

Spring 2021
University of Houston
Department of Economics
PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS
ECON 2304-04 (19046)
Online Course

Instructor: Oscar Gálvez-Soriano (website [here](#))

Course Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays 17:30-19:00.

Instructor Office Hours:

Fridays 10:00-11:00. Meetings at other times must be arranged in advance.

Email me at: ogalvezs@cougarnet.uh.edu (First contact me through Microsoft Teams or Blackboard)

If you email, please indicate “ECON2304: <and add your subject>” in the email subject line.

Course Description: This course is an introduction to microeconomics: individual consumer and firm behavior, supply and demand, and the market determination of prices, output, and income. We will analyze government policies of price controls, taxation, monopoly and antitrust laws, market failures of market power and environmental policy.

Quick Overview of Course Requirements (More details below):

- **Webcam** - Required for taking exams
- **Windows or MAC computer** (not Chromebook or Linux)
- **MindTap Registration** (\$78) – Follow Link on Blackboard
- **Packback Registration** (\$25) – Follow Link on Blackboard
- **Microsoft Teams** (Free to UH students – Follow link on Blackboard, or click [here](#))
- **Stable internet connection**

Course Textbook: Principles of Microeconomics (9th edition) by Gregory N. Mankiw.

MindTap is an online teaching resource which integrates the textbook (online version), homework assignments and other learning resources. You just need to purchase the MindTap license. An electronic version of the textbook is already included with the license.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand basic microeconomic terms, concepts and methodology and demonstrate the ability to apply them to the fundamental economic question of allocating scarce resources.
- Students will understand how markets work, when are market outcomes desirable and how real-world events and government policies affect the prices, production, and revenues of firms.
- Students will understand the market failures arising from market power and externalities, as well as the effects of government interventions to address these failures. Students will learn the most common economics justifications for when, how and why governments should intervene in markets.

- Students will be able to apply economic reasoning to better understand policy issues, such as: taxation of goods and services, minimum wage laws, rent controls, carbon taxes, tradable pollution permits and international trade policy.

Prerequisites: Completion of Math 1310 or a higher Math. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that you have the necessary prerequisites.

Instruction Interaction:

Online only: This course is 100% online. Lectures will be held in Microsoft Teams every Monday and Wednesday from 17:30 to 19:00. **Attendance is mandatory and it is worth 5% of the final grade. Attendance will be taken every day.** There are additional pre-recorded video lectures for each topic associated to each chapter within MindTap. The pre-recorded video lectures are an additional resource and are not a substitute for the live online lectures. The instructor will be available for questions over video chat on Microsoft Teams.

Course Grading and Exam Schedule

Partial Exams (Drop the lowest. Keep the highest two: 19% each)		38%
o Partial Exam 1 (Ch 2-6)	Feb. (Wed.) 17th	
o Partial Exam 2 (Ch 7-11)	Mar. (Wed.) 31st	
o Partial Exam 3 (Ch 13-16)	Apr. (Wed.) 28th	
Cumulative Final exam (Ch. 4-16)	May (Mon.) 10th	27%
Online MindTap Assignments (details below)	Every Sunday night	20%
Packback Discussion Board Submissions (details below)	Every Sunday night	10%
Attendance	Every class day	5%
Total		100%

The assignment's deadlines are all set for Sunday night for the students' convenience. I recommend you set yourself a deadline for Friday for the Packback Discussion Submissions and Sunday for the MindTap homework. Please manage your time intelligently.

I follow the standard grading scale at UH:

93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<59
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F

Use the following formula to calculate your grade:

$$\text{Course Grade} = 0.19 * \text{HighestExam1} + 0.19 * \text{HighestExam2} + 0.27 * \text{FinalExam} + 0.20 * \text{MindTapGrade} + 0.10 * \text{PackbackGrade} + 0.05 * \text{Attendance}$$

Exams using Lockdown Browser and Webcam (VERY IMPORTANT)

The exams will be taken at home during the scheduled class time. See the exam dates above and on the Course Outline at the end of the syllabus. Exam dates are non-negotiable. **The student must have a (i) Windows or Mac computer, (ii) a working webcam and (iii) a stable internet connection.** These are course requirements. To preserve the integrity of exams, the exams will be administered using a free internet browser called Lockdown Browser and proctored remotely using the student's webcam (required) at home. The browser *only works with PCs and Mac* operating systems

(not on Chromebooks or Linux) and the exam *cannot* be accessed using any other web browser. Click below for a demo video about Lockdown Browser and a download link for the installation. (Important: You must download and install the version from this link. It is unique to UH. If you use any other version of Lockdown Browser it will not work with the exam.)

<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?ID=185514015>.

MindTap Homework Details and Registration Instructions

MindTap is an online teaching resource which integrates the textbook (electronic version), online homework assignments and additional learning resources. **The online version of the textbook is included together with the MindTap license.** There is also a money-saving bundle option called Cengage Unlimited for students needing multiple Cengage products for different courses. Check it out during registration if it benefits you.

- MindTap homework official due dates: **Every Sunday at 11:45 pm Central Time Zone.** There is one problem set from MindTap for each chapter due every Sunday. See the Course Outline at the end of the syllabus for the exact dates. Click the “Link to MindTap” on the left panel of Blackboard to go to MindTap and do the weekly homework.
- Late Submission Policy. There will be a “Late Submission Policy” of one week with a 10% penalty. *There will not be additional extensions.* This policy is meant to take care of any *temporary* personal events that might make students *unexpectedly* fall behind. Keep in mind that delaying homework can only set you back. Do your best effort to stick to the official due dates for each homework.
- Registration instructions:
 1. Registration. Go to the Blackboard course and click the “Link to MindTap” on the left panel. Follow the prompts to register for the MindTap course.
 - a. **You must start the registration using the Link to Mindtap on Blackboard.** Even if you have an existing Cengage account.
 - b. Do not start the registration directly from Cengage.com. (see (a) above)
 - c. There is no “course key” for this course. (see (a) above)
 - d. You can purchase an “access code” from the bookstore if you are using financial aid. The “access code” is different than a “course key”. The former is to pay the license and the latter is to search for the course on Cengage. This course does not have a “course key”.
 - e. You cannot use an account created with a high school email address. You need to create a new account with a new email address.
 2. Payment: **Register today to start your work. You can pay later.** There is a two-week payment grace period. \$78 for this course or \$120 for MindTap Unlimited (a one-price option if you have multiple courses using eligible Cengage products).
 3. Student Support: There is little the instructor or TAs can do to solve technical problems on Cengage. If you have ANY questions or problems, please contact customer support directly <https://cengage.force.com/s/contact-us>. (Must be logged in.)
- Other MindTap Resources: For each chapter, MindTap have pre-recorded video lectures from your instructor, study guides, video problem walk-throughs and a tool to generate prep-tests.

These are excellent tools to learn, get organized and prepare for the exams. Explore them early in the semester.

Packback Discussion Board Details and Registration Instructions

Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform (www.Packback.co) will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious about how what we are studying relates to life and the real world. My goals for using Packback in this course is to raise student's awareness about current economic issues, develop an attitude towards curiosity, promote the sharing of ideas and enhance critical thinking/writing skills related to arguing, justifying and supporting views based on facts and evidence. We can all learn from one another and the discussion board will be our community to do this. For a brief introduction to Packback watch this video:

www.vimeo.com/Packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions

- **Due dates:** **Every Sunday at 11:45 pm Central Time Zone.** Click the “Link to Packback” on the left panel of Blackboard to go to the discussion community.
- **Requirements:**
 1. **Question: Every other Sunday**, the student will submit ONE original question (Q). You do not necessarily need to answer your own question.
 2. **Response: Every Sunday**, the student will submit ONE response (R) to a classmate's question.

Note: A limitation on the Packback system forces it to show as having to submit one question every Sunday. Please ignore this. It is one question every other Sunday. Follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus.
 3. Q/Rs should be related to the class material, economic events or economic policy issues; preferably related to the topics discussed during the current or past week. This can be very fun. Beyond the obvious economic topics, there is also topics related to the economics of sports, music, entertainment, and the environment. You can support your Q/R by referring to local/national news articles, case-studies, government reports or reports from reputable institutions. The responses need not be right or wrong. However, every post needs to be well-thought, well-argued, clearly separate facts from opinions and **written in a respectful way**. Read these guidelines to have a preview of the do's and don'ts: <https://www.Packback.co/resources/Packback-questions-community-guidelines/>
- **How will the Questions and Responses be graded?** Each Q/R will receive a “Curiosity Score”. Posts that are more elaborate and contain references will get higher scores. The student will receive full credit if the curiosity score for each Q/R is at least 50 points (this is a low requirement). I recommend you submit Q/R on Fridays so that you can get a curiosity score and edit your submission, if necessary, before the deadline (it takes about 24 hours to generate a curiosity score). More details about Packback, the “Curiosity Score” and the guidelines for submission in the tutorial when you sign up to the service.
- **Registration Instructions:** If you are on the class roster on the first day of the semester you should had received an email invitation. If you have nor received it, you will during the first week of class. Follow these instructions:

1. **Search** your official UH inbox for an email from holla@Packback.co with the subject line **“Finish registration for Oscar Galvez-Soriano”**. This may be hiding in the spam folder.
 2. **Click “set account password”** to get started (or just log in if you already have an account). Once logged in, **click “join a community”** and follow the prompts to complete checkout.
 3. If you did not receive a welcome email, head to www.Packback.co, create an account (Important: use your UH’s student *email*!), and find our community with the community look-up key: **fb20f7c9-c898-4a7c-974e-ad804ede5501** (Note: this is not a payment code!)
- *Troubleshooting/ Student Support*: There is little the instructor or TA can do to solve technical problems on Packback. If you have ANY questions or concerns throughout the semester, please contact the customer support team at holla@Packback.co. If you need to defer payment, you can also email Packback student support.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams (AKA Teams) is a workspace for real-time collaboration and communication, video/voice meetings, file and screen sharing, and more. Teams is the best way to communicate with me and the TAs; particularly for office hours. It is free of charge to UH students. Download and log in using your UH credentials as you would for any Office 365 applications. For additional instructions and tutorials go to <https://uh.edu/infotech/services/office365/teams/>. To get started:

1. Download Teams for your desktop (preferred), iOS, or Android:
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/download-app>
2. Or, just use Teams on the web app at <https://teams.microsoft.com>.
3. Sign in with your CougarNet ID and password (make sure to append @cougar.net.uh.edu after your username).

Student Resources for Remote Learning

The University’s department of Online & Special Programs has an excellent webpage with many resources for remote learning. Check it out on <https://uh.edu/online/students/remote-learning/>. Scroll all the way down to see all available resources. If you need more help call 713-743-3327 or email at UHonline@uh.edu. Here are some useful links:

- [What is the latest update on COVID-19?](#)
- [How to adjust to online learning?](#)
- [Online learning tips](#)
- [How to access UH Library Resources Remotely?](#)
- [How to improve your internet connection?](#)
- [What is "Keep Americans Connected"?](#)

More About Office Hours: If there is anything you do not understand you should come to me, the TAs or UH tutoring services early on. The knowledge in the course is cumulative; each new topic builds on the previous one. Solid foundations early on will set you to a good start. Do not wait too long to clarify material. When coming to office hours come prepared with specific questions about concepts or exercises you are struggling with. The more specific the question the more effective office hours will be.

UH Online Tutoring: UH provides additional tutoring services online through its program LAUNCH. Go to <https://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch/> for more details. The schedules can be found here <http://ussc.uh.edu/lss/tutoring.aspx>. (It takes a week or two from the beginning of the semester for the schedule to be created.)

Blackboard Technical Support: Student assistance for Blackboard can be found by visiting <http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/help/>, calling 713-743-1411, or emailing support@uh.edu.

Academic Honesty Policy: Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class or being suspended or expelled. Examples of academic dishonesty can be found in the UH Policies on Academic Honesty <https://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf>

UH Student Disability Policy: UH seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. If you need special accommodations, please contact: Center for Students with Disabilities Room 100 CSD. Website: <http://www.uh.edu/csd/>. Email: uhcds@uh.edu. Phone number: 713-743-5400, TDD: 713-749-1527. I invite students to talk to me personally about accommodation for any type of physical, mental, or learning disability as early as possible so that I could make appropriate arrangements in advance.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS online <http://www.uh.edu/caps> or by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. <https://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets-talk/>

Incomplete Policy: The official policy on incompletes, from the Undergraduate Catalog, states that the grade of “I” is given “when students a) are currently passing a course or b) still have a reasonable hope of passing in the judgment of the instructor, but for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements.”

Required Language for All Courses

Excused Absence Policy: Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional

policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

Recording of Class: Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes: Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through MS Teams, Blackboard or UH email.

Recommended Language

Resources for Online Learning: The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On website](#). Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

UH Email: Email communications related to this course will be sent to your [Exchange email account](#) which each University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. Additional assistance can be found at the [Get Help page](#).

Webcams: Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.

Honor Code Statement: Students may be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including but not limited to projects, quizzes, and exams: "I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the [University of Houston Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy](#). I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston."

Course Schedule

ECON 2304 Spring 2021

Week	Dates		Topics and Exams	Packback Questions (Q) & Responses (R)	MindTap Homework
Week 1	Wed.	20-Jan	Ch. 2: Economic Models and the PPF		
	Sun.	24-Jan	Homework Due	none	Chapter 2
Week 2	Mon.	25-Jan	Ch. 3: Interdependence and Trade		
	Sun.	31-Jan	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	Chapter 3
Week 3	Mon.	1-Feb	Chapter 4: Supply and Demand*		
	Sun.	7-Feb	Homework Due	1 Response	Chapter 4
Week 4	Mon.	8-Feb	Ch. 5: Elasticity		
	Wed.	10-Feb	Ch. 6: Price Controls & Taxes on Goods		
	Sun.	14-Feb	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	Ch 5 & Ch 6
Week 5	Mon.	15-Feb	No class: UH closed		
	Wed.	17-Feb	Review		
	Sun.	21-Feb	Homework Due	1 Response	none
Week 6	Mon.	22-Feb	Exam 1 (Ch. 2-6)		
	Wed.	24-Feb	Chapter 7: The Efficiency of Markets*		
	Sun.	28-Feb	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	Chapter 7
Week 7	Mon.	1-Mar	Ch. 8: Application: The Costs of Taxation		
	Sun.	7-Mar	Homework Due	1 Response	Chapter 8
Week 8	Mon.	8-Mar	Ch. 9: Application: International Trade		
	Sun.	14-Mar	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	Chapter 9
Week 9	Mon.	15-Mar	Spring Break		
	Sun.	21-Mar	Spring Break	none	none
Week 10	Mon.	22-Mar	Chapter 10: Externalities		
	Wed.	24-Mar	Ch. 11: Public Goods & Common Resources		
	Sun.	28-Mar	Homework Due	1 Response	Ch 10, 11
Week 11	Mon.	29-Mar	Review		
	Wed.	31-Mar	Exam 2 (Ch. 7-11)		

	Sun.	4-Apr	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	none
Week 12	Mon.	5-Apr	Ch. 13: Production and Cost Functions*		
	Tues.	6-Apr	Last Day to drop with a "W"		
	Sun.	11-Apr	Homework Due	1 Response	Chapter 13
Week 13	Mon.	12-Apr	Ch. 14: Profit Maximization Under Perfect Competition*		
	Sun.	18-Apr	Homework Due	1 Q and 1 R	Chapter 14
Week 14	Mon.	19-Apr	Chapter 15: Monopoly*		
	Wed.	21-Apr	Chapter 16: Imperfect Competition		
	Sun.	25-Apr	Homework Due	1 Response	Ch. 15, 16
Week 15	Mon.	26-Apr	Review		
	Wed.	28-Apr	Exam 3 (Ch. 13-16)		
	Sun.	2-May	Homework Due	none	none
Week 16	Mon.	3-May			
	Sun.	5-May	No class	none	none
Week 17	Mon.	10-May	Final Exam (Ch. 4-16, except 12)		
	Wed.				