

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
ECON 490-02: URBAN ECONOMICS
SPRING 2021

Class Time:	MWF: 11:15 AM – 12:05 PM
Lecture Link:	https://unc.zoom.us/j/99825144770 (Meeting ID: 998 2514 4770) Make sure you are using the latest version of Zoom and that you are using your UNC Zoom account (unc.zoom.us).
Credit Hours:	3 hrs.
Prerequisites:	C or better in ECON 400 and ECON 410
Instructor:	Rita A. Balaban
E-Mail:	balabanr@email.unc.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays (2:00 PM – 3:00 PM), Wednesdays (4:30 PM – 5:30 PM), and Thursdays (9:00 AM – 10:00 AM) Use this link for office hours: https://unc.zoom.us/j/949953760 (Meeting ID 949 953 760)
Course Website:	http://sakai.unc.edu This is the course website and you can access it by using your ONYEN. Please become familiar with Sakai. This is where you will find a detailed outline of what you are expected to do before/after each lecture. It also contains the official course gradebook, announcements, and other supplementary materials. The course will appear as ECON490.002.SP21 in Sakai. It is your responsibility to check Sakai frequently for any new announcements.

Course Description: This course introduces space into economic models to study the location of economic activity and the implications location has on business and individuals. We examine the major contemporary issues confronting urban areas, exploring possible economic solutions to the problems of housing, transportation, education, employment, poverty, and crime. Also considered will be theories of why cities exist, city location, city size, the causes of growth and decline.

Course Expectations and Format: We will meet via Zoom during our assigned class time. This time will be used to introduce new material, hold discussions related to the course content, and do activities. Besides Zoom, we will use Poll Everywhere and Google docs during class. You are expected to be attentive and you are highly encouraged to ask questions as soon as they arise.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand why cities exist and describe the market forces that determine their location and development.
- Understand how land is allocated between competing sectors (manufacturing, offices, and households) within a city and the role of government in urban land use.
- Identify the unique features of housing and analyze policies that assist low- and high-income households.
- Explain the role of local government and analyze the effects that the local public sector has on the spatial patterns of the urban area.
- Analyze the externalities that occur within urban areas and possible policy solutions.

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.

Required Materials:

- Brueckner, J. K. (2011). *Lectures on urban economics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. (available in Sakai under Course Reserves)
- McDonald, J. F., & McMillen, D. P. (2011). *Urban economics and real estate: Theory and policy*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. (available for purchase/rent via the University's bookstore)
- Computer with microphone and webcam.
- High-speed internet access during class.
- Zoom – You will need Zoom to join lectures and office hours. Make sure you are using the latest version of Zoom and that you are using your UNC Zoom account (unc.zoom.us). Zoom is freely available to you and you can sign up at unc.zoom.us.
- Basic calculator.
- Gradescope – You will submit your assignments on Gradescope by using the link on our Sakai course page. Gradescope is free to you. 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, follow this link (<https://www.gradescope.com/help#help-center-section-student-workflow>). Note: When you submit an assignment, you will receive an automated email from Gradescope that includes the date and time you turned in your work, the assignment Due Date, and a link to your submission. Make sure that you receive this email before you navigate away from the submission page.

Recommended Reading:

- Glaeser, E. L. (2011). *Triumph of the city: How our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Axios Cities (<https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-cities>) This newsletter explores the technology and market forces shaping our cities, edited by Kim Hart. Published

University Approved Absences: Note that "University Approved Absences" refer to very specific situations as outlined in the University Catalog, in accordance with University policies (see <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>). As such, to be eligible for makeup work, a student must have the following:

- An absence which falls under the specific circumstances considered to be a "University Approved Absence." Specifically:
 - Authorized University activities with official notification from the organization (e.g., travel letter). Club activities are NOT eligible.
 - Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
 - Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC). Please note that this may also pertain to significant health conditions, such as COVID-19 or severe flu.
 - Invalid excuses are anything not listed explicitly as a University Approved Absence, including but not restricted to club activities/events, interviews (unless interviewer provides documentation that the date of the interview cannot be changed), travel and/or vacation plans, feeling unprepared, etc.
- Documentation which comes specifically from ARS, EOC, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Gender Violence Service Coordinators or the official organization (barring club sports) will be accepted. All other types of documentation cannot be used for University Approved Absences, and thus, makeup work cannot be given under these circumstances.

- Documentation must specify exactly which dates the student is to be excused for; thus, a beginning and end time must be made explicit.

It is the student's responsibility to email me at balabanr@email.unc.edu either before or during the week you return to let me know which assignment(s) you would like to make up. If you email well past the week you return, you will be unable to make up the missed work.

Course Requirements

We will draw heavily on the tools that you learned in ECON 410 so this course will feel fairly rigorous and demanding at times. However, I have carefully constructed the assignments in this course to maximize your learning. You are expected to work hard, actively participate, ask questions when you have any doubts, and perform to the very best of your ability.

Course Components and Grading Breakdown: (percentage of final grade)

Guided Reading Questions	15%
Homework Questions	15%
Recorded Presentation	15%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	15%
Cumulative Final Exam	25%

Description of Course Components

- **Guided Reading Questions** will be due by 11am before most classes. These questions will be tied to the readings that you are scheduled to prepare for a given lecture and will generally be 1-2 pages in length. All responses must be typed in at least 10-point font, double-spaced, and uploaded to Gradescope by their deadline. These questions will be graded for 1) completion, which means that ALL questions must be answered; 2) accuracy (70% or better); and 3) clarity (i.e., your response is clearly written). You are welcome to discuss these questions with your classmates, but everyone is expected to turn in their own assignment and put their responses in their own words – do not copy and paste from the reading - before uploading them to Gradescope. If you meet all these requirements, then you will receive credit (1 point), otherwise, you get no credit (0 points).
- **Homework Questions** will be assigned after many of our lectures. These questions will appear in Sakai shortly after the lecture ends and will be due before the start of the next class. Explicit instructions will be provided in the assignment and the questions will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Each homework will be graded for 1) completion, which means that ALL questions must be answered; and 2) accuracy (70% or better). You are welcome to discuss these questions with your classmates, but everyone is expected to turn in their own assignment and put their responses in their own words before uploading them to Gradescope. If you meet all these requirements, then you will receive credit (1 point), otherwise, you get no credit (0 points).
- **Recorded Presentation:** Each student will be required to do a recorded presentation on a book, academic article, documentary, lecture, podcast, or other that is related to the course content. Your source must be submitted to me for approval by emailing me a complete citation of the source (feel free to attach a copy or a link to a website) and including a short explanation on how the source is related to the course content and why you think this content would be interesting to future ECON 490 students. Your topic must be approved by April 1st and the presentation is due by April 30th. Detailed instructions with the presentation guidelines will be provided by February 1st.
- **Midterm Exam #1** will take place on Monday, February 22nd, and will be open from 11:15am – 12:15pm. More information on the exam structure, content, and how it will be administered will be provided closer to February 22nd.

- **Midterm Exam #2** will take place on Wednesday, March 31st, and will be open from 11:15am – 12:15pm. More information on the exam structure, content, and how it will be administered will be provided closer to March 31st.
- **Cumulative Final Exam** will take place during the final exam period assigned by the registrar (12:00pm – 3:00pm on Friday, May 14th). More information on the exam structure, content, and how it will be administered will be provided by May 3rd.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity: Students are bound by the Honor Code on all assignments. The Honor Code of the University is always in effect, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and the use of unauthorized materials are only some of the behaviors that will not be tolerated. I take academic integrity very seriously and will not hesitate to report any instance where I feel academic integrity has been compromised, either intentionally or unintentionally. If you are unsure about which actions violate the honor code, please see me, review the “Course Components” section above, or consult instrument.unc.edu. Any violation of the Honor Code will result in, at a minimum, a zero on the assignment in question and usually an F in the course in addition to the possibility of further university sanctions.

Contact Information and Email Policy: Students are encouraged to visit me on a first-come, first-serve basis during my scheduled Zoom office hours or ask any brief questions immediately before/after class. If you are unable to make my scheduled office hours, then feel free to schedule an appointment with me at a time that is convenient for both of us. Follow this link (<https://calendly.com/balabanr/15min>) to schedule an appointment. Face-to-face (via Zoom) is my preferred method of communication.

Attendance Policy: Regular attendance is strongly recommended. You are responsible for any announcements that you may have missed if you choose not to attend class or if you cannot attend class. You should get the missed notes/announcements from one of your peers. Discuss any questions you have on the content with a classmate or stop by during my scheduled office hours. 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. **Students who are not willing to attend regularly should drop the course.**

Late/Missed Work Policy

Late assignments are not accepted unless you have a University Approved Absence with one of the proper documentations described on pp. 2-3.

Regrade Requests: If you feel that your work has been graded unfairly, you may submit it for a regrade. However, the regrade request must be submitted within one week of when the assignment’s grade was posted. There are no exceptions to this rule. Note: if the assignment was completed on Gradescope, then select the “Request Regrade” button within Gradescope (<https://help.gradescope.com/article/8hchz9h8wh>).

In order for your regrade request to be considered, you must submit the original work with NO additional markings or changes along with a detailed description of what you believe was graded unfairly and why you think you deserve additional points. Please keep in mind that we reserve the right to regrade any and all parts of the work which is submitted for re-assessment, and your grade may increase, decrease, or stay the same as a result.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

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.

- 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 eligible for Accessibility Resources & Services (specifically, for extended time on exams), be sure to:
 - Email a copy of your official ARS notification/document to Professor Balaban at balabanr@email.unc.edu as soon as possible.
 - If I do not receive your ARS notification/document in a timely manner, then I will be unable to give you extended time.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 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 their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Title IX Resources: Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

The Learning Center: The UNC Learning Center is a great resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>

The Writing Center: The Writing Center is located in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up an appointment on their website: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>

Calendar and Reading List

Below is a general outline of the topics that will be covered this semester. A detailed outline with a schedule of required readings and assignments can be found in Sakai. You should always refer to the weekly schedule on Sakai when you are preparing for class.

Dates	Topic and Readings
Jan. 20 – Jan. 22	Introduction to Urban Economics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glaeser, E. L. (2011). <i>Triumph of the city: How our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier</i>. New York: Penguin Press. (Introduction, pp. 1-15) McDonald and McMillen, Chapters 1, 2, and 3
Jan. 25 – Jan. 29	Market Forces in the Development of Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brueckner, Chapter 1 Glaeser, E. 1998. “Are cities dying?” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 12(2): 139- 160. McDonald and McMillen, Chapter 4
Feb. 1 – Feb. 19	Land Rent and Land-Use Patterns in Urban Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brueckner, Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 11 Glaeser, E. L. (2007). <i>The Economics Approach to Cities</i> (NBER Working Paper No. 13696). National Bureau of Economic Research. McDonald and McMillen, Chapters 6 and 7
Feb. 22	Exam #1
Feb. 24 – Mar. 10	Housing Demand and Housing Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brueckner, Chapters 6 and 7 McDonald and McMillen, Chapters 10 and 11
Mar. 15 – Mar. 29	Government and Infrastructure in Urban Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brueckner, Chapters 5 and 8 McDonald and McMillen, Chapters 14 and 16
Mar. 31	Exam #2
Apr. 7 – Apr. 23	Urban Poverty: Trends and the Role of Neighborhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boustan, L. (2011). Racial Residential Segregation in American Cities. In N. Brooks, K. Donaghy, & G.-J. Knaap (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Urban Economics and Planning</i>. Oxford University Press. Chetty, R., Hendren, N., & Katz, L. F. (2016). The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment. <i>American Economic Review</i>, 106(4), 855–902. McDonald and McMillen, Chapters 17 and 18 Ross, S. L. (2011). Social Interactions within Cities: Neighborhood Environments and Peer Relationships. In N. Brooks, K. Donaghy, & G.-J. Knaap (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Urban Economics and Planning</i>. Oxford University Press.
Apr. 26 – Apr. 30	Crime in Urban Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McDonald and McMillen, Chapter 20 Brueckner, Chapter 10
May 3 – May 5	Catch-up Days/Semester Wrap-up
May 14	Cumulative Final Exam (12:00pm – 3:00pm)

Disclaimer: Although the instructor intends to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, there may be times when deviations from the material presented herein are necessary. Changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedule.