



Economics 345 - Spring 2018
Public Policy Towards Business

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:05 p.m. to 9:55 p.m.
in Gardner 308

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Office: Phillips Annex 102
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Course Description: 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? Why did the Justice department not allow Office Depot and Staples to merge? Would consumers be better off if they could purchase cable channels individually? This course has a number of goals. First, we will develop an analytical toolkit that will allow us to examine strategic choices by firms and how those choices impact consumers. Second, looking at real world examples, we will examine how the US government has handled actual antitrust cases. We will learn how some basic mathematical concepts and a few assumptions can help us answer abstract questions about how businesses behave and, more practically, how government regulation works.

Text: *The Antitrust Revolution: Economics, Competition and Policy.* **Authors:** Kwoka and White (no relation); **ISBN-13:** 978-0199315499

Optional Text: *Industrial Organization: Contemporary Theory and Empirical Applications.* The 3rd and 4th editions should be fine as well. Readings (which are optional) will refer to the 5th edition.

Authors: Pepall, Richards and Norman; **ISBN-13:** 978-1118250303

Grade Distribution and Dates:

2 Midterms	40%	Feb. 14th and April 9th
Final Exam	30%	8:00 am to 11:00 am, Monday May 7th
Assignments	15%	
Presentation	10%	
Participation	5%	

Course Policies:

- **Exams**

- Each midterm will be worth 20% of your grade. The final exam is cumulative and is worth 30% of your grade.
- Exams will be open book and open note. Memorization is not a valuable skill and will not be emphasized in this course. The exams will challenge you to apply the concepts you have learned in class and via the homework assignments.
- There are no makeup exams. If you miss one midterm and your absence is excused, your final exam score will represent 50% of your grade. If you have an 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 will be excused. Where applicable, you must provide documentation from a coach or doctor. The scenarios above are broad but do not cover all acceptable excused absences. I reserve the right to excuse an absence, in which case your final exam will be re-weighted. If you miss an exam for any reason, you should contact me and we can decide on an appropriate course of action going forward. Furthermore, for students who have taken both exams, if reweighing a final exam score to 50% improves a student's final grade, then I will automatically drop the midterm score and add its weight to the final, giving those who have attended the midterms a slight advantage. The final exam is mandatory and will be given at the scheduled time. The UNC Undergraduate Bulletin provides specific and narrow exceptions to this rule. If you believe you qualify for one of these exceptions, you will need to work with the Dean's office and/or Academic Advising in order to reschedule the exam.
- For simple scoring or adding-up mistakes, return the exam to me with a brief explanation. If there is a more substantial issue, write a typed, single paragraph explaining why you think your answer is correct, and give it to me (along with your exam). You must provide all regrade requests within a week of when the exam is returned.
- UNC facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, Tel:- 919-962-8300 or Email;- accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible. If you are established with ARS, and will require appropriate academic accommodations, please contact me after class, during office hours, or by individual appointment.

- **Homework Assignments**

- Throughout the semester, I will assign graded homework assignments. You are permitted to work in groups, but everyone must turn in their own answers. Your work should be neat, easy to follow and well presented. If any of your assignments are messy or unorganized, then you will be required to type up the remaining assignments.

- Homework problems are designed to prepare you for exams. Not doing the assignments will have a direct effect on your grade but will, in all likelihood, also have an indirect impact on your exam scores. Because exams make up 70% of your grade, it is important that you take these assignments seriously.
- The lowest homework assignment will be dropped.
- Late homeworks will not be accepted. If you can not make it to class or turn in the assignment beforehand, send me a photo of the work you have completed, and turn in a hardcopy next class period (which should match the photo).

- **Presentation**

- The last section of the course will be student-led presentations of antitrust cases. You will be assigned to a group of four or five students. A substantial number of cases are available in the textbook. I will also post some potential cases on Sakai.
- We will discuss the presentation requirements in greater detail as it nears but in general each student will be required to speak for 4-5 minutes. The group is expected to cover the more important portions of the antitrust cases and economic issues raised by those cases.

- **Participation**

- Participation is a direct portion of your grade. Participation includes attendance as well as engaging in class discussion. This course offers many real world applications and I will do my best to connect recent articles, news, etc. to what we are learning. You should read and connect the ideas we discuss to stories in the popular press. A few good sources would be the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and The Economist. I will occasionally post stories on Sakai and you may be called upon to give your thoughts.
- You are not permitted to use electronic devices (computers, tablets, cell phones, etc.) in the classroom. If you need to use your phone (including to text) during class, please step outside the room.

- **Sakai**

- Readings, announcements and other class information will be distributed via Sakai. Please make sure you have access. Course grades will be stored and displayed on Sakai. It is your responsibility to check those grades for accuracy.

- **Honor Code**

- The UNC Honor Code governs your behavior. If you do not yet understand your responsibilities under this code, I urge you to go to <http://studentconduct.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.

Tentative Course Outline:

The number in parentheses is the approximate number of class meetings we will spend on a topic.

1. Course introduction, objectives, historical perspective (1). Readings: PRN: Ch. 1., KW: Intro and pp. 1-5
2. Math Review (1).
3. Review of perfect competition and monopoly (3-4). PRN: Ch. 2, KW: pp. 8-15
4. Monopoly product and pricing strategies (6).
 - (a) Price discrimination. PRN: Chs. 5 - 6.
 - (b) Bundling PRN: Ch. 8.

Midterm 1 approximately here.

5. Game theory: Assumptions and solution concepts (3). PRN: Ch. 9.1 - 9.3.
6. Oligopoly markets (8).
 - (a) Cournot competition. PRN: Ch. 9.4 - 9.6
 - (b) Bertrand competition. PRN: Ch. 10.1 - 10.2.
 - (c) Describing market structure. PRN: Ch. 3
7. Oligopoly markets, extensions (6)
 - (a) Stackelberg competition. PRN: Ch. 11.1
 - (b) Dynamic interaction. PRN: Ch. 11.2 - 11.3
 - (c) Entry deterrence. PRN: Ch. 12.

Midterm 2 approximately here.

8. Cartels and collusion (3). PRN: Ch. 14, KW: pp 202-209
9. Student presentations of antitrust cases.

PRN = Pepall, Richards, and Norman. This book is slightly more advanced than necessary but provides good written explanations for concepts we cover. The class lectures and slides are a guide to what topics are important within each PRN chapter.

KW = Kwoka and White. This is a book consisting of different antitrust cases. Each case is examined by an economist who worked directly on the case. There are some technical parts that we will skip. Our focus will be on the central economic ideas that they highlight. This will be a critical tool in connecting the models we develop in class to real world applications.