

Georgia Institute of Technology
Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts
School of Economics

Economics 3110
Advanced Microeconomic Analysis
Fall 2016

Meeting Time and Location: TR 12:05-1:25 p.m., D.M. Smith 104

Instructor: Dr. Matthew E. Oliver, Assistant Professor

Office: 223 Old CE Building

Office Hours: TR 2:30-4:00 p.m.

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NOTE: This semester I am also teaching a Principles of Macro course with 200 students. So in the event that you come to my office hours and I am occupied, or if your schedule conflicts with my office hours, my Teaching Assistant, Fritz Young, will also be holding regular weekly office hours. He can help you with basic homework questions or other questions about the material. For all other needs or inquiries, or if your schedule conflicts with both Fritz's and my office hours, I will be happy to schedule an appointment with you during a time that works for you. My door is always open, but I still prefer to know when you're coming!

Teaching Assistant: Fritz Young (economics PhD student)

Office: 205 Old CE Building

Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Email: fyoung9@gatech.edu

Course Description: Thanks in part to politicians and major news media outlets, these days when most people think of "economics" they're really thinking of *macroeconomics*. In reality, however, most issues and problems in economics would be categorized under *microeconomics*. Fundamentally, microeconomics is the study of how individuals and firms make decisions about how to allocate scarce resources, given all relevant benefits, costs, and constraints. For example, households consume a variety of goods and services, which provide them with benefits while incurring costs, and each household's income constrains the total amount of goods and services it can afford to consume. Firms, on the other hand, combine inputs (*e.g.*, labor and machinery) to produce goods and services, seeking simultaneously to minimize costs and maximize output. A market emerges when consumers (households) seeking to purchase a given good or service interact with producers (firms) seeking to sell it. Broadly, microeconomics can be thought of as the study of the market behavior of consumers and producers.

Relative to a beginning course, this is a much more advanced and math-intensive (!) course on factors that determine demand, supply, and equilibrium price in markets. We will examine the behavior of individual economic decision makers through models of consumer theory, the theory of the firm, theories of market behavior, and game theory. The main goal is to make you thoroughly familiar with the most important concepts and tools of microeconomics, because any further work you do in economics will likely rely on the foundation laid in this

course. By the end of the semester, you will be able to critically analyze the economic behavior of consumers and firms, and understand the economic ramifications of government action and current policy issues.

Required Textbook: *Microeconomics*, by Jeffrey M. Perloff (2014), 7th ed., Addison-Wesley

Grading Scale: We will follow a standard grading scale for this course:

90%-100%	A
80%-90%	B
70%-80%	C
60%-70%	D
< 60%	F

Your grade for this course will comprise three components:

1. *Homework Assignments* (20%) – As we go through the material, your homework problem sets will be posted on the t-square course website “Resources” page. All completed homework assignments are to be submitted in class on the specified date. No email submissions, please. Late submissions will be penalized 10 points per day for up to 3 working days, after which they will no longer be accepted. At the end of the semester when I calculate your final grade, I will drop your two lowest homework scores.
2. *Mid-term Exams* (25% each) – Your mid-term exams will be on **Sept. 29, 2016** and **Nov. 10, 2016**. These dates are non-negotiable. For those with GT-approved absences only, any make-up exams will be scheduled accordingly.
3. *Final Exam* (30%) – The final exam will be comprehensive. The date and time of the final exam will be in accordance with the Institute’s final exam schedule, and is non-negotiable. For those with GT-approved absences only, a make-up final exam will be scheduled accordingly.

The percentages next to each component indicate the weight that each component carries in your final grade. Thus, your final grade will be calculated as a *weighted average*. So, for example, if at the end of the semester your homework average is a 90, you got an 80 on the first mid-term, a 92 on the second mid-term, and a 90 on the final exam, your grade for the class will be:

$$(0.2 \times 90) + (0.25 \times 80) + (0.25 \times 92) + (0.3 \times 90) = 88 \rightarrow B$$

Rounding Policy: I have a hard rule about rounding, which is that there is none. Your final score is what it is down to the last decimal. An 89.999 is a B (just as a 79.999 is a C, and so on). You might think that's harsh, but here's the rationale. You already get to drop two homework scores, plus there will be various opportunities for bonus points and extra credit throughout the semester. If that still isn't enough to get you over the hump to a 90.0 or better, that's too bad; you deserve the B.

Final Grade Policy: Final grades are final. Please do not contact me after the semester is over to ask if there is anything you can do to improve your grade. There isn't. This is not because I'm mean or I don't like you. It's simply a hard rule designed to maintain fairness. It would not be ethical to extend a special favor to any one person that I do not also extend to everyone.

Exam Schedule Policy: If you do not have a GT-approved excused absence (*e.g.*, for athletics or if you have a disability waiver), DO NOT ask me if you can take an exam at some other time for any reason. The answer is, preemptively, “no” (verifiable minority religious holidays are the *only* exception). Here also, this is a rule to maintain fairness. This is simply too big of a class to accommodate those requests, and if I do it for one person, I have to do it for everyone, which would be way too much to deal with. If, on an exam date, you come down with a legitimate serious illness or have an automobile accident or something like that, we can negotiate, but you had better have indisputable evidence that you’re telling the truth about it.

Attendance Policy: I cannot force you to attend class, but I strongly encourage it. However, to make things more interesting, I will implement a class attendance game. For more information, please see the **Attendance Game** document, which is available on the t-square course site.

Other Course Policies: Please make every effort *not* to arrive late or leave early. Please set cell phones to ‘silent’, and *do not* answer your phone while in class (do not get up and leave the classroom to answer your phone either). If it is a genuine emergency, please exit the classroom as discretely as possible to address the issue. Texting during class is not permitted. Any other rude or disruptive behavior will be dealt with appropriately. You may bring your laptop computer or other device to class, but only if you are using it for course-related activities (not for playing games or looking at social media, among other things). *During exams, you **may not** use your cell phone calculator (so bring an actual calculator), and if you need to go to the restroom, you must leave your cell phone while you go.*

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any violation of the Institute’s Honor Code will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Group Work: You are encouraged to interact with other students outside the classroom to discuss the homework and study for exams, but no formal group assignments are assigned.

Disclaimer: If anything significant should change with respect to this syllabus, I will let you know immediately.