

Economics 410
Intermediate Theory: Price and Distribution
Summer 2020

Instructor:	Michelle Sheran-Andrews
Email:	sheran@unc.edu
Office Hours:	Please complete this whentomeet so I can pick office hours that accommodate the most students.
Section 02:	9:45-11:15 am M-F https://unc.zoom.us/j/96494615692 Meeting ID: 964-9461-5692
Section 03:	11:30 am -1:00 pm M-F https://unc.zoom.us/j/98015916139 Meeting ID: 980-1591-6139
Prerequisite:	ECON 101, and one of MATH 152, 231, STOR 112, or 113
Website:	http://sakai.unc.edu (There is one Sakai site for both sections.)
Credit Hours:	4 credits

1. Class Description

The purpose of this course is to explore the foundations of Microeconomic theory, focusing on the behaviors 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 three topics:

- *Consumer theory*: How households make decisions in the face of scarcity and how these decisions vary in response to changes in the economic environment.
- *Firm theory*: How firms make decisions in the face of scarcity and how these decisions vary in response to changes in the economic environment.
- *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!*

2. Class Policies and Expectations

- a. Regular class attendance and participation are required. Participation includes having your camera on, being respectful of others, collaborating with your classmates while in your assigned breakout rooms, and answering polls.
- b. You should spend approximately 5 hours per day on this class, Monday through Friday. This includes time spent before, during and after class.
- c. As a student of UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the University's Honor Code, which states that "It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity." An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. If you are unsure about which actions violate the honor code, please ask me or consult instrument.unc.edu.
- d. Let me know if you have difficulty with the material or assessments. I am here to help! Trust me, you don't want to fall behind. A good start makes a big difference 😊

3. Class Resources

- a. **Textbook:** The recommended textbook is *Microeconomics* by David Besanko and Ronald Braeutigam. You do NOT have to purchase the most recent version of this textbook.
- b. **Poll Everywhere:** We will use *Poll Everywhere* for online polling in class. You can find more information on Poll Everywhere at <https://poll.unc.edu/>.
- c. **Zoom:** We will use Zoom for our lectures and my office hours. Zoom is freely available to you; sign in at <https://software.sites.unc.edu/zoom/>. If you have any issues with Zoom (or Sakai), you should contact ITS. I will record each course meeting, but this does not serve as a substitute for attending class. The recording link will be posted under the relevant Lesson Notes in Sakai.
- d. **Gradescope:** You will submit all graded work to [Gradescope](https://www.gradescope.com/). I will register you for Gradescope on Tuesday, May 12th, by using your official UNC email address listed on Connect Carolina. It is your responsibility to make sure your submitted assignments are clear and easy to read. This means that you should use pen or dark pencil and make sure that your ink does not bleed through to the back of the page if you are writing on both sides. When taking photographs or scanning a document, make sure the pages are properly oriented and ordered numerically, and clearly indicate where each problem appears. For more information on how to submit homework to Gradescope and other frequently asked questions, visit <https://www.gradescope.com/help#help-center-section-student-workflow>.

4. Academic Services and Policies

- a. **Counseling and Psychological Services:** CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to <https://caps.unc.edu> to learn more.
- b. **Accessibility Resources & Services:** UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. Visit <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us> for contact and registration information.
- c. **Diversity Statement:** I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate suggestions.

5. Grades

Except for the final exam, assignments in this course will not be graded in the typical “point” fashion. Instead, each assignment will be graded pass/fail. I will specify my expectations for a “passing grade” in each assignment. The number of assignments that you pass and your performance on the final exam will determine your course grade. Note below that “completion” implies that you have achieved a “pass” on the assignment.

To earn a D, students must be able to remember, understand, and apply a minimum number of concepts. This will be demonstrated by:

- Completing 17 of 22 guided video questions by the assigned deadline.
- Attending and participating in 17 of 22 classes and completing all graded activities during those classes.
- Completing 17 of 23 quizzes by the assigned deadline.
- Earning at least a 60 on the final exam.

To earn a C, students must be able to remember, understand, and apply more of the concepts. This will be demonstrated by:

- Completing 18 of 22 guided video questions by the assigned deadline.
- Attending and participating in 18 of 22 classes and completing all graded activities during those classes.
- Completing 18 of 23 quizzes by the assigned deadline.
- Earning at least a 70 on the final exam.

To earn a B, students must be able to remember, understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate the concepts. This will be demonstrated by:

- Completing 20 of 22 guided video questions by the assigned deadline.
- Attending and participating in 20 of 22 classes and completing all graded activities during those classes.
- Completing 20 of 23 quizzes by the assigned deadline.
- Earning at least an 80 on the final exam.
- Analyzing 2 applications by the assigned deadline.
- Completing 12 of 16 Climb exercises by the assigned deadline.

To earn an A, students must be able to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. This will be demonstrated by:

- Completing 20 of 22 guided video questions by the assigned deadline.
- Attending and participating in 20 of 22 classes and completing all graded activities during those classes.
- Completing 20 of 23 quizzes by the assigned deadline.
- Earning at least an 85 on the final exam.
- Analyzing 2 applications by the assigned deadline.
- Completing 14 of 16 Climb exercises by the assigned deadline.

Students must meet *all* requirements for each category to earn their grade.

Guided Video Questions

These questions are tied to the videos you are scheduled to prepare for each class. The purpose of these questions is to make sure that you are prepared for each class by having the necessary background information. Each lesson's Guided Video Questions are due via Gradescope by 9am on the day of the lesson.

Quizzes

Each quiz will contain 5 multiple choice questions and 1 long-form question, consisting of a mix of problems, graphs and essays. Your answers to the multiple-choice questions will be submitted and graded through *Sakai*. Long-form answers will be submitted and graded through *Gradescope*. Each lesson's Quiz is due by 9am the class period after the lesson.

Final Exam

The final exam is a cumulative exam, consisting of multiple choice, true/false and long-form questions. The exam will be open-book and open-notes and delivered via Sakai. The final exam is on Wednesday, June 17th from 8:00 to 11:00 am for Section 02 and from 11:30am to 2:30pm for Section 02. If you are unable to attend the final exam, you need to provide me with an official excuse. Upon receipt of the exam excuse, we will work together to schedule a make-up exam at a time that is convenient for both of us.

Applications

You will analyze an article, podcast, video or journal article, either from the examples provided on Sakai or one of your own choosing (but approved by me). Your analysis will critically apply at least 2 class concepts to the application. One application is due by 9am on June 1st, and the other is due by 9am on June 15th. Applications should be submitted via Gradescope.

Climb Exercises

Each Climb Exercise corresponds to a Help Sheet. Climb Exercises have you analyze and evaluate the class material at a higher-order level. Climb Exercises are due via Gradescope by 9pm the class period after the lesson in which the Help Sheet is posted.

Help Sheets

Help Sheets are available for select topics, usually those topics students find most challenging. Each Help Sheet summarizes and synthesizes key concepts. Most Help Sheets also have a list of learning objectives intended to model how to master the Help Sheet's concepts and a video in which I work through an associated practice problem step-by-step.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Grading Criteria:

- 1. Why are you using this grading criteria and not the typical point system?** My colleague, Dr. Rita Balaban, recommended a podcast on teaching and learning about this type of grading (a.k.a. specifications grading). The guest on this particular episode was Dr. Linda B. Nilson and she gave many reasons why this is a better system for evaluating students. The benefits listed were that this system will 1) reflect student learning outcomes; 2) motivate students to learn and excel; 3) make expectations clear; 4) reduce student stress; and 5) allow students to choose how much effort they are willing to exert. I promise you that the activities for this course were designed to meet the course's learning objectives and are not "busy work." If you ever find that you are doing an activity in this class and you are not sure of its purpose, then please let me know.
- 2. Are all deadlines firm? Are there any exceptions?** Yes, the deadlines are firm. I have already built some leeway into the course since you are not required to attend all classes or hand in all assignments. However, each student will be given 3 tokens. These tokens can be used to either 1) push a deadline back by 24 hours; or 2) redo an assignment that they failed. The tokens cannot be used to move the date of the final exam.
- 3. What is your policy on regrade requests?** You can use a token to submit a regrade request. However, the assignment must be resubmitted within 48 hours after the grade was posted.
- 4. What happens to unused tokens?** An unused token has value, but you need to tell me how you would like to use your unused token(s). You can use your unused token in either of the following ways: 1) One unused token can be used as 5 bonus points on your final exam; 2) One unused token can be used to bump your final grade up by $\frac{1}{2}$ a letter grade, e.g. from a C to a C+.
- 5. What if I fulfill all criteria, for a D, but do not get at least a 60 on the final exam?** Then, you will fail the course.
- 6. What if I fulfill all criteria, for a D, but I get a 70+ on the final exam?** Since you did not fulfill the criteria for a higher grade, you will receive a D.
- 7. What if I fulfill all criteria, for a B, but I do not get an 80+ on the final exam?** You must receive at least a 60 on the final exam to pass the class. If you fulfill all the criteria for a B and get at least a 60 on the final exam, then your grade will be reduced by 1 letter grade.
- 8. Am I permitted to work with my classmates on assignments?** Absolutely, but only on in-class assessments and quizzes. You may also seek my help during office hours on Application and Climb exercises.

6. Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Date	Unit	Lesson	
Wednesday, May 13, 2020	Introduction	1	Introduction and Math Review
Thursday, May 14, 2020	Consumer Theory	2	Budget Constraints
Friday, May 15, 2020	Consumer Theory	3	Preferences
Monday, May 18, 2020	Consumer Theory	4	Utility
Tuesday, May 19, 2020	Consumer Theory	5	Utility Maximization
Wednesday, May 20, 2020	Consumer Theory	6	Utility Maximization Exceptions
Thursday, May 21, 2020	Consumer Theory	7	Demand
Friday, May 22, 2020	Consumer Theory	8	Demand and Elasticity
Monday, May 25, 2020	Memorial Day- No Class		
Tuesday, May 26, 2020	Consumer Theory	9	Income and Substitution Effects
Wednesday, May 27, 2020	Consumer Theory	10	Income and Substitution Effects
Thursday, May 28, 2020	Consumer Theory	11	Extensions
Friday, May 29, 2020	Consumer Theory	12	Uncertainty
Monday, June 1, 2020	Firm Theory	13	Production
Tuesday, June 2, 2020	Firm Theory	14	Production
Wednesday, June 3, 2020	Firm Theory	15	Cost Minimization
Thursday, June 4, 2020	Firm Theory	16	Input Demand
Friday, June 5, 2020	Firm Theory	17	LRTC
Monday, June 8, 2020	Organization of Markets	18	Perfect Competition
Tuesday, June 9, 2020	Organization of Markets	19	Perfect Competition
Wednesday, June 10, 2020	Organization of Markets	20	Monopoly
Thursday, June 11, 2020	Organization of Markets	21	Monopoly
Friday, June 12, 2020	Organization of Markets	22	Oligopoly
Monday, June 15, 2020	Organization of Markets	23	Oligopoly
Tuesday, June 16, 2020	Reading Day		
Wednesday, June 17, 2020	Final Exam		