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Hamilton College
Economics 275: Microeconomic Theory

Fall 2025

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Contact information	Course meetings
Professor Kara Dimitruk	TTh (1) 9:00-10:15am; (2) 10:30-11:45am
Office: KJ 230	Class Location: KJ 203
Email: kdimitru@hamilton.edu	

Office Hours
Mondays 3:45-5:15pm
Wednesdays 4:00-5:30pm
By appointment

QSR
Tutor: Rafa Coutinho-Padua

QSR drop-in tutoring:
   Mondays 1-4pm, 7-9pm
   Tuesdays 6-9pm
   Wednesdays 4-9pm
   Fridays 1-4pm
   Sundays 4-9pm

Course Overview

Communication plan: All regularly scheduled course business (e.g., posting problem sets) will be conducted on Blackboard. Changes to our schedule, assignments, or course policies will be communicated via Blackboard announcement and in person.

Prerequisites: Economics 101 and 166; Math 113 or placement beyond Math 113.

Course description
We will cover theories and models that help us understand a variety of economic decisions using graphs, algebra, and calculus. These models build on the concepts and issues learned in the introductory economics sequence. We will study decisions made by consumers and firms, the structure and performance of markets, the role of the government in the economy, and welfare analysis. Goals for the course include: to deepen your understanding of concepts learned in the microeconomics part of Introductory Economics, to introduce you to a range of new analytical tools, and to help you master these tools in an active manner. The course is also intended to help you develop the ability to apply microeconomic theory to a range of behaviors and problems.

Resources: What is economics? What can you do with a degree in economics?

- What do economists do? Video: https://vimeo.com/389776283 (American Economics Association)

- What can I do with a degree in Economics? Site: https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/students/careers; Video: https://vimeo.com/135871291

- The Economics concentration at Hamilton: https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/departments/Economics

Course Objectives
This course fulfills several of Hamilton's educational goals:

- *Intellectual curiosity and flexibility*: By examining microeconomic issues and models in depth, and from a variety of perspectives, this course promotes intellectual curiosity and flexibility.

- *Disciplinary practice*: By engaging in the focused and sustained practice of microeconomic analysis, students will acquire mastery of economic concepts and their applications.

- *Analytic Discernment*: By solving and explaining economic models and analyzing a newspaper article, students will analyze information, arguments, and ideas quantitatively.

- *Ethical, Informed and Engaged Citizenship*: Students will understand economic issues that are relevant to policy-making, which facilitates ethical, informed and engaged citizenship.

QSR-Intensive Course This course meets the College's expectations for the QSR-Intensive designation. Therefore, this class will include:

- Mathematical Representation. The use of mathematical models based on graphs and equations that represent economic decisions.

- Logic and Symbolic Reasoning. The use of formal logic or symbolic reasoning in solving economic models and explaining economic decisions.

This course includes four or more graded assignments (tests, quizzes, problem sets) in mathematical representation and logic and symbolic reasoning. The assignments are distributed throughout the semester. The course also providse explicit instruction in problem solving techniques and strategies specific to the level and content of the course.

Required books and readings

- Textbook: Pindyck and Rubinfeld, <u>Microeconomics</u>, 9th edition (2017); available from Course Reserves at the library.

- Additional readings posted to Blackboard.

Course Policies

The following sections detail our class policies. *Students are responsible for reading and understanding all course policies.*

Grade weights and grading

Course engagement 5%
Problem sets 8%
Short paper 10%
Quizzes (2) .... 16% (8% each)
Exam 1 .... 18%
Exam 2 .... 18%
Final Exam (comprehensive) 25%

Note: For the two in-semester exams, I weigh the higher scoring exam more in the final grade.

Grading
I will communicate grading decisions before handing back assignments (e.g, scaling, etc). For final grades, A: 90-100, means excellent work; B: 80-89, good work; C: 70-79, satisfactory work; D: 60-69, poor work, NC, F: below 60, work does not demonstrate understanding of the material. As a rule of thumb: the maximum

cutoffs I use are: A = 95% and above, A- = 90% and above, B+ = 87% and above, B = 84% and above, B- = 80% and above, C+ = 77% and above, C = 74% and above. The final cutoffs can dip a little below these numbers, which helps you.

Course structure
The following sections detail our class policies.

The most important rule for the class is to maintain an environment of respect and open-mindedness in class lectures, discussions, working with other students, and meeting with me. This is an inclusive classroom. This means we all (professors and students) listen attentively to whomever is speaking and are direct, constructive, and courteous in our comments. When disagreements arise, we remain respectful of each other, committed to hearing what others have to say, and are willing to think and rethink our own positions.

If you are having difficulty with the material, meeting course requirements, or have concerns about the class/class environment, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements or perhaps change. I am available by email and/or during office hours.

Lecture based. This course is primarily lecture-based with time devoted to discussion and practice problems during class. Using multiple sources (textbook, your in-class notes and activities, problem sets, etc.) will be instrumental for you to master the material.

Resources

I want you to do well! There are a number of resources to help support your learning and proficiency in using microeconomic theory and tools.

Tips: Please see "econ275 advice and office hours" document on Blackboard for more information on what you can expect in office hours and suggestions for doing well in this (and other) economics courses.

Student drop-in office hours: What are office hours? Office hours are times outside of class where you can meet with me without an appointment. You can stop by to: ask questions about assignments, readings, or problem sets (current or previous); discuss concerns about the course; discuss material you find compelling; discuss your general interests; discuss academic or career goals; to chat. In addition to my research in economic history and economics, some of my interests include movies, TV shows, music, and sports, so I am always happy to discuss these topics and learn more about your interests.

If you have a conflict with my office hour times, you can email me to make an appointment. If you are unable to come to my office in person, I am happy to meet with you remotely via Zoom.

Email: All email communication with me should be professional, which is a good practice for other courses and for life outside/after Hamilton. Here is a helpful resource on how to write a professional email specifically to faculty members: https://www.purdue.edu/advisors/students/professor.php .You can expect a response within 24 hours; it may take more time over the weekend. If it's been more than 24 hours, you are welcome to send a follow-up email.

Course note-taker(s): I will ask for volunteers to serve as note-takers. Note-takers agree to make their notes available to students. Their contact information is available on the Blackboard site. Please contact them directly if you miss a class or would like to check your notes against another set. Being a course note-taker counts towards engagement (see below).

QSR center: The QSR center is available for students. The QSR hosts drop-in hours (see hours above),

facilitated group study, and 1:1 tutoring. You are welcome to go to the QSR as often and for as long as you would like for help.

Facilitated group study through the QSR is available for this course. This means your course tutor will be hosting small group sessions outside of class on QSR content. Please let me or the QSR tutor know if you are interested facilitated group study.

Problem Sets

Problem sets are designed to challenge you to learn the material. This includes making mistakes. Taking the time to work through the problem sets will help you learn the material and prepare you for exams, which are designed to assess student learning.

I encourage you to talk to other students about the problem sets and to work together, though you should write up your actual answers independently. See "econ 275 advice and office hours" on Blackboard for suggestions on how to effectively complete problem sets so they are helpful to you in learning the material.

Strictly copying answers from other students or from online solutions will not help you learn the material and will be reflected on exams. **Problem sets that are identical copies or do not show work will not be graded and automatically receive a zero. It will also not be dropped from your final grade.** It is also a violation of the honor code. Allowing fellow students to copy work is also a violation of the honor code. See "Academic Dishonesty" policy below.

Turning in problem sets: Problem sets will generally be weekly assignments. They will be posted by Thursday afternoons and due the following Thursday by 11:59pm. All problem sets will submitted electronically via Blackboard and assessed using Gradescope. Please submit one combined file for each problem set. You may type or hand-write your problem set. I encourage you to make problem sets clearly organized, which includes large, easy to read graphs, all work shown, and **easy to find answers** (see "econ 275 advice and office hours").

Questions about a problem set score?: Drop by my office hours (or make an appointment) and talk to me about your questions. I will generally follow the re-grade policy for exams (see below). Do not use features/tools on Gradescope to request re-grades.

Late problem sets: Because late assignments interfere with the logistics of the course (e.g., hold-up grading, posting solutions), late problem sets are not accepted unless arranged with me at least a week in advance. Note that the lowest problem set grade will be dropped.

Short paper

A four page (double spaced) paper. You will analyze a recent news article using microeconomic theory and concepts. In doing so, you will practice applying theory and economic reasoning to novel situations (recent events), which will help meet course and Hamilton educational goals reviewed above.

The short paper is due no later than Wednesday, December 4. Students who have a writing conference at the Writing Center to discuss a completed first draft may turn in a final draft of the paper on Friday, December 6 without incurring any penalties. You must submit your topic in a short proposal to me for preapproval no later than Monday, November 3. The paper assignment also details other relevant policies.

Engagement

My goal for you is to become truly interested in the material. I will give you credit for steps you take to demonstrate your engagement, which I interpret broadly (e.g., listening attentively during class, asking questions, etc.). Completing the syllabus questionnaire (a google survey) successfully before the second class will give you 0.5% automatically.

In-class expectations: Positive engagement with the course includes respect for your peers and me, for example, listening attentively, not distracting your classmates/talking during lecture, answering questions/participate in activities, and asking informed questions.

Be on time for class. If you arrive late or leave early once or twice, please do so quietly. I will reach out to you if I observe that lateness or leaving early become a habit out of concern for your engagement with the material.

Laptops and cellphones: Cell phones and laptops are not allowed during lecture, unless it is to access an article or resource during specific class activities. Tablets may be used to take notes. I will ask you to put laptops or cell phones away if I see them out during lecture. If it is a recurring problem, I will ask you to leave. You may not take pictures of my notes or otherwise take recordings during class—I expect and encourage you to write down your own notes. Research shows that taking notes by hand improves learning/understanding. It is therefore a good skill to develop and practice.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly and actively engage with the material. I generally do not take attendance. I will notice if you are not regularly in class, however, and will reach out to you out of concern for your well-being and success in this course. You do not need to email me if you will miss class once. If you anticipate not being able to attend class for a longer period, please communicate with me (e.g., email, stop by office hours, etc.) so we can make necessary arrangements and I can support you.

Typos: If you come across a typo in a problem set or slides, please let me know (in class, via email, office hours, etc.). This will count towards participation.

Scheduling conflicts: Please notify me ahead of time, with plenty of notice, if you have a scheduling conflict with exams or quizzes due to activities, job interviews, etc. The student will be responsible for all missed work. It is the student's responsibility to make any necessary arrangements.

Regrading and Late Work

I am more than happy to discuss and go over exams and problem sets after they have been graded because going through mistakes/errors is part of the learning process. Exams may be submitted for re-grading with a cover letter explaining the reasons for seeking a re-grade. I will re-grade the entire exam, which may lead your grade to go up or down.

Because late assignments interfere with the logistics of the course (e.g., hold-up grading, posting solutions), late problem sets are not accepted unless arranged with me at least a week in advance. Note that the lowest problem set grade will be dropped.

Student Well-Being

I care about your well-being. Many of us may feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed for various reasons. If at any point you feel unable to complete work for this class, please stop by office hours, email me to set up a meeting, etc.

It is important to know that Hamilton College community cares and has services that are available to assist you. We have a number of resources on campus: Counseling Center (315-859-4340), Campus Safety

(315-859-4000) the Student Support Care Team (315-859-4020; studentsupport@hamilton.edu), Associate Dean of Students for Academics Adam Van Wynsberghe (315-859-4600; avanwyns@hamilton.edu), your faculty advisor, your RA, or Area Director in your residence hall.

Accommodations

Hamilton College will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation(s) and would like to make a formal request for this course, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. You will need to provide Allen Harrison, Assistant Dean for Accessibility Resources (aharriso@hamilton.edu) with appropriate documentation of your disability.

Academic Honesty & AI Use

Students are expected to understand and abide by the *Hamilton College Honor Code*. Any violations of this Code will be treated seriously, including but not limited to a zero on the assignment, quiz, or exam. You are expected to do your own academic work: failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty and will be dealt with as explain in the Hamilton College Honor Code.

Scholastic dishonesty includes: cheating on examinations (such as using unauthorized class materials during exams or looking at other students' exams, allowing other students to look at your exam, talking with students during exams, etc.); copying problem set answers from answer keys (online or old); copying from other students and/or allowing students to copy your work; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; plagiarizing; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; falsifying records to dishonestly obtain grades; using artificial intelligence (AI, like ChatGPT) to complete assignments without the proper citation. Strictly copying answers from other students or from online solutions on problem sets will not help you learn the material and will be reflected on exams.

Problem sets that are identical copies or do not show work will not be graded and automatically receive a zero. They will also not be dropped form the problem set grade. It is also a violation of the honor code. Allowing fellow students to copy work is also a violation of the honor code.

If you have additional questions about what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of this class, please ask me.

Disclaimer: The syllabus and course schedule are subject to change. Any changes will be communicated to students through Blackboard announcement and in class.

Last updated: 1 September 2025