

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

**ECON 380: LABOR ECONOMICS**

SS1 2021

MTWRF 9.:45AM - 11:15AM

**Instructor:** Alex Weng

**Email:** [alexing@live.unc.edu](mailto:alexing@live.unc.edu)

**Office Hours:** MWF, 11:30AM - 12:30PM & by appointments

**Instructional Mode:** Remote Only

**Course Website:** [Sakai](#)

The Sakai web site will contain the official course gradebook, announcements, and other supplementary materials.

**Zoom Link for Class and Office Hour:** <https://unc.zoom.us/j/7705216859>

**Prerequisites:** ECON 101 and ECON 310/410

**Course Description:** This course applies concepts from microeconomic theory to the study of labor markets. We will apply the ideas you learned in ECON 101 and ECON 310/410 to various topics in labor economics as a means of understanding labor market behavior.

**Required Textbook:** George Borjas, Labor Economics, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Optional Textbook (no math):** Ronald G Ehrenberg, Robert S. Smith, Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition.

### Grading and Course Components

- Homework: 25%
- Policy Memo: 15%
- Exam 1: 15%
- Exam 2: 15%
- Final Exam: 30%

The grading scale is as follows:

A : 93 – 100	C+ : 77 – 79.99
A- : 90 – 92.99	C : 73 – 76.99
B+ : 87 – 89.99	C- : 70 – 72.99
B : 83 – 86.99	D+ : 65 – 69.99
B- : 80 – 82.99	D : 60 – 64.99
	F : < 60

**Homework:** There will be three problem sets assigned during the course of the semester. You are free to work in pairs on the homework. You should write clearly, as assignments that are hard to read will not be graded and your grade will be 0. Homework is due at 11:15 AM on the assigned date. Due dates are firm and no late homework will be accepted without prior approval.

**Policy Memo:** There will be two policy memos assigned during the course of the semester. These policy memos are due at midnight (12:00 AM) on the assigned date. You must submit an electronic copy of the memo on Sakai as instructed during class. You will choose a topic from the available list (with details coming two weeks before the deadline) and write a memo to President Biden explaining why he should support or oppose such policy. Your writing should be clear, concise, and well-organized, and your arguments should be based on the economic concepts and theories we discuss in this course and supported by empirical facts.

**Policy Memo Format:**

- 3-4 pages
- Double spaced
- 12 point font
- 1 inch margins
- Name and PID in the header.
- References on separate page at the end (does not count towards length requirement), citing at least 3 sources, 2 or more of which should be from peer-reviewed economics journals in Chicago Author-Date style.

**Exams:** There will be two in-class exams during the course in addition to the final exam. Each exam will cover material presented in class, readings scheduled outside of class, and homework assignments. The exam format will be provided a few days prior to a given exam. You should bring a **non-graphing** calculator with you to each exam (if in doubt

about yours, ask!).

**Exam Dates:**

Exam 1	May 31, 9:45AM - 11:15AM
Exam 2	June 11, 9:45AM - 11:15AM
Final Exam	June 23, 9:00AM - 12:00PM

**Course Policies**

**Attendance & Participation:** Regular attendance and participation is strongly recommended, but not required. You are responsible for any notes or class announcements that you may have missed. You should attempt to get these notes/announcements from one of your peers before seeing me. It is expected that you will respect your peers and the instructor with appropriate behavior while in class and that you will arrive to class on time. You should refrain from browsing the web, texting, etc. during class time.

**Missed Exams::** Two midterm exams will be given for a total weight of 30%. Students are expected to take the midterms at the announced times **SYNCHRONOUSLY**. There will be no make-up exams. Please prepare well in advance to schedule your time to avoid conflicts. However if a student has a [University approved absence](#), the student can take a make-up exam at a time convenient for both the student and the instructor or choose to shift the weight of the midterm exam to the final exam.

The final exam will be 30% of the course grade. If you must miss the final exam for any excused reason, it is your responsibility to alert your instructor and Dean as soon as possible to schedule a make-up exam. Please see the [University policy](#) regarding final examinations.

**Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to adhere to the [UNC Honor Code](#).

**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 [CAPS website](#) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

**Accessibility Resources and 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. See the [ARS website](#) for contact and registration information.

## Course Outline\*

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
5/19	Introduction to Labor Economics	Syllabus; 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.2	
5/20	The U.S. Labor Force; Unemployment; Preferences and Constraints	12.1-12.2, 2.3-2.4	
5/21	Labor Supply: The Hours Decision; Anti-Poverty Policy	2.5, 2.6-2.8, 2.10-2.11	Homework 1 Due
5/24	Labor Demand in the Short Run	3.1-3.2	
5/25	Labor Demand in the Long Run	3.3-3.4	
5/26	Minimum Wage and Competitive Labor Market EQ	3.10,4.1-4.2	
5/27	Immigration Impact and Noncompetitive EQ	4.5, 4.8	Homework 2 Due
5/28	<b>Exam 1</b>		
5/31	Holiday		
6/1	Human Capital: Introduction,The Schooling Model	6.1-6.3	
6/2	Human Capital: Returns to Schooling	6.4-6.5	Essay 1 Due
6/3	Human Capital: Signaling Model; Human Capital Development	6.9	
6/4	Catch up day		Homework 3 Due
6/7	Income Inequality: Introduction	7.1-7.4	
6/8	Wage Dispersion and Intergenerational Inequality; Inequality Experiment	7.5-7.6	
6/9	Labor Market Discrimination; Taste-Based Discrimination	9.1-9.5	
6/10	Catch up day		Homework 4 Due
6/11	<b>Exam 2</b>		
6/14	Statistical Discrimination; Measuring Discrimination	9.6, 9.8	
6/15	Human Capital: Signaling Model	6.9	
6/16	Application: Discrimination; Taste-Based Discrimination	9.7, 9.9, 9.11	
6/17	Compensating Differentials	5.1-5.2,5.5	
6/18	Application: Health Insurance	5.6	Essay 2 Due
6/21	Catch up day		
6/23	<b>Final Exam, 9AM-12PM</b>		

\*Note: This outline is tentative and subject to change.