

Economics 4413
International Trade
Fall 2024

Professor: Dr. Billy Mertens
Office: Econ 12
Zoom Link: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/5838330659>
E-mail: mertens@colorado.edu While email is the best way to contact me, be aware that I check my email and respond (if time) exactly twice every weekday. Once in the morning (typically between 9 and 10am, sometimes earlier). There is usually not enough time to respond to all emails during that time, but I will respond in the afternoon. I typically do not check emails at other times or over the weekend, but there are some exceptions such as exam times. We can set up times to Zoom over the weekend if you give me plenty (2 weeks) of advance notice.
Web: canvas.colorado.edu
Office Hours: MWF 11:05am – 12:05pm

Course Description:

In this course, we will study the theories, policies, and institutions of international trade. We will study these aspects of international trade at a fairly abstract and rigorous level. Although the analysis will be largely graphical in nature, the course materials and lectures will employ some mathematics. Among the issues that will be addressed are: (1) the fundamental determinants of the patterns of trade and the gains from trade; (2) the implications of imperfect competition for trade patterns and welfare; (3) how firms of different sizes and productivities engage in trade; (4) the effects of trade barriers; and if there is sufficient time, we may cover (5) the rationale for regional free-trade agreements and multilateral trade rules; and (6) the role of international capital and labor movements OR the political economy of trade policy. The economic, political, and social forces underlying many of the issues involved in international trade are complex, multi-faceted, and dynamic. They cannot be fully or easily analyzed in a professional lifetime, much less a one-semester course. They do, however, lend themselves extremely well to critical thinking and rational inquiry, which are the guiding principles of this course. Our goal is to become and remain informed about issues related to international trade and, even more importantly, acquire the ability to think about complex issues in a logical objective manner. Thinking critically is what permits us to differentiate between the illogical and the sensible, between the misleading use of statistics, misleading anecdotal evidence, and the reasonable presentation of information.

Prerequisites:

Students must have completed ECON 3070 and ECON 1088 (or its equivalent). It is NOT sufficient to take these courses concurrently. You not only need to have taken the class, but you must also understand and remember the content. The prerequisites must be strictly enforced – if you did not do well in 3070, it will be difficult to do well in this course!

While this is not a micro-theory course, economics without theory is not economics. You will need micro theory to understand and explain some of the topics. Some of the theory and terms you will need to know include: the *theory of the firm*, the *theory of the consumer*, *efficiency*, when the market equilibrium will and won't be efficient, *market failure*, types of market failures, and corrections for market failure.

A strong math background will make this course easier. Math involves rigor and a way of thinking that facilitates economic thinking. In addition, graphs and simple mathematical descriptions of economic problems provide insights that would be difficult to convey with only words.

Readings:

We will be using Markusen and Maskus, *International Trade: Theory and Evidence*, Wiley Publishers, 2012. Note that this book is not in regular print. Professor Markusen has been kind enough to allow me to post a pdf version of the text, but please note that typos do exist and so being present for lectures is crucial as we will resolve any text errors you notice in lectures.

Policy on Cheating:

If you are suspected of cheating, I will immediately and without notification forward your case to the honor code office. This is actually the fairest way to proceed. In these instances, if I took it upon myself to make the decision of whether you violated the honor code, there could be bias involved. The honor code council has both students and faculty members, and they are trained to deal with these types of situations. I will accept the honor code decision as final. If the honor code finds that you did not violate the code, then there will be no repercussions, and all grades will be entered based on your submitted work. If you are found to have violated the honor code (see below), by both the honor code council and I, you will automatically fail the course!

Material from a Missed Lecture:

If you miss a class, *you* are responsible for obtaining notes from a classmate and reading the relevant material in the textbook. I encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss the material you missed, but only after you have reviewed the relevant material and prepared specific questions.

Electronics in the Classroom

Laptops, tablets, and even phones can actually play a role and benefit learning in many types of classes. There are many pros and cons to allowing consistent use of these devices during the class period. However, it has become abundantly clear to me that these devices are more of a distraction than a learning aid in most situations for economics courses. In addition, taking notes by hand has actually been shown to be [more effective than taking them on a laptop or tablet.](#), and use of devices has been shown to [lower not only the grades of the users, but also of the surrounding students.](#) Therefore, electronic devices, other than tablets used with a writing device will NOT be allowed in the classroom (this includes cell phone use for texting, etc.). **You especially cannot use any form of electronic device during Group Assignments (it defeats the purpose of working together). You should take a calculator to class on Group Assignment days and put your phone completely out of sight!** If you are expecting an important call or text, then simply put your phone on vibrate, sit near the door, and step out when the call/text comes through. Otherwise, keep your phone in your pocket/bag, and **not** on your desk (or I may ask you to put it away or leave the class). Of course, if you have a disability services related need for these devices they will be allowed – in that case notify me of your exception ASAP.

More about email:

Email is not a very efficient mode of communication when it comes to answering in-depth concept, and also administrative-type questions. These are best asked when the whole class can benefit from the response. Time will be given at the beginning of every class for questions – please utilize this time if you have any questions. If it's something impossible to do at that time and you have class during my office hours, then you can email your question along with your official class schedule and we will set up a meeting.

In-class Group Assignments and Grading of All Group Content:

The material for this class can be very complex and doing problems in class (often in groups with peer-input) has proven to be more beneficial than traditional problem sets and review problems. We will do in-class problems almost every week. **No cell phones are allowed during these assignments!! You will lose points if you have them out.**

These cooperative learning exercises (detailed below) are extremely important. The group assignment dates are listed in the course outline. It is important not to miss these days without an excused absence. The object of these assignments is to work together and engage your brains in the learning process. The goal is NOT to try and finish the assignments quickly, or in most cases, to even finish them at all. You will receive a passing score of 90% just for being present and working on the in-class problems with your group. Additionally, I will typically have a random member of a random group demonstrate a problem at the board, and if you are a member of the group that presents, it can raise your grade for that assignment. **You receive a grade for these assignments by being present on the day we begin the assignment. We will often work on these over the course of two class periods, and while it is important to be present the 2nd day as well, the assignment credit is given only on the first day (which is also the day listed in the course outline).**

Homework: While there is no graded homework for this class, there is homework. You should read the relevant chapters in advance of class and come prepared with questions. You should also then review the notes you take in class and come prepared with questions on those notes for the following class. **Don't skip the homework!**

Review Sets:

You will also be given review problems that are extremely valuable in preparing for exams. There are 2 sets (a and b) for each exam. The 'a' review sets focus on the concepts, and the 'b' sets focus on problem-solving. Both are essential.

Exams:

There will be three cumulative exams and a cumulative final. These will be given in class on the days listed. No exams will be dropped. To be fair to everybody, I will not answer ANY questions during exams (even about typos) – this puts everyone on equal footing during the exams. Tests will consist of short-answer questions and some longer problems. The exams will all be cumulative, and the material does build on itself, so it is important to understand all the concepts as we go. **Exams will be given in class on the days listed. If you miss an exam with**

a valid excuse (e.g., illness), then the weight of your final will be increased. Please do Not feel the need to try and reschedule an exam no matter the reason you miss one. We simply reweight the final in all circumstances. If you know in advance that you will miss an exam, sometimes we can arrange for you to take it a day or two early. Note that the exam dates below are not tentative – exams will be given in class on the days listed. **NO EXAMS WILL BE DROPPED!!**

Exam Schedule: *all exams will be taken in class!*

Exam 1: Friday, September 27th

Exam 2: Wednesday, October 30th

Exam 3: Friday, December 6th

Final Exam: Saturday, December 14th at 4:30pm in our usual classroom

Calculators:

On some exams, the use of a calculator may be helpful. I will announce in class the day before exams if you will have the option of using one on the day of the exam. Graphing calculators are NOT permitted. If you do not take a calculator to the exam, then you will have to do without. You cannot use the same calculator as another student, and you cannot use your phone.

Grading:

In-class problems (group assignments)	11%
Exam 1:	21%
Exam 2:	22%
Exam 3:	22%
Final Exam:	24%

Grading Disputes:

If you have a dispute on a test, then you must put your issue in writing and submit it to me (or our grader if applicable). Subsequently, your entire exam will be regraded.

Incompletes, Extra Credit, etc.:

I adhere strictly to the University guidelines on Incompletes (“An I is given only when students, *beyond their control*, have been unable to complete course requirements. A substantial amount of work must have been *satisfactorily completed* before approval for such a grade is completed.”). Bad grades, unsatisfactory performance, too many credit hours, work conflicts, etc. are not reasons for an incomplete.

I am adamant about giving each student an equal opportunity to perform well in the course, so there will be no extra credit opportunities that are not offered to the entire class. You should focus your efforts on learning the material and doing well on the exams.

Grading Scale:

<u>Your score</u>	<u>Grade</u>
92% to 100%	A
90% to 91%	A-
88% to 89%	B+
82% to 87%	B
80% to 81%	B-
78% to 79%	C+
72% to 77%	C
70% to 71%	C-
68% to 69%	D+
62% to 67%	D
60% to 61%	D-
Below 59.5%	F

Tentative Course Schedule:

Many sections of the book are advanced and written more for master's and MBA students. Therefore, we will skip some sections; these sections will be announced in class. Students are responsible for all announcements made in class. I will not be continually updating the website with announcements, etc.

TEXT PART I: TECHNICAL TOOLS AND THE GAINS FROM TRADE

In this part of the course, we develop and review basic tools of microeconomic theory that we will use throughout the course.

1. Supply and Production Possibilities

MM chapter 2 (Weeks 1-2)

2. Preferences, Demand, and Welfare

MM chapter 3 (Weeks 2-3)

3. General Equilibrium in Open and Closed Economies

MM chapter 4 (Weeks 3-4)

4. The Gains from Trade

MM chapter 5 (Week 4)

5. Differences in Technology between Countries.

MM, chapters 6 and 7 (Weeks 4-5 or maybe 6)

TEXT PART II: DETERMINANTS OF TRADE

This section analyzes the different underlying causes of international trade and the gains from trade.

1. Differences in Technology between Countries.

MM, chapters 6 and 7 (Weeks 4-5 or maybe 6)

2. Differences in Factor Endowments between Countries.

MM chapters 8 and 9 (Weeks 6-9?)

3. Distortions and Externalities as Determinants of Trade.

MM chapter 10

4. Imperfect Competition and Increasing Returns I: oligopoly

MM chapter 11

5. Imperfect Competition and Increasing Returns to Scale II: monopolistic competition

MM chapter 12 (we might skip this)

TEXT PART IV: TRADE POLICY

The final part of the course analyzes the principal tools that governments use to influence trade. We analyze the effects of the policies and try to understand the reasons that governments choose the policies they do.

1. Imperfect Competition and Increasing Returns I: oligopoly

MM chapter 11

2. Tariffs

MM Chapter 18 (Weeks 12-14??)

3. Quotas

MM chapter 19

4. Strategic Trade Policy

MM chapter 20

5. Preferential Trade Areas

MM chapter 21 and/or class notes (Weeks 14-15??)

6. The Political Economy of Trade Policy (Weeks 14-15??)

MM chapter 22 and/or class notes

Additional Notes:

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you are sick and will need an excused absence, unless you are incapacitated, you must notify me immediately (by email) in order to obtain that excused absence status.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

Religious Holidays

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please

communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. In this class, **let me know if you have any religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance within the first week of class and we will make arrangements.**

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.

If you are sick and will need an excused absence, unless you are incapacitated, you must notify me immediately (by email) in order to obtain that excused absence status.

Any University policies that are in conflict with my own policies will supersede my policy!

A reply from one student to another on the discussion board for one of my colleague's online classes: "If you read the course syllabus you will find the answer to your questions. If you do not understand what you read, I recommend you read multiple times. After reading the syllabus if you still have questions come back and I will try to help you as much as possible."

