

# Economics 410

## Intermediate Microeconomic Theory

### Fall 2014

TuTh 2:00pm – 3:15pm (Section 001)

TuTh 3:30pm – 4:45pm (Section 002)

Global Center 1015

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**Office Hours:** Unless otherwise notified, I will be in my office every Tuesday from 12:30pm-1:30pm and Thursday from 9:30am-10:30am (unless UNC classes are not being held). I will also be available most Wednesdays by appointment. To schedule an appointment, use Sign-Up in Sakai. I have 15-minute slots and 30-minute slots available. For the most part, I will be unavailable for office hours on Mondays and Fridays unless it is an emergency.

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#### Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to explore the foundations of Microeconomic theory, focusing on the behavior of consumers, producers, and the interaction of these agents in the marketplace. The organization of markets and its implications for firm behavior and market equilibrium are also examined. This course is divided into the following four topics:

1. Supply and demand: How consumers and firms interact to determine the market price and quantity of a good or service and how these vary in response to changes in the economic environment.
2. Consumer theory: How households make decisions in the face of scarcity and how these decisions vary in response to changes in the economic environment.
3. Firm theory: How firms make decisions in the face of scarcity and how these decisions vary in response to changes in the economic environment.
4. The organization of markets: How perfectly competitive, monopolistic, monopolistically competitive, and oligopolistic markets are organized and the outcomes of these markets.

The principles covered in this course are building blocks. These building blocks can and will be used in elective courses to analyze many specialized topics. This material cannot be learned passively. A major goal of this course is to teach you to "think" in a manner beyond fact recall. Active thinking and problem solving are essential. *Microeconomic theory is a tool learned best by use!*

## Required Course Materials

1. The required textbook is *Microeconomics: Theory & Applications with Calculus, 3e* by Jeffrey M. Perloff.
2. All students are required to register for MyEconLab through <http://pearsonmylab.com/>. Registration instructions are posted on Sakai in the *Course Management* folder under the *Resources* link. To register, you will need a:

- **course ID**
  - Section 001 (2:00pm class) sheran31925
  - Section 002 (3:15pm class) sheran35348
- **student access code**

The ISBN for a textbook that comes packaged with an access code for MyEconLab is 9780133423853. Note that you can buy an access code for MyEconLab for \$60 through <http://pearsonmylab.com/>. Alternatively, you can buy the eText and student access code for \$105 through <http://pearsonmylab.com/>. If you're waiting for financial aid and can't pay immediately, you can get temporary access to MyEconLab without payment for 14 days.

3. TurningTechnologies Clicker - Any of the following TurningTechnologies clicker models can be used in the course. The bookstore has the ResponseCard RF LCD. If you purchase a new clicker, you are eligible for a \$10 rebate from TurningTechnologies (see below for details).
  - A. ResponseCard RF - Bare bones model
  - B. ResponseCard RF LCD (recommended) - Similar to the RF, but includes an LCD screen to verify your input
  - C. ResponseCard XR - Upgraded model that allows numeric entry (which we will not be using)
  - D. ResponseCard NXT - High-end model with all the bells and whistles

If you purchase a new ResponseCard, you are eligible for a \$10 rebate from TurningTechnologies. To redeem the rebate, go to <https://rebates.turningtechnologies.com/> and enter the rebate code RUNC5. Please note you must submit the receipt and the clicker box. By sending them your box, you likely will be unable to sell your clicker back to the bookstore (although I'm not 100% sure). That being said, I'll be teaching this class for the foreseeable future, so finding someone to buy your clicker next semester will likely not be too difficult.

## Optional Course Materials

Besides our primary textbook, you might find additional textbooks helpful in their treatment of the subject matter and the availability of extra problems. If you would like to check-out or purchase a separate textbook, most any "Intermediate Microeconomics" textbook will have similar content, and older additions will likely be just as useful as newer additions. In addition, the following books are on 2-hour reserve in the library. Please note the similarities in the book names and authors. Make sure you receive the book you actually requested.

1. *A Short Course in Intermediate Microeconomics with Calculus*, **Roberto Serrano** – Another calculus-based treatment of Microeconomics.
2. *Microeconomics: Theory & Applications with Calculus*, **Jeffrey Perloff** – Older edition of our textbook.
3. *Microeconomics: Theory & Applications*, **Edgar Browning and Mark Zupan** - Similar to Perloff's book. Many of the chapters end with a "The Mathematics Behind..." section that includes some of the calculus we will be using.
4. *Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions*, **Walter Nicholson** - A slightly more mathematically advanced treatment of the material with many worked-out in-chapter examples and test-quality end-of-chapter problems.
5. *Intermediate Microeconomics and its Application*, **Walter Nicholson and Christopher Snyder** - The most recent edition of the above book, with a more accessible treatment. Less worked-out in-chapter examples and more graphical explanations than earlier edition.
6. *Microeconomics: Theory and Applications*, **Dominick Salvatore** - Nice graphical treatment of microeconomic concepts. Calculus is excluded from the exposition, focusing on the intuition and visual explanations.
7. *Price Theory and Applications*, **Jack Hirshleifer, Amihai Glazer, and David Hirshleifer** - Similar to Salvatore's book, with less intuition and more graphical analysis.
8. *Microeconomics and Behavior*, **Robert H. Frank** - If Salvatore's book and Perloff's book had a baby.
9. *Microeconomics*, **Robert Pindyck and Daniel L. Rubinfeld** - Non-technical treatment of the material.

## Clickers

In almost every lecture, there will be opportunities for students to earn points by answering questions with their TurningTechnology clickers. Students are required to bring their clickers to lecture each day. Using any clicker other than your own is a violation of the Honor Code; having another individual use your clicker is a violation of the Honor Code. There are no opportunities to make up missed clicker points. However, in order to allow for illness, technical problems, and other unforeseen emergencies, there is a 10% curve on your clicker score (not to exceed a total score of 100%). This equates to 2-3 days' worth of clicker points.

Prior to August 26<sup>th</sup> you must register your clicker with TurningTechnologies. Registration instructions **will be** posted on Sakai in the *Course Management* folder under the *Resources* link.

## Attendance

I expect regular attendance. 10% of your course grade will be based on your performance on the in-class clicker questions. Moreover, I expect you to come to class prepared. You should read the relevant material before I cover it in lecture and come to class ready to work out problems and ask/answer questions. Make the best use of your time! Come to lecture prepared to take an active part in your learning. I strongly encourage and welcome questions.

If you miss a lecture, please take the following steps in the order listed to obtain the missing material.

1. Look for any new announcements on Sakai.
2. Talk to other students and acquire copies of their notes.
3. Review the relevant slides for the class.
4. Read the text corresponding to the class content.
5. Discuss any questions you have on the content with a TA during an EIM session.

## Laptop/Cell-Phone Restrictions

Unless you have a documented visual, auditory, or learning disability requiring the use of a laptop, all laptops and cell-phone usage is restricted during class. The first time you violate the restriction, you will be warned. The second time you will lose all Clicker points for the day. If you are expecting an important phone call (job interview, family illness, etc.), please notify me before class and then sit in the back of the class near the exit.

## Class Conduct

Do not talk to your neighbors during class. It distracts the students around you, and it distracts me. The first time you violate this restriction, you will be warned. The second time you will lose all Clicker points for the day.

# EIM (Extended Intermediate Microeconomic) Sessions

## Standard EIM Logistics

Throughout the semester, whenever regular UNC classes meet on a Monday-Wednesday, extended sessions will be held according to the following schedule. A graduate TA will be present during each session to answer any questions you have. The sessions are first-come, first-serve, with a 20 minute limit per individual if multiple students are waiting. If no students are waiting, you can spend as much time as you need with the graduate TA.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Day Session(s)</b>	TBD	N/A	TBD	N/A	N/A
<b>Evening Session</b>	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A	N/A

If a TA is not present at a scheduled EIM session, please send an email to the Head TA ([econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu)) and me so we can get someone to the session as quickly as possible.

To find the time/location of an EIM session, please refer to the Course Calendar in Sakai.

On evenings for which a HW Help Session is scheduled, the HW Help Session will take the place of the EIM session.

## Flex EIM Logistics

In addition to the Standard EIM Sessions, we will also be offering Flex EIM Sessions. Specifically, if you would like to meet with a TA on a Thursday or Friday or have a schedule conflict preventing you from attending the Standard EIM Sessions, you may request a Flex EIM Session by emailing [econ410-flex@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-flex@unc.edu). In your request, please include the following:

1. Your name
2. Your pid
3. Your section
4. The best manner to contact you
5. Times you are able to meet during the week
6. Location preference

TA's will be holding up to 8-hours of Flex Sessions per week, on a first-come/first-serve basis. Each student may request up to an hour per week. On high-demand weeks, we will limit the Sessions to 30 minutes per student. Multiple students can attend a single Flex Session, if desired. If four or more students would like to attend a single Session, they may request a 2-hour Group Session. If you are requesting a Flex Session, the location will likely be in the TA's office, although specifics will be determined on a Session-by-Session basis.

## Email Correspondence

Besides the EIM sessions, throughout the week graduate TA's will be available to answer email questions. From Monday-Thursday, if you send an email you should expect a response within 24 hours. From Friday-Sunday and on holidays you should expect a response within 48 hours. Please note if the question is particularly complex, you might be redirected to an EIM or Office Hour session.

All questions should be sent to one of the following email addresses:

1. **Administrative Questions** - Any question relating to when the class will meet, where EIM sessions are held, what percentage of the grade a certain assignment is, missed assignments, etc. should be sent to [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu).
2. **Concept Questions** - Any question relating to the subject matter of the course, *but not the current HW assignment*, should be sent to [econ410-concepts@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-concepts@unc.edu).
3. **Flex EIM Session Requests** - Any request for a Flex EIM Session should be sent to [econ410-flex@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-flex@unc.edu).
4. **HW Questions** - Any question relating to the current HW assignment should be sent to [econ410-hw@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-hw@unc.edu). Please note any question of the form "is this right" or "is this wrong" will not be answered.

## Late Email Responses

If you send an email and do not get a response in the specified time, please forward your question to the Head TA ([econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu)), as well as the specifics on when/where you sent the email. If the Head TA does not respond within 24 hours, send an email directly to me.

## Grades

The actual letter grade you earn in this course will be based on a grading scale to be determined *after* the final exam. This scale may or may not resemble the 10-point scale that many of you are used to (*e.g.*, 90-100% is some sort of A, 80-89% is some sort of B, etc...) because I reserve the right to curve. (I will not curve down.) I will provide feedback over the semester on how to interpret your raw homework and exam scores so that you know how you are progressing in the course.

## Grade Breakdown/Schedule

Your grade will consist of 4 components. Please note there is **no extra credit** in this course.

Portion	%	Date	Description
Clickers	10%	Daily	For each class, the percentage of the available clicker points you receive will make up your daily score. Your overall clicker score will be the average of your daily clicker scores plus a 10 point curve (not to exceed 100).
3 Midterms	45%	Midterm 1 on Tu, 9/23 Midterm 2 on Tu, 10/28 Midterm 3 on Tu, 11/25	Your Midterm score will be the average of your 2 highest Midterm scores.
Final	25%	Section 001 (2:00 class): Sa, 12/6; <b>12pm-3pm</b> Section 002 (3:30 class): Th, 12/11; <b>4pm-7pm</b>	Comprehensive final covering all aspects of the course.
HW	20%	HW1 due 9/4 HW2 due 9/11 HW3 due 9/18 HW4 due 10/2 HW5 due 10/9 HW6 due 10/23 HW7 due 11/6 HW8 due 11/13 HW9 due 11/20	Homework is administered through MyEconLab. I will drop your lowest HW grade and calculate your HW score as the average of the remaining HW assignments.

## Homework Policies

MyEconLab questions will be graded automatically, and no submissions will be accepted after the due date. Please plan accordingly and submit your assignment early. You can (and should) save your work as you go. The assignments do not have to be completed in one sitting. Due to the size of the course, technological glitches are not a valid excuse for a late assignment unless MyEconLab has been down for more than 24 hours.

You can use the following resources to help you complete your HW assignments

1. Anyone taking ECON 410-001 or ECON 410-002 this semester.
2. ECON 410 TA's
3. Me
4. Any economics book, whether in electronic or traditional form.
5. Course notes from another Intermediate Microeconomics course found online.
6. Math software, including [www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com).
7. Instructional websites, such as [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org).

Any other resource is considered an Honor Code violation. If you have any questions about a particular resource, please do not hesitate to ask me prior to using it.

## HW Help Sessions

Besides the normal EIM sessions, graduate TA's will hold additional HW Help Sessions during HW weeks. The schedules for HW Help Sessions are as follows:

Monday	TBD
Tuesday	TBD
Wednesday	TBD
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>HW Due</b>

Within the HW Help Sessions, the TA will work through practice problems related to the homework assignment and answer HW specific questions. Any question of the form "is this right", "is this wrong", or "how do I do this" will not be answered. Instead, you should have worked through the problem to the best of your abilities and have specific questions. Alternatively, if you truly are lost on a particular problem, you should bring in a list of concepts which you think apply to the problem that the TA's can use to guide the session.



## Midterm/Final Policies

If you miss 1 Midterm, your Midterm score will simply be the average of your other two Midterms. If you miss 2 Midterms, you will receive a score of 0 for the second Midterm.

Per UNC rules, you must have a valid excuse from the Dean to take the Final Exam at a time other than the schedule time. Details can be found at <http://advising.unc.edu/policies-and-procedures/final-exam-excuse/>. If you miss the Final Exam and do not have an excuse from the Dean, you will receive a score of 0 on your Final.

Each Midterm is exactly 1 hour and 15 minutes. The Final Exam is exactly 3 hours. To ensure each student has the same amount of time, these cutoffs are strict. If you are observed writing on your Midterm/Final after the time limit has passed, you will receive a 10% penalty for each minute by which the limit has been exceeded. For instance, if you are observed writing 2 minutes after the time limit has passed, you will receive a 20% penalty.

*To avoid a last-minute rush, please make sure to bubble your scantron in early.*

## Regrade Requests

Requests for a regrade must adhere to the following rules:

1. Barring a major technological failure, there will be no regrading of MyEconLab questions unless an error is found. If you believe a MyEconLab question was graded incorrectly, please email [econ410-hw@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-hw@unc.edu). If you are unsure why a particular MyEconLab question was correct or incorrect after reviewing the answer, please attend an EIM session or email [econ410-hw@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-hw@unc.edu).
2. **All midterm Regrade Requests must be made within 2 weeks of the day on which the midterm was returned.** Unfortunately, due to the size of the class there can be no exceptions to this rule except in extraordinary circumstances.
3. If you feel the long-form portion of your Midterm was graded incorrectly, please fill out the Regrade Request Form found on Sakai in the *Course Management* folder under the *Resources* link. Staple the Request form to your Midterm and hand it in at the start of class. Please note that there is an element of subjectivity in grading long-form questions. If your Regrade Request is of a subjective nature ("I think I deserve 8 points and you only gave me 7"), your Request will likely be rejected.
4. If you submit a Regrade Request, I reserve the right to regrade your entire Midterm, which could potentially lower your grade.
5. If your Regrade Request is rejected and you disagree with the explanation, come see me during my office hours to appeal your Request. Please note the odds are fairly low that I will overturn the original grade, but it is possible if there is a relatively severe misunderstanding.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **"I forgot my clicker today. Can I write down the answers and submit them?"**

Due to the difficulty of keeping track of 500+ potential hand-written submissions, I instead curve the clicker points by 10%. This curve incorporates all the reasons you might not have your clicker on a specific day (forgot it, dead battery, missed class, etc.) This curve is equivalent to 2-3 days' worth of clicker points.

### **"I registered my clicker incorrectly. What should I do?"**

Please do not re-register your clicker. Instead, email [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu) and include your first name, last name, onyen, pid, and clicker device id.

### **"My old clicker died and I got a new one. What should I do?"**

Please do not register your new clicker. Instead, email [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu) and let us know you got a new clicker. Make sure to include your onyen, pid, and new clicker device id.

### **"Can you tell me if I registered my clicker correctly?"**

Due to the size of the class, we cannot verify every clicker. Instead, approximately every week we will post the clicker scores in Sakai/Post'Em. If you received points for the day, you are registered correctly.

### **"I was in class today. Why didn't I receive any clicker points?"**

Check the following causes, in this order

1. Do you have a valid TurningTechnologies clicker model?
2. Are you clicking correctly? To click a particular response, you only press the desired optioned and nothing else. For instance, if you want to select option 2, you should only press "2". When you do so, the light on your clicker should turn a solid green.
3. When you click in class, does the light turn solid green?
  - a. If yes, then you likely have a registration problem. If you have not registered, do so following the instructions posted on Sakai. If you have registered, email [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu) and provide as much information as possible.
  - b. If no, but you do see a red light or a blinking red/green light, then you are likely on the wrong channel. Change the Channel to 41. Generally, this is done by hitting "Channel" then "41" then "Channel".
  - c. If no, but you see no light, then you might have a dead battery. The clicker battery can be replaced with a standard watch battery you can find at most drug stores.

If none of these steps have helped (and you are sure you don't have a broken clicker), email [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu) and provide as much information as possible.

**"I've been using my clicker all semester long but received a 0% for my final grade? What should I do?"**

It is extremely important that you verify your clicker scores in Sakai/Post'Em throughout the semester to make sure you are registered correctly, your clicker is working correctly, etc. If you did not and you realize you have no clicker scores at the end of the semester, your first step is to email [econ410-admin@unc.edu](mailto:econ410-admin@unc.edu) with your clicker device id to see if it was a registration problem. If it was, we will be able to find your points. If, however, it is not a registration issue (for instance, your clicker was on the wrong channel throughout the year, your battery was dead, etc.), you will unfortunately not be able to receive any points.

**"I bubbled in the wrong answers on my Midterm/Final scantron. Can I get partial credit?"**

Unfortunately, to ensure fairness and remove subjectivity, we have to be strict on scantron grading. The answers on your scantron are the answers on which your grade is based, regardless of what is written on the test itself.

**"My scantron score was lower than I expected. Could you check to see if the scantron machine graded it incorrectly?"**

Email me directly and I can manually grade your scantron. Make sure to include your name, section, and onyen. Please note scantron grading issues are very rare, but possible (for instance, if you bubbled in the wrong sequence number).

**"Is there extra credit?"**

No. The reason I do not offer extra credit is that if everyone knows about it, it's not really extra credit. It's just another assignment, since I incorporate the curve and opportunity for extra credit into the Grade scale. If some people don't know about it (for instance, if a specific student asks for extra credit at the end of the semester), then I'm treating my students differently, which I make every attempt to avoid.

**"I got an 89.8. Is there anything I can do to raise my grade?"**

I completely empathize with this question, as I understand how frustrating it is to be on the cutoff for a particular grade. Unfortunately, however, the answer is no. The reason is twofold. First, I believe selective extra credit leads to an inequality in how I treat different students, which I make every attempt to avoid. Second, with a class of this size, if I move the Grade scale down by even 0.1, I am sure to have moved the cutoff up against another student. This once again introduces an element of inequality, as I was willing to move the scale for one student, but not the new student for whom the cutoff now applies.