Economics 2010-200 Principles of Microeconomics  
Fall 2005 University of Colorado at Boulder

Professor: Stephen Billings  
Office: Econ 414  
E-mail: billinsb@colorado.edu  
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11:00 and by appointment.

Course website: http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~billinsb  
Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:15 in room MCOL W100.

Teaching Assistants (TA): Andrew Meyer and Yen-Heng Chen

Required Text: • Krugman, Paul and Wells, Robin, (2004), Microeconomics, Worth Publishers  
I would suggest looking for used/new copies online before buying at the bookstore to compare prices. Also, the best strategy for doing well in class and understanding the material is to read the corresponding textbook chapters before class.

Course Description: Microeconomics is the study of how individuals, firms, and the government interact within the context of markets to determine how scarce resources are allocated. In this introductory level course, we will focus on the development of economic models that can be used to analyze these interactions. Topics covered will include supply and demand analysis, production analysis, market outcomes under different assumptions regarding the degree of competition, and the effects of government policies such as taxes, subsidies, and price controls. The information in this course is important to know for anyone considering further study in economics, business, and other social sciences.

Prerequisites: High school algebra. Students should be comfortable using equations, graphs, and tables.

Lectures: In lecture, new material will be presented that will follow topics from the textbook, but will differ in emphasis. All students are strongly encouraged to attend lecture regularly. Besides all the obvious reasons to attend lecture, some exam questions will not be covered in the text but only covered in lecture. In the off chance that you miss a lecture, you should try to get lecture notes from a fellow student, if they are willing to share. I don’t give students my notes as they are only outlines of topics to discuss and will not be of much help to you.

Recitation:  
What happens in recitation is up to your recitation instructor. Your TA will go over how you will be evaluated in recitation. Recitation is a smaller group opportunity to go over questions you have and discuss the more challenging concepts. Attending recitation is required and expected.

Exam Preparation/Textbook Website:  
In order to help prepare for exams and solidify concepts from class, a number of resources are available.

1) The course webpage http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~billinsb has a set of review problems by economic topic and also has answers to these problems. Students are encouraged to work on these problems and check them at their own pace. We will not go over them in class.
2) A week before each exam, I will provide an exam problem set that will closely resemble the exam in terms of material and types of questions. Students are expected to go through these questions on their own and we will go over them in the class session before the exam.

3) The Krugman and Wells textbook Microeconomics has a number of online problems and a review of different concepts that are helpful for topics that students are having trouble grasping. You will need to register as a student on the website for access to this material. The website is http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/krugmanwells/default.asp?s=&n=&i=&v=&o=&ns=0&uid=0&r=0

Grading: Your course grade will be based on two midterms, your recitation grade and a comprehensive final. Exam dates are listed below. The breakdown of grades is as follows: 30% for Midterm 1, 30% for Midterm 2, 30% for Recitation and 40% for the Final. To make this add up to 100%, I’ll automatically drop the lowest of your Recitation, Midterm 1 or Midterm 2 scores when determining your grade. You will not be able to drop your Final Exam score.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:
93.00 – 100.0 % … A
90.00 – 92.99 % … A-
88.00 – 89.99 % … B+
83.00 – 87.99 % … B
80.00 – 82.99 % … B-
78.00 – 79.99 % … C+
73.00 – 77.99 % … C
70.00 – 72.99 % … C-
68.00 – 69.99 % … D+
63.00 – 67.99 % … D
60.00 – 62.99 % … D-
59.99 – 0.00 % … F

Make-Up Examinations: The two midterm exams will take place during regular class time in the regular class room on the dates listed below. The final will take place during finals week on the date, time, and place listed below. The multiple-choice portion of the exams will be graded by Scantron, so be sure to remember a #2 pencil. You’ll probably also want to bring a calculator (no cell phone calculators). The number of questions on each exam may vary, but the final will have more questions than the midterm. The format of questions will be multiple choice and short answers. Exam questions will be based on material covered in the book and/or in lecture. A majority of the questions will test your memory and understanding of the definitions and concepts covered, and a minority of the questions will test your ability to synthesize the material and apply the concepts in a new context. I’ll talk more about each exam as the exam date approaches.

Since this is a large class, make-ups for any exam are allowed only under compelling circumstances. Under such a compelling circumstance, you are almost always required to make prior arrangements before the exam, usually one week in advance. In the case that you miss a midterm exam that you cannot make-up, remember that the lowest midterm or recitation grade is dropped. So missing a midterm exam should be avoided, but it may or may not hurt you as long as you do well on the other midterm exam and in recitation. In the event that a make-up exam is warranted, I may choose to prorate your exam grade to your final.
Extra Credit: There will only be one extra credit opportunity for the entire semester, but it will be worth between 0 and 4 points on your final grade. This means that you have the opportunity to improve your grade by a sign. The assignment is related to thinking like an economist and allows a fair amount of flexibility in how you complete it. For extra credit, you need to write a maximum of three pages examining the conventional wisdom of a current social/economic issue and how this wisdom is wrong or that there exist other explanations for this issue, which are not part of popular belief. Make sure to use data or figures and economic principles learned in class to support your discussion. I will provide a number of examples of good discussions on dispelling conventional wisdom through in class article discussions.

Conventional wisdom is usually thought of as popular or commonly held explanations for social events. Some examples are that minimum wage laws hurt small businesses, any urban legend, or even that people used to think the world was flat. These examples of conventional wisdom might not be wrong (except for the latter example), but they may offer some alternative explanations that are not commonly used. The current bestseller Freakonomics by S. Levitt and S. Dubner provides a great example in how economists often use innovative thinking to overcome conventional wisdom. Since this an unconventional assignment, I would expect you to come and speak with me during office hours before you spend too much time on it. This assignment is due on December 1st and late assignments will not be accepted.

Important Dates:
Classes Start: Mon, August 22nd
Recitations Start: Mon, August 29th
Midterm 1: Thurs, September 29th
Midterm 2: Tues, November 8th
No Class: Thurs, November 10th
Last Day of Class: Thurs, December 8th
Final: Mon, December 12th from 10:30-1:00pm

Additional Notes:
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) early in the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, (http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Disability Services letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated reasonable accommodations. Other letters/requests you may receive from agencies such as the Wardenburg Student Health Center, or other health providers, such as physicians or counselors, are recommendations you may choose to follow to assist students but are not necessarily legal mandates. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, accommodations will be made, but only with adequate advanced notification. Students can see full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and
respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which
students express opinions. See polices at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html
and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to
the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating,
plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All
incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council
(honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic
integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-
academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).
Other information on the Honor Code can be found at
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at
http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty.
Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion,
or promises or create an environment that is hostile or offensive. Harassment may occur between
members of the same or opposite gender and between any combination of members in the campus
community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Harassment can occur anywhere on
campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall. Any student, staff or faculty
member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual
Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.
Information about the OSH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe
they have been sexually harassed can be obtained at: http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/

Be aware of the Drop/Add deadlines (http://registrar.colorado.edu/DropAdd/Default.html ). I will
only add students to the course after the wait list deadline.

If you have three or more final exams scheduled on the same day, you are entitled to arrange an
alternative exam time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. To qualify for
rescheduling final exam times, you must provide evidence that you have three or more exams on
the same day, and arrangements must be made with your instructor no later than the end of the
sixth week of the semester. For the complete final examination policy, see the University of
Colorado at Boulder Catalog (http://www.colorado.edu/catalog).

Course Topics (We will roughly cover a topic every week and since exams dates are
fixed, they will only cover topics we have finished)

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