

Econ 445, Spring 2015
Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. in Gardner 308
Instructor: Jeff Ackermann (jeffack@email.unc.edu)
Office: Phillips Annex 102. Office Hours: Tuesday or Thursday, time TBD

Course Overview

Why is it that airplane tickets get more expensive on the day of the flight, but Broadway tickets get less expensive on the day of the show?

Should Office Depot and Staples be allowed to merge?

Should Net Neutrality laws be passed?

These questions all relate to how firms make decisions. In this course, we will learn how some basic mathematical concepts and a few assumptions can help us answer abstract questions about how businesses behave and how government regulation can work.

Textbook

“Industrial Organization” by Pepall, Richards, and Norman. Any edition will do.

Grading

Item	Percentage	Dates
Clickers	10%	Daily
2 Midterm exams	35%	February 12; March 31
Final exam	25%	
5 Homework assignments	15%	Jan 22; Feb 5; Mar 5; Mar 24; Apr 14
Project	15%	April 17

Exams

Each midterm will be worth 15% of your grade. The final exam is cumulative and is worth 25% of your grade.

There are no makeup exams. If you miss one midterm *and* your absence is excused, your other midterm score will represent 30% of your grade.

If you have a documented illness, are participating in a University-sanctioned activity, or the assignment falls on a major religious holiday that has the potential of affecting your performance, your absence may be excused. Where applicable, you must provide documentation from a coach or doctor.

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. 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 exam.

Time Policy: Each midterm is exactly 75 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 or 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.

Disabilities: If any student will require assistance or appropriate academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Division of Student Affairs, Disability Services.

Homework Assignments

There will be five graded homework assignments. No late assignments will be accepted, but your lowest homework score will be dropped. You are permitted to work in groups, but everyone must turn in their own answers. See the section regarding the honor code for information on what resources you are permitted to use.

In general, I try not to ask for large volumes of homework. I'd rather ask you to do less, but expect you to do it well. This means that your work should be neat, easy to follow, and look like something that you are proud to turn in. Do not turn in anything that is multiple pages and unstapled.

I will occasionally assign ungraded problems. It is important that you get lots of practice doing lots of types of problems. Do not infer that "ungraded" means "unimportant".

Homework problems are designed to prepare you for exams. Because exams make up 55% of your grade, it is important that you take these assignments seriously.

Clicker Score

10% of your grade will depend upon your attendance and participation during class. To keep this component as objective as possible, Turning Technologies clickers will be used. There will be multiple-choice questions interspersed throughout lectures. Almost all questions give you full points for submitting any answer.

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).

- ResponseCard RF - Bare bones model
- ResponseCard RF LCD (recommended) - Similar to the RF, but includes an LCD screen to verify your input
- Clicker scores will be curved up by 10%, with a maximum possible score of 100%. **If your midterm average is higher than your post-curve clicker score, I will use your midterm average in its place.**

Attendance and Attention

No electronic devices (computers, tablets, cell phones, etc.) are permitted during class. All cell phones should be turned off – not set on vibrate. If there is a special circumstance requiring you to have your cell phone on during class, come speak to me before class begins. If you are observed using an electronic device during class, your clicker score will be manually reduced.

I encourage everyone to participate in the course. Feel free to ask questions and offer your comments during class. Because I need to keep the class moving at the appropriate pace, I may have to cut some discussions short; do not infer this as discouragement from participation but as the unfortunate result of having a large amount of material to cover in a small amount of time.

Honor Code

Your behavior is governed by the UNC Honor Code. If you do not yet understand your responsibilities under this code, I urge you to go to <http://honor.unc.edu> to learn more. I am also bound by the honor code and am required to report all cheating to the honor court. I will do my best to discourage cheating by actively proctoring exams, but there is a limit to what I can do. Ultimately, you should recognize that nothing we do in this course is worth jeopardizing your integrity over.

Honor Code – Homework Assignments

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

- Anyone currently taking this class
- Jeff Ackermann
- Any economics book, whether in electronic or traditional form.
- Course notes from another industrial organization course found online.
- Math software, including calculators and www.wolframalpha.com.
- Instructional websites, such as www.khanacademy.org.

Honor Code – Exams

The only resources you are allowed to use during an exam are:

- A pencil
- A calculator
- A straight-edge
- For each midterm, you are allowed to bring in one side of an 8.5 x 11" sheet of paper with anything on it legible to your naked eye. For the final, you are allowed to bring in all previous cheat sheets plus one additional. Thus, for the final you are allowed to have four sides of 8.5 x 11" sheets of paper.

Using any resource not expressly permitted above is an honor code violation. If you have any questions about what is permitted under the honor code in this course, please ask me.

Project

The expectations for the project will be described in depth later in the course. In general, you can expect to work in a small group to write a short essay discussing a real-world issue that relates to industrial organization.

