facts to present a description of economic activity.
- Economic theory: relies upon principles to analyze behavior of economic agents.

Economy has slowly transitioned from mainly theoretical to mainly empirical.

Assumptions are made consistently, so as to more rigorously create a methodology to analyze the world without overly complicating things.

Model building is the creation of abstractions from reality.

Occam's razor: The best model is that which describes reality and is the simplest.

"Ceteris Paribus": All other things equal. (changing only certain parameters and leaving everything else the same)

The lack of assumptions would make things either too simple or too complicated to viably describe reality.

Economics provides a method to make a rational choice.

Rigorous models are made to predict human behavior through either inductive logic, or deductive logic.

There are two kinds of economics:

- Positive Economics: concerned with reality.
- Normative economics: concerned with what should be. (If a statement has "should" it's probably normative).

The economic problem involves the allocation of resources among competing wants.

This exists due to scarcity.

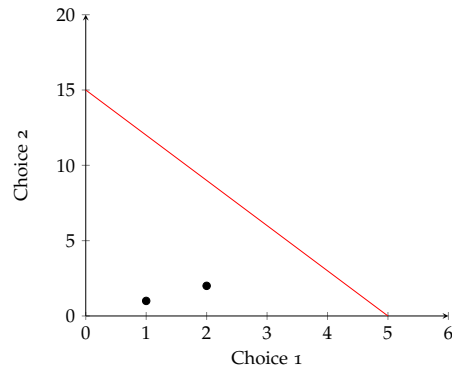
Scarcity exists because of unlimited human wants and limited resources.

Economic Resources:

- Land - space, natural resources.
- Capital - physical assets like factories or tractors.
- Labor - skills, abilities, knowledge, etc.
- Entrepreneurial talent - the economic agent who creates the enterprise.
- Technology - a manner in which resources are combined to produce commodities (methods of making processes more efficient).

#### Core Principles of Economics:

- **Cost-Benefit Principle:** cost and benefits are the incentives. Do something if the benefits outweigh the costs. (Convert everything to money, and then calculate).  
The cost-benefit principle is directly related to the willingness to pay, which is precisely, the conversion of benefits to money.  
If the benefit is greater than the cost, one has achieved an economic surplus. This principle aims to maximize the economic surplus. It also relates to framing effects, which is when a decision is affected by the method in which the situation or object is framed.
- **Opportunity Cost Principle:** The allocation of resources imply decisions and choices. For every choice we make, there are other choices we do not, and the next best alternative has a cost, which is known as the opportunity cost.  
This principle focuses on the tradeoffs of particular options.  
The opportunity cost is not the sum of all lost options, only the next best one.  
All choices involve tradeoffs due to scarcity. The usage of resources on one choice limits the amount available for other choices.  
*Note: a sunk cost is a cost that cannot be recouped, and should be ignored. They should not be included into the current decision.*  
As a subtopic of Opportunity Cost Principle is the Production Possibilities Frontier, which analyzes the different set of attainable gains based on different allocations. Under the assumption that the costs and benefits are constant, the graph will look something like this:



Any allocation of time below the PPF is an inefficient use of resources.

Points above it are unreachable unless new productivity increase methods are found.

- **Marginal Principle:** Decisions about quantities are best made incrementally. Instead of analyzing how many, one should analyze whether smaller increases are viable and reasonable.

Marginal Benefit: Benefit on an extra unit.

Marginal Cost: Cost of an extra unit.

While the marginal benefit of an additional unit exceeds its costs, it should be acquired.

Anything that asks how many can be analyzed marginally.

Economic surplus is maximized when the marginal cost equals the marginal benefit.

- **Interdependence Principle:** Your best choice depends on your other choices, the choices others make, development of markets, expectations of the future. When these factors change, the best choice might change as well.

Because you have limited resources, all the choices you make, affect others.

The choices made by other economic actors shape the choices available to you.

Changes in price and opportunities in one market affect your ability to make choices in others.

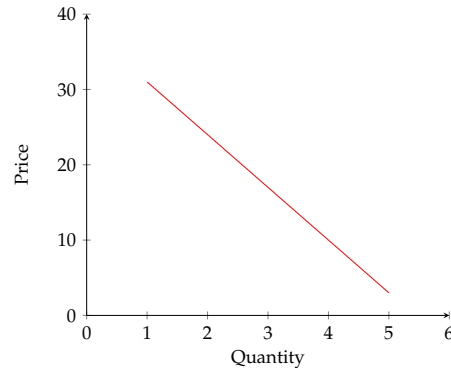
There is also a dependence through time, as choices you make now will have an effect on what you can do in the future.

## *Demand & Supply*

A demand curve is a function that shows the quantity demanded at different prices.

Quantity demanded is what buyers want to buy and are able to buy at the given price.

Demand refers to the entire curve, while quantity demanded is a point on the curve.



The Demand Schedule and Curve are the tabular and graphical representations of the supply and demand curve.

The Law of Demand states that a demand curve will have a negative slope.

Utility: the happiness from the consumption of goods.

Marginal Utility: the change in utility derived from the consumption of one more unit of the good.

The demand curves show the marginal benefit. Thus, the demand curve is also the marginal benefits curve.

Diminishing Marginal Utility: the utility derived from consuming one more good is less than the one before. This ends up in a lower willingness to pay for the additional unit.

**IMPORTANT: Keep buying until price = marginal benefit.**

A demand function is typically written as  $Q_d = f(P)$ , but we prefer to plot the inverse demand function  $P = f^{-1}(Q_d)$ .

The Market Demand shows the aggregate of all individual demand curves, which we were discussing prior to this. The change in price causes movement along the demand curve, as the change is endogenous (from inside the system).

So, if the price increases, the quantity demanded will decrease.

However, the exogenous changes, caused the curve to shift:

- Population
- Expectations
- Seasons
- Tastes (fashion)
- Income:

- Normal Goods: good for which demand increases alongside increase of income.
- Inferior Goods: good for which demand decreases with income increases.
- Prices of related goods:
  - Substitutes-in-consumption: if two things can be replaced, the decrease in the price leads to the increase of the other.
  - Complements-in-consumption: if two things are used together, the increase in the price of one leads to a decrease in the demand of the other.