

ECON 4616 - Labor Economics

Fall 2021

Tu-Th 9:35AM-10:50AM on Zoom

Instructor: Professor Richard Mansfield

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Office Hours: Monday: 10:15AM – 10:45AM, Thursday: 2PM - 3:30PM

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1 Course Overview

The first objective of this course is to expose students to basic economic theory governing the determination of the level of wages and employment in the labor market. Thus, the course will begin with the classic models of labor supply and labor demand, and will then address more recent developments regarding job search frictions, welfare systems, human capital development, performance incentives, non-wage benefits, and automation.

The second objective of this course is to develop students' ability to test the theories presented in class using labor market data. Thus, considerable attention will be focused on how to formulate an economic model, isolate its testable predictions, and select and transform data so that such predictions can be evaluated.

2 Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is Economics 3070 (Intermediate Microeconomic Theory)

3 Zoom Information for Class Sessions

4 Assignments and Grading

There will be two in-class midterm examinations (tentative dates: September 23rd, October 28th). Each midterm will comprise 20% of each student's grade, so that the midterms collectively will account for 40% of the grade. The final exam will comprise 30% of the student's grade. The final exam will be comprehensive, but will focus primarily on untested content from the final third of the semester. Calculator use is prohibited on quizzes and exams.

Weekly problem sets will be posted on Canvas that are designed to reinforce and expand upon the topics covered in class. These problem sets will not be graded, and solutions will be posted at the same time as the problem sets themselves. However, in-class quizzes based on these problem sets will occur each week (usually Tuesday) starting the second week of class. Scores on these in-class quizzes will comprise 10% of each student's grade. Quizzes may not be made up, but each student's lowest score over the course of the semester will be dropped.

The final 15% of each student's grade will be based on lecture attendance (5%), scores on in-class iClicker questions (5%), and class participation (5%). The final exam will last 2.5 hours, at the date and time to be assigned shortly by the university.

Each student's weighted average score will be calculated, and a final letter grade will be computed based on a curve that ensures that the distribution of grades will be similar to that observed in 4000-level courses in economics.

5 Textbook

The primary textbook for the course is Modern Labor Economics, 11th edition, by Ronald Ehrenberg and Robert Smith. While the content and sequence of lectures will generally follow the textbook, not all lecture material will be covered in the textbook, and not all textbook material will be covered in class. All problem sets and exams will be based only on the content covered in lecture. Thus, purchase of the textbook is not explicitly required. However, because the course follows the book fairly closely, buying the textbook is *extremely*

strongly encouraged. Later or earlier editions will likely suffice, though they may not be perfectly aligned with the material in the 11th edition.

6 Course Website

Students should enroll in this course’s Canvas webpage. This syllabus will be posted there, along with problem sets, lecture recordings, announcements, and grades.

7 Makeup Exams

If you communicate to me prior to the day of the exam that you will need to miss an exam due to a religious holiday, family emergency, or illness, a makeup exam may be scheduled with the professor. If the makeup is taken after the originally scheduled exam, then the makeup exam will be more difficult than the original exam due to the additional time you will have to study.

8 Course Schedule

A tentative schedule of lecture topics, textbook reading assignments, and exam dates is provided below. The chapters listed refer to Ehrenberg and Smith’s *Modern Labor Economics*, 11th edition. Note that there will be no class during Thanksgiving Break (November 23th and 25th). The dates of these classes are replaced with “NC” for “no class” on the course schedule below.

Week	Topics	Book Chapters
Aug 24/26	Introducing the Economic Model& Perfect Competition	Ch. 1 & 2
A/S 31/2	Perfect Competition & Intro. to Labor Demand	Ch. 2 & 3
Sep 7/9	Labor Demand with Competitive Markets	Ch. 3 & 4
Sep 14/16	Imperfect Competition & Automation	Ch. 5
Sep 21/23	Review & 1st Midterm Exam	
Sep 28/30	Worker Utility Max.	Ch. 6
Oct 5/7	Labor Supply	Ch. 7
Oct 12/14	Welfare Policy	Ch. 7
Oct 19/21	Occupational Sorting	Ch. 8
Oct 26/28	Review & 2nd Midterm Exam	
Nov 2/4	Educational Investments & Signalling	Ch. 9
Nov 9/11	Contracts &	Ch. 11
Nov 16/18	Performance Incentives	Ch. 11
Nov NC/NC	Thanksgiving Break	
N/D 30/2	Job Search & Unemployment	Ch. 14
Dec 7/9	COVID’s Impact & Review	Ch. 12
Dec TBA	Final Exam	

9 iClicker Reef

Students are required to purchase an iClicker Reef subscription for this class. iClicker information will be used to help determine your attendance and participation grade. You are responsible for setting up the iClicker Reef application by August 24th. Information on how to register for an account is available at <https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/cuclickers-set-iclicker-reef-student-account>. Information on how to add this course to your iClicker Reef account and how to use the application during class is available at <https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/cuclickers-using-iclicker-reef-class>.

10 Administrative Drops

Students who do not attend at least two of the first three classes may be administratively dropped from the course in favor of students on the wait list.

11 University Policies

11.1 Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail 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 policies on classroom behavior and the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies.

11.2 Requirements for COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policy on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

As of Aug. 13, 2021, CU Boulder has returned to requiring masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a temporary precaution during the delta surge to supplement CU Boulder’s COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are

separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. If you are sick or quarantined, inform the professor. If you need to miss more than two classes, you can set up a Zoom meeting with the professor to formulate a plan to catch up.

11.3 Accommodation for Disabilities

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.

11.4 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.

11.5 Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code academic integrity policy. Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, 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 the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the Honor Code website.

11.6 Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about OIEC, university policies, reporting options, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options.

11.7 Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you expect to miss an exam in order to observe a religious holiday, you must communicate this request to the professor prior to Tuesday, August 31st.