



**University
of Victoria**

**Department of Economics
Course Syllabus
September 2017
ECON 312 Section A01
Urban Land Economics
CRN: 11000**

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Every student is responsible for reading and understanding the content of this course outline.

Course Description

This course provides a general introduction to urban land economics. We will use economic analysis to explain why cities exist and where they develop, how cities grow, and how economic activity is distributed within urban areas. We will examine determinants of land prices and rents, consider market failures associated with land use and discuss appropriate policy remedies. We will explore urban problems such as poverty, high housing costs, segregation, congestion, pollution, and crime. Throughout the course, current issues relevant to Canadian cities will be discussed. In addition, some international cases will be discussed.

Note: Credit will be granted for only one of ECON 312, ECON 412, and ADMIN 445.

Prerequisites: One of ECON 103, ECON 103C, ECON 180.

Class Information

Lecture time: 9:30-10:20, TWF

Location: Cornett B108

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-12:00, BEC 354

Teaching Assistant: N/A

TA Office Hours: N/A

Texts/Materials

1. **Required Textbook:** The textbook for the course is “Triumph of the City” by Edward Glaeser. It’s not a traditional text, in that it has no formal models. But it

- discusses issues that we will analyze with formal models presented in lecture. It is available at the campus bookstore or online. Earlier editions are fine to use.
2. **Optional Textbook.** For those who want more exposure to the formal models from lecture, the optional text is “Urban Economics” (seventh edition) by Arthur O’Sullivan. It is similar enough to the sixth edition that you should be fine with a sixth edition copy, should you want the optional text and prefer a used text. This can be bought online, and some copies will be available at the campus bookstore.

Course Content

You are advised to read ahead in order to prepare for lectures. I won’t tell you specifically how far ahead to read, but you can figure this out pretty well by observing the pace I move through notes and noting where the last lecture left off.

Lectures Outline (Rough Schedule)

	Topic Week
	Text Readings
	G: Glaeser (required)
	O: O’Sullivan (optional)
Introduction (Topic 1)	
Why do Cities Exist? (Topic 2)	
	1
G: Intro, Chapter 1	
O: Chapter 2	
Firm Location (Topic 2)	
	2
O: Chapter 3	
City Size (Topic 3)	
	3
G: Chapter 5	
O: Chapter 4	
Urban Growth (Topic 4)	
	4
G: Chapters 2, 9	
O: Chapter 5	
Land Rent (Topic 5)	
	5
O: Chapter 6	
Land Use Patterns (Topic 6)	
	6 & 7
O: Chapter 7	
Neighbourhood Choice (Topic 7)	
	7 & 8
O: Chapter 8	

Land Use Policy (Topic 8)	9
G: Chapters 6-8	
O: Chapter 9	
Cars and Highways/Mass Transit (Topic 9)	10 & 11
O: Chapters 10-11	
Urban Poverty and Crime (Topic 10)	11
O: Chapter 12	
G: Chapters 3-4	
Housing (Topic 11)	12
O: Chapter 13	
Housing Policy (Topic 12)	13
O: Chapter 14	
G: Conclusion	

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the term.

Grading Scheme

Midterm 1:	25%
Midterm 2:	25%.
Final Exam:	50%.

Problem Sets: A series of problem sets will be distributed throughout the course. While these will not be graded, you are strongly encouraged to work through the problem sets to develop and gauge your understanding of the material. Most students will find that careful practice solving problems significantly increases their understanding of the material. Students are encouraged to work on these problems in groups after first attempting them individually.

Midterms: The midterm exam(s) are scheduled as follows:

Midterm #1:	Tuesday Oct 3, (normal class time/place)
Midterm #2:	Friday Nov 3, (normal class time/place)
Final Exam:	Scheduled by the Registrar

The University's Grading Schedule with numerical score/letter grade equivalency, and descriptions can be found at the following: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015-01/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

Course Website

- Lecture notes, problem sets, answer keys, additional readings, and other useful information will be posted on the course website: <http://web.uvic.ca/~mfarnham/312.html>
- I may also use CourseSpaces for posting material
- Important announcements will be posted on the course website. Students are advised to check frequently.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

Policies

This course adheres to the Undergraduate Course Policies of the Department of Economics that deal with the following issues:

- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Academic concessions
- Travel plans
- Students with a disability
- Policy on inclusivity and diversity

For details on Undergraduate Course Policies, see <http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/course%20policies/index.php>

Further information related to policies:

Examinations

Attendance at all scheduled examinations is mandatory. Consideration for missed examinations will be given only on the basis of documented illness, accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed final examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Examination Policies: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-05/undergrad/info/regulations/exams.html>

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.

Electronic devices: During exams, only non-programmable calculators are permitted. All other electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of view.

Waitlist Policies

- Enrolment limits are determined by classroom capacity. Instructors have no discretion to raise the cap or admit waitlisted students. *While waiting for enrolled students to drop, waitlisted students must attend all classes and submit assignments according to the normal deadline.*
- *Enrolled students who do not show up in the first three lectures may lose their seats. Enrolled students who decide not to take the course are responsible for initiating their dropping out of the course, and are urged to do so as promptly as possible out of courtesy toward waitlisted students.*

Classroom Etiquette

Behave politely and professionally. Do not disturb or distract your fellow students or the instructor.

Language

English is the language of instruction at the University and for all aspects of this course. Dictionaries are not allowed in examinations.

Academic Integrity

Please browse “What is Plagiarism?” (<http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php#whatis>) for the definition of plagiarism. Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the Policy on Academic Integrity in the University Calendar (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>), is subject to penalty by the University. I respect students who are honest, regardless of their performance in the course, and to protect them from unscrupulous classmates I will ruthlessly prosecute anyone I catch plagiarizing or cheating in any other way. Period. If you have any question about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, I’m very happy to explain this. Check with me before taking a chance.

Failing grades

I respect your choice to exert minimal effort in this class due to priorities elsewhere in your life. However, department policy sets the bar to pass a course *very* low, and I have no sympathy for those who fail to clear that bar. Optimize carefully, should you choose to engage in risky cost-minimizing behavior! Students regularly fail my courses. This is not meant as a threat, but as a warning that careless coasting can lead to disaster.

Policy on Inclusivity and Diversity

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/general/policies.html>)

Policy on Gifts

Some students have very kindly given me gifts in the past. While I truly appreciate the gesture, I would like to discourage this. I never want a student to get the impression that they need to curry favour with me in order to get a good grade. In fact, a gift would never affect a student's grade, but it's best to avoid any appearance to the contrary. So please don't give me gifts. In any case, the kindest gesture of thanks you can ever make is to drop by sometime after grades are in and tell me you appreciated the course. That never fails to make my day.

e-mail

- You may contact me at my UVic email address. *Please include both your legal name (the name in the university records) and course title in the subject of your email. Without such information, it is sometimes hard for the instructor to understand the nature of your queries. Please avoid inappropriate nicknames, email ids and signatures. Text message lingo should not be used.*
- *You should contact me by email primarily on matters that relate to your personal participation, e.g. you have a medical condition that prevents you from taking an exam. It is best to raise questions related to course materials in class or in person during office hours. You may ask simple short questions via email; however, I may answer directly or I may reply telling you that I will cover that in class or it is best to explain the question in person. E-mail is a terribly inefficient way of communicating with these types of issues. General administrative matters such as the arrangement and the format for the assignments or exams will ONLY be discussed in class and no answers will be provided via email on these issues.*
- *A good rule of thumb for emails is, "Only send it if it's really important." For example, if I post an answer key with an error on it 2 days before an exam (or promised you an answer key by a certain date and forgot to post it), definitely email me. Email is arguably too cheap relative to what would be socially optimal. People send emails without thinking because it's cheap (to them) to do so. Unfortunately, emails impose a cost on the recipient who has to read them and respond to them. It becomes very tempting to send me an email asking "What will be covered on the midterm?" even though that very point will with 100% certainty be covered in lecture. So, I only respond to emails that really "needed" to be sent, and I get to decide what's "needed." Basically, if you could have figured out the answer to your question by 1) reading the syllabus; 2) reading the website; or 3) attending lecture, I won't answer it. So check those sources, and if you missed lecture, ask a classmate who was there. If it's a question on material (and hence was covered in lecture) you're more than welcome to ask it, but come to office hours to do so. Email is terrible for explaining most economics.*