

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

ECON 380: LABOR ECONOMICS

Spring 2023

MWF 12:20PM-1:10PM

Gardner 307

Instructor: Estonia Black

Email: efblack@live.unc.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Course Website: sakai.unc.edu

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

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, 7th Edition. (**Note:** You may use another edition of this book, but chapter/section numbers might vary.)

Grading and Course Components

- Homework: 25% (5% each)
- Policy Memo: 15% (7.5% each)
- Exam 1: 15%
- Exam 2: 15%
- Final Exam: 30%

The grading scale is subject to change, but will not be stricter than the following:

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 five problem sets assigned during the course of the semester. You are free to collaborate on homework assignments, but each student must turn in their own work. Homework is due at 5:00 PM on the assigned date, and must be submitted via [gradescope.com](https://www.gradescope.com). Late work will be accepted until 6:00 PM on the assigned due date, with a 15% late penalty.

Students should use a Gradescope account connected with their UNC Heelmail address, and will be automatically added to our course Gradescope site via Sakai. I will create a fake assignment on Gradescope for students to test the system for uploading homework submissions; if you are not already familiar with Gradescope, I highly recommend using that assignment to practice uploading your work, to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties. You may submit a “regrade request” on Gradescope for any questions on a homework assignment within one week of the date the assignment’s grades are published. Any regrade request submitted after that point will not result in a change to your grade for that assignment.

Policy Memo: There will be two policy memos assigned during the course of the semester. Policy memos are due at 5:00 PM 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 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.

- In-text citations with bibliography/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 A.P.A. 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 may utilize a **non-graphing, non-programmable** calculator to assist you in completing the exam.

Exam Dates: (subject to change)

Exam 1	Friday, February 17th
Exam 2	Wednesday, March 29th

Course Policies

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and participation is strongly recommended, but not required. If you miss a class session, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate and attend office hours with any remaining questions. If you have attempted to acquire notes from classmates and have attended regular office hours and still feel behind from an absence, please reach out to me after class or via email.

Missed Exams: No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

- Authorized University activities
- 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).

If due to one of the above reasons you must miss an exam, contact me as soon as possible, and obtain a University Approved Absence by submitting a request to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Academic Integrity: Students are bound by the [UNC Honor Code](#) in taking exams and in written work. The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the

submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code.

Syllabus Changes: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, including due dates and exams. Any changes will be announced in class and on Sakai.

Additional Resources

- **Accessibility Resources:** 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: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>.

Students registered with the Accessibility Resources & Service (ARS) may be eligible to take their exams at the ARS office. If you choose this option, you must schedule the exam with ARS at least 4 business days before the date of the exam. Please schedule the exam at the same time as the in-class exam, or as close as possible. It is the responsibility of students who take their exams at ARS to ensure that they do not exceed their allotted time. I will apply a 7.5 percentage point penalty to exam scores for each 5 minutes over the time limit.

- **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 call 919-966-3658.
- **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 their website for more information or to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.
- **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.

Course Outline*

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
01/09	Introduction to Labor Economics	Syllabus; 1.1-1.3	
01/11	The U.S. Labor Force; Unemployment	2.1-2.2, 12.1-12.2	
01/13	Unemployment;		
01/16	No Class: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
01/18	Neoclassical Model of Labor Supply: Preferences and Constraints	2.3-2.4	
01/20	Labor Supply: The Hours Decision	2.5	
01/23	Labor Supply: The Participation Decision	2.6-2.8	
01/25	Labor Supply: Elasticity; Application: Anti-Poverty Policy	2.10-2.11	Homework 1 Due
01/27	Labor Demand in the Short Run	3.1-3.2	
01/30	Labor Demand in the Long Run	3.3-3.4	
02/01	Application: Minimum Wage Empirical Studies	3.10, Sakai Readings	
02/03	Labor Market Equilibrium: Competitive Markets	4.1-4.2	
02/06	Application: Immigration Impacts	4.5	
02/08	Noncompetitive Labor Markets	4.8	Homework 2 Due
02/10	Application: Labor Markets and Development	Sakai Readings	
02/13	No Class: Well-being Day		
02/15	Catch up / review day		
02/17	Exam 1		
02/20	Human Capital: Introduction	6.1	
02/22	Human Capital: The Schooling Model	6.2-6.3	
02/24	In-Class Activity		
02/27	Human Capital: Returns to Schooling I	6.4-6.5	Policy Memo 1 Due
03/01	Human Capital: Returns to Schooling II	6.4-6.5	
03/03	Human Capital: Signaling Model	6.9	
03/06	Application: Human Capital and Development		Homework 3 Due
03/08	Income Inequality: Introduction	7.1-7.3	
03/10	Application: Why is Inequality Rising?	7.4	
03/13	No Class: Spring Break		
03/15	No Class: Spring Break		
03/17	No Class: Spring Break		
03/20	Wage Dispersion and Intergenerational Inequality	7.5-7.6	
03/22	In-Class Activity		
03/24	Labor Market Discrimination	9.1-9.3	Homework 4 Due
03/27	Catch up / review day		
03/29	Exam 2		
03/31	Statistical Discrimination	9.6	
04/03	Measuring Discrimination	9.8	
04/05	Application: Discrimination	9.7, 9.9, 9.11, Sakai Readings	
04/07	No Class: University Holiday		
04/10	Application: Discrimination	Sakai Readings	
04/12	In-Class Activity		Policy Memo 2 Due
04/14	Compensating Differentials	5.1-5.2, 5.5	
04/17	Application: Health Insurance	5.6	
04/19	Selected topics (time permitting)	Sakai Readings TBD	Homework 5 Due
04/21	Selected topics (time permitting)	Sakai Readings TBD	
04/24	Selected topics (time permitting)	Sakai Readings TBD	
04/26	Selected topics (time permitting)	Sakai Readings TBD	
04/28	Review day		Bring questions!
05/09	Final Exam at 12:00PM		

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