

Summer 2021
University of Houston
Department of Economics
PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS
ECON 2304-3 (18658)
Online Course

Instructor: Hussain Hadah

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Instructor Office Hours:

By appointment.

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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, production and income. We will analyze government policies of price controls, taxation, monopoly and antitrust laws, market failures and environmental policy.

Quick Overview of Course Requirements (More details below):

- **Webcam** - Required for taking exams
- **PC or MAC computer** (not Chromebook or Linux)
- **MindTap Registration** (\$77) – Follow Link on Blackboard
- **Packback Registration** (\$25) – Follow Link on Blackboard
- **Microsoft Teams** (Free to UH students)
- **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 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 sales of firms and markets.

- Students will understand market failures arising from market power and externalities, as well as the effects of government interventions to address these failures. Students will learn the economic 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.

Course Grading and Exam Schedule

• Partial Exam 1 (Ch 2-6)	Wednesday June 16th	20%
• Partial Exam 2 (Ch 7-11)	Friday June 25th	20%
• Final exam (Ch. 4-16)	Wednesday July 1st	20%
• Online MindTap Assignments	Almost every weeknight	30%
• Packback Discussion Board Submissions	Every Sunday night	10%
Total		100%

I follow the standard grading scale: 93-100 is A, 90-92 is A-, 87-89 is B+ and so on. The C- stands at 70. There may be an adjustment (curve) of the grade distribution at the end of the semester. Use the following formula to calculate your grade:

$$0.20*\text{Exam1}+0.20*\text{Exam2}+0.30*\text{FinalExam}+0.20*\text{MindTapGrade}+0.10*\text{PackbackGrade}$$

Exams using Lockdown Browser and Webcam (VERY IMPORTANT)

The exams should be started between 8am-8pm on the scheduled day. 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) PC or Mac, (ii) a working webcam and (iii) a stable internet connection to do the exams online.** 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). 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 here for a demo video about Lockdown Browser and a download link for the installation: <https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?ID=185514015>. The software version is unique to UH. Only this version will work with the exam.

MindTap Homework Details and Registration Instructions

MindTap is an online teaching resource which integrates the textbook (electronic version), online homework assignments for each chapter and additional learning resources. You just need to purchase the MindTap license. The electronic version of the textbook is included with the license. There is also a money-saving bundle option called Cengage Unlimited for students needing multiple Cengage products for different courses.

- MindTap homework official due dates: **Mondays-Fridays at 11:45 pm Central Time Zone.** There is one problem set from MindTap for each chapter due (almost) every weeknight. 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 homework.
- Late Submission Policy. There will be a “Late Submission Policy” of **THREE DAYS** with a 5-point penalty. This policy is meant to take care of any *temporary* personal events that might make students *unexpectedly* fall behind. **There are no additional extensions.** 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. Do not use it as a road to procrastination.
- 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 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.**
 - a. **Grace period:** There is a one-week payment grace period.
 - b. **Price:** \$77 for this course or \$120 for MindTap Unlimited (a one-price option if you have multiple courses using eligible Cengage products).
 - c. You can pay the license with a credit card online (less expensive) or purchase an “access code” from the UH bookstore. 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”.
 3. Student Support: The instructor or TA cannot solve technical issues on Mindtap or Cengage. If you have any questions or problems, please contact customer support directly <https://cengage.force.com/s/contact-us>. (You must be logged in to Cengage.)
- Other MindTap Resources: IMPORTANT. For each chapter, MindTap have 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 session.

Packback Discussion Board Details and Registration Instructions

Participation is a requirement for this course. The Packback Questions platform (www.Packback.co) will be the discussion board to discuss how what we are studying in class relates to life and the real world. My goal to use 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 each other and the Packback 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

- Requirements:
 1. **Every Sunday at 11:45 pm Central Time Zone.**
 2. Submit (i) **ONE original question (Q) AND (ii) TWO responses (R)** to a classmates' question. Click the "Link to Packback" on the left panel of Blackboard to go to the discussion board.
 3. **No make-ups:** You must submit your Q/R every week. You can post at any moment during the week before the due date. You have a whole week to post in the discussion board. There are no make-ups. You cannot make up missed submissions on subsequent weeks.
 4. Every *Question and Response* must be related to the class material; preferably to the topics discussed during the current or past week. Any question is acceptable as long as it is related to economics concepts, current economic issues, individual market events or public policy. Be curious and provoke constructive discussion. Think of it as class discussion. This can be very fun. Beyond the obvious economics topics, there are also topics related to the economics of sports, music, entertainment, and the environment, amongst others. You can support your Q/R by referring to local/national news articles, case-studies, government reports or reports from reputable institutions (include references and links).
 5. You do not need to answer your own questions. Other students will give their own answers.
 6. The responses need not be right or wrong They are meant to promote the exchange of ideas. However, every post needs to be well-thought, well-argued and –very importantly– 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). 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 were on the original roster for this course, your account has probably been created by Packback & added to the correct discussion community. You should have received an email invitation.
 1. **Search** your official UH inbox for an email from holla@Packback.co with the subject line **"Finish registration for Instructor Hadah's course"**. 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 (use your *school email!*), and find our community with the community look-up key: **c7e8ad9b-7dcb-42d3-a540-312378dde012** (Note: this is not a payment code!)
- Troubleshooting/Student Support: The instructor and TA cannot solve technical problems on Packback. If you have ANY issues please contact the customer support team directly 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, video/voice meetings, file and screen sharing, and more. The live video meetings will be over Teams. This is also the best way to communicate with me and the TAs; particularly during 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"?](#)
- [What are the major carriers offering?](#)
- [How to access Xfinity Wi-Fi Free?](#)

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 or need additional clarification. 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 session 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 (www.uh.edu/caps) 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. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

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.”

Advice for Learning on Summer Courses

Time management is crucial for success in summer courses (and everything else in life). Summer courses are designed to cover the same material as a regular session but in a shorter period. This makes it fast-paced and more time-intensive on a daily basis than a regular full-semester course. Time management will help you achieve this efficiently. The video lectures for each chapter have a duration between 40-80 minutes (which is less lecture time than the face-to-face course format) and the *average* student needs 90 minutes to finish the assignments for each day. In addition, the student will need additional time to study –meaning, processing content, clarifying concepts, and getting ready for exams.

Set yourself a schedule that you can commit to and stick to it. Set it from the beginning of the session. Treat it like a job. You must be there on-time every day. Organize yourself around the Course Outline at the end of the syllabus and make adjustments for personal situations you know will get in the way. Allocate individual time slots to watching the video lectures, attending the live video meetings, doing homework and reviewing the material. Take notes while watching videos as you would in the classroom. From my experience, I recommend students plan to dedicate at least 3.5 - 4 quality hours per day in order to complete the course satisfactorily. This is a realistic *minimum* requirement. The more the better. Of course, the quality of study is more important than the quantity of time studying. I consider this to be a good advice for any (summer) course.

Do not abuse the homework's Late Submission Policy. It is there to allow some flexibility around a tight summer schedule and help you catch-up during the weekends. It is advised not to delay submitting an assignment since it will set you back and may be difficult to catch-up. You may end up having to submit two assignments for two chapters the next day; or, you may miss a deadline if you are already behind when the unexpected strikes. Furthermore, if you are consistently behind, then you will not complete the last chapters covered before an exam. Skipping homework is a bad idea. Homework helps the student stay engaged, understand the material, formulate questions, and get you ready for the exams. *Procrastination is the easiest way to set you up for failure –avoid it at all cost.*

Consistency is key. Keep in mind that the course is, by very nature, comprehensive. Poor performance early on will lead to poor performance throughout the semester. It is a good idea to watch the videos on time and read from the textbook for those topics you feel needing more clarity. Try staying ahead of the course outline rather than trying to keep up.

(Course Outline on next page)

Course Outline/Calendar *(tentative and subject to change)*

	Date		Topic Assigned	Important Things
Week 1	Monday	12	Introduction Ch 2: Thinking Like an Economist: Economic Models and the PPF	Class at 10 AM HW due HW due on Math & Graphs
	Tuesday	13	Ch 3: Interdependence and the Gains from Trade	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Wednesday	14	Ch 4: The Market Forces of Supply & Demand* (Pt. 1)	Class at 10 AM Post question on PackBack
	Thursday	15	Ch 4: The Market Forces of Supply & Demand* (Pt. 2) LAST DAY TO DROP without receiving a grade	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Friday	16	Ch 5: Elasticity & Its Applications	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Saturday	17		
	Sunday	18		PackBack Submission #1: 2 Responses
Week 2	Monday	19	Ch 6: Government Policies	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Tuesday	20	Discussion & Review	Class at 10 AM
	Wednesday	21	Exam 1 (Chs. 2-6)	Exam 1
	Thursday	22	Ch 7: Consumer Surplus, Producer Surplus & Market Efficiency	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Friday	23	Ch 8: Taxes	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Saturday	24		
	Sunday	25		PackBack Submission #2: 1Q/2R
Week 3	Monday	26	Ch 9: International Trade	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Tuesday	27	Ch 10: Externalities	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Wednesday	28	Ch 11: Common Resources & Public Goods	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Thursday	29	Discussion and Review	Class at 10 AM
	Friday	30	Exam 2 (Chs. 7-11)	Exam 2
	Saturday	31		
	Sunday	01		PackBack Submission #3: 1Q/2R
Week 4	Monday	02	LAST DAY TO DROP WITH A "W" Ch 13: Production and Costs	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Tuesday	03	Ch 14: Profit Maximization in Perfectly Competitive Markets*	Class at 10 AM

	Wednesday	04	Ch 14: Profit Maximization in Perfectly Competitive Markets*	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Thursday	05	Ch 15: Monopoly* <i>(continues on next page)</i>	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Friday	06	Ch 16: Monopolistic Competition	Class at 10 AM HW due
	Saturday	07		
	Sunday	08		PackBack Submission #4: 1Q/2R
Week 5	Monday	09	Study Period	
	Tuesday	10	Review	Class at 10 AM
	Wednesday	11	Exam 3 (Chs. 12-16)	Exam 3

* Topics marked with an asterisk are critical and worth investing extra time. The following topics build on these ones.