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Office hours: Mon 3-4 pm
Wed 10:00 am-12 pm;
ALT2 Wed 2:15 – 3:35 pm, and by appointment

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Office hours: TBA in the Econ Help Room

ECON 101: Principles of Microeconomics **Syllabus and Course Policies**

Lecture: Monday and Thursday 1:30-2:40 pm; Wednesdays-Alt1 2:15 – 3:25 pm
Classroom: PNW 117; Alt Wednesdays in PNW 116

Course Description: Economics 101 is an introduction to microeconomic theory and its applications. Economics is the study of how society allocates its scarce resources, and microeconomics is the study of the behavior of households and firms, whose collective decisions determine how resources are allocated in a free market economy. Economic arguments are often used in debates about government policies, discussion of business strategies, and many of life's other arenas. The goal of the course is to teach you to "think like an economist," which I hope will help you to understand the world around you, make better economic decisions in your own life, and be a more informed citizen and voter. We will study when markets are likely to produce "efficient" outcomes, and when government intervention may improve on the competitive market outcome. We will use economic theory to analyze issues like a gas tax to change reliance on oil, minimum wages to increase salaries of the working poor, and government subsidies to increase education.

Course Requirements

Prerequisites: This course does not assume any prior knowledge of economics. However, you must have passed the Quantitative Reasoning Assessment in order to register for the course. The course will rely heavily on graphs and basic algebra. Calculus will not be used in this course, but is required for many higher-level economics courses.

Readings: The required textbook for the course is Principles of Microeconomics, by N. Gregory Mankiw (5th Edition, 2009). Earlier editions of the book are fine. The book is available at the college bookstore. Please read the assigned chapters before coming to class. Throughout the semester, I will also assign articles from newspapers and magazines that will be available through the course conference or on the web. Note that these articles are also **required** reading.

Course Format: The course meets on Mondays and Thursdays from 1:30-2:40 or 1:30-2:40pm (section 06) in Pendleton West 117. There is an extra class meeting time every other Wednesday (ALT-1) from 2:15-3:35 in Pendleton West 116. We will use all of these Wednesday meeting times; see below for details. There will be no class on Thursday, April 29.

If you cannot attend class, it is not necessary to notify me or ask my permission. If you do miss class, however, you should get the notes from another student and if you have questions after having read the notes and that day's reading, you are welcome to come to office hours.

Grading: Grades will be based on class participation (5%), problem sets (10%), two midterm exams (25% each), and a final exam (35%). Each component of your final grade will be graded based on a point scale. Any assignment of letter grades to a particular component is purely for informational purposes.

Class Participation (5%): You are expected to attend all class meetings and be a positive contributor. Participation in class is highly recommended and will be much appreciated. Please ask questions in class – if something is unclear to you, it is likely unclear to other students as well. Please answer questions in class even if you are not sure you are correct. I reserve the right to cold-call if necessary.

Please refrain from inappropriate behavior that detracts from the learning of others and the classroom environment such as emailing, texting, IMing, surfing the internet, etc. Please turn off cell phones.

Please make every effort to arrive in class on time – late arrivals are disruptive for us all. If you have to leave the room during class, please close the door softly to minimize the disruption to the class.

Problem Sets (10%): This course will feature 8 weekly assignments, including both problems and short answer questions based on the readings. You may work on assignments individually or in groups of 2-3 students; if you work in a group, you may turn in one assignment per group. I encourage you to work in groups since three heads are better than one. However, I expect that each member of the group understands all the work that is submitted since the problem sets are the best way to prepare for the exams. I suggest that you attempt the problem set on your own first before meeting to discuss your answers.

The problem sets will be graded check, check +, and check -; it is your responsibility to check correctness with the solution sets.

Problem sets will generally be due in class on Thursdays. They may also be emailed to me before the beginning of class. Please write your name(s) in the document itself. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

Exams: There will be two midterm exams (worth 25% each) and a final exam (worth 35%). All exams will be closed book and closed notes. The final exam will be cumulative with an emphasis on material from the last third of the course.

Requests for re-grades must be submitted by email to me within one week of the return of that graded assignment or exam to the class. Note that the entire exam is subject to re-grade.

Course Resources

Course Conference: Please add yourself to the course conference (if you registered early, I added you myself) and get in the habit of checking it regularly. I expect that you will check your email and the conference at least every two days during the semester. I will use the conference to make announcements and post assignments and handouts. You can use it to ask questions of me, Nandita or your fellow students. At the end of the second week of classes this will become a closed conference; please let me know if you are unable to access the conference after this time.

Office Hours: Please feel free to stop by during my office hours (listed on the front of this syllabus) if you have any questions, concerns or are interested in learning more about a topic. If you have a conflict with all of my office hours, please let me know within the first week of the

course; I will do my best to provide alternative office hours if the demand is sufficient. If conflicts arise throughout the semester, I am also available by appointment.

Email: I will usually respond to email within 24 hours, but my response time may be slower on weekends and holidays. Please plan accordingly if your question is time-sensitive. If your question may be of interest to other students, I encourage you to post on the conference rather than emailing me. However, please cc me on any message posted to the conference to ensure a quicker reply.

Tutoring: Nandita Krishnaswamy is the attached tutor for the course. She and the other attached tutors from Econ 101 and 102 sections will be staffing the Econ Help Room, which will be open Mondays-Thursdays 7-9 pm in PNW 116. The help room is intended to be a place where Econ 101/102 students can go to work on assignments together and obtain help in a casual, non-threatening atmosphere. Nandita will be there one of these nights (to be announced), but you should feel free to use the Help Room even if she is not there.

If you still feel overwhelmed or confused, please consider requesting an individual tutor assigned to you through the PLTC for one-on-one tutoring. This is a free service and can be extremely helpful. Further information and the tutor request form are available at <http://www.wellesley.edu/PLTC/>

Course Policies

Conflicts: If you have a pre-existing conflict with the exam dates, you must contact me by **February 4** to make alternative provisions. Acceptable conflicts include religious observances and athletic matches. Any alternative provisions will be made at my discretion.

Extension Policy: There will be no make-up exams or excused extensions on written work due, except under extreme circumstances such as severe personal illness or injury (requiring admission to the health center or hospital) or family crisis. In such cases, you must notify me in advance of the missed exam or due date for written work via a phone call or email. Unexcused late work or missed exams will receive a grade of zero.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need disability-related accommodations in the completion of course work should contact Jim Wice, Director of Disability Services, to arrange these accommodations. If the accommodations include alternative testing space or time, it is the responsibility of the student to contact me 1-2 weeks in advance of each exam to coordinate the provision of these accommodations.

The Honor Code: As a reminder, the Wellesley Honor Code, “As a Wellesley College student, I will act with honesty, integrity, and respect. In making this commitment, I am accountable to the community and dedicate myself to a life of honor.” You should adhere to this code in the completion of all assignments and interactions with all members of the course.

Approximate Schedule

I. Introduction

Wednesday, January 27 Introduction to Economics I
 Mankiw, Chapters 1 and 2

Thursday, January 28 Introduction to Economics II / Introduction to Supply and Demand
 Mankiw, Chapters 1 and 2 (including appendix)
 "In Las Vegas, College Has Less Appeal Than Casinos," *Boston Globe*,
 2/21/1999
 R. Blank, "What do economists have to contribute to policy decision-
 making?" *Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* (2002), pp. 817-24.

II. The Market System: Supply and Demand

Monday, February 01 Supply and Demand I
 Mankiw, Chapter 4
 "Facing New Costs, Some Smokers Say, 'Enough'," *New York*
 Times, 7/17/2002

Thursday, February 04 Supply and Demand II
 Mankiw, Chapter 4

Monday, February 08 Consumer and Producer Surplus
 Mankiw, Chapter 7
 "Seven Lessons about Superbowl Tickets," *New York Times*, 2/1/2001

Wednesday, February 10 Price Restrictions
 Mankiw, Chapter 6
 "Ohio Dairy Industry Hopes Price Pact Doesn't Go Sour," *Plain*
 Dealer, 7/4/2001

Thursday, February 11 Elasticity
 Mankiw, Chapter 5
 "China's Movie-Going Masses Cheer Deep Cuts in Ticket Prices," *New*
 York Times, December 20, 2000

Monday, February 15 No class, President's Day

Tuesday, February 16 Applications of Supply and Demand
 (Monday Schedule)

Thursday, February 18 Taxation
 Mankiw, Chapter 8
 "Despite Tax-The-Rich Plans, Congress May Repeal Luxury Tax,"
 Christian Science Monitor, 1/25/1993

Monday, February 22 In-class Review Session

Wednesday, February 24 **Midterm 1**

III. Consumer Behavior

Thursday, February 25 Consumer Behavior I
 Mankiw, Chapter 21

Monday, March 01 Consumer Behavior II
 Mankiw, Chapter 21

Thursday, March 04 Behavioral Economics
 Mankiw, Chapter 22 (Behavioral Economics section only)

Monday, March 08 Costs of Production
 Mankiw, Chapter 13

Wednesday, March 10	Perfect Competition I <i>Mankiw, Chapter 14</i>
Thursday, March 11	Perfect Competition II <i>Mankiw, Chapter 14</i>
Monday, March 15	Factor Markets <i>Mankiw, Chapter 18</i>

V. Firm Behavior - Imperfect Competition

Thursday, March 18	Monopoly <i>Mankiw, Chapter 15</i>
Monday, March 22, 25	Spring Break
Monday, March 29	Oligopoly <i>Mankiw, Chapter 16</i>
Wednesday, March 31	Antitrust
Thursday, April 01	Monopolistic Competition <i>Mankiw, Chapter 17</i>
Monday, April 05	In-class Review Session
Thursday, April 08	Midterm 2

VI. A Role for Government

Monday, April 12	Externalities I <i>Mankiw, Chapter 10</i>
Wednesday, April 14	Externalities II <i>Mankiw, Chapter 10</i>
Thursday, April 15	Public Goods <i>Mankiw, Chapter 11</i>
Monday, April 19	No class, Patriot's Day
Thursday, April 22	Redistribution <i>Mankiw, Chapter 20</i> (Monday Schedule)
Monday, April 26	Social Insurance I <i>Mankiw, Chapter 22 (sections TBA)</i>
Thursday, April 29	No class
Monday, May 03	Social Insurance II <i>Mankiw, Chapter 22 (sections TBA)</i>
Thursday, May 06	Final Review Session