

Econ480.001 Syllabus

Course Overview

This course serves as an introduction to the field of labor economics. We will examine the economic theory behind workers' labor supply, firms' labor demand, and equilibrium in the labor market. In addition, we will examine the role of government in labor markets, the effect of immigration on labor markets, human capital attainment, and incentives and compensation schemes.

Prerequisites for this course are: ECON101, ECON410, and ECON400 with a grade of C or better (or a "Pass" if taken during COVID)

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to

- Explain how labor markets function
- Apply economic theory to analyze and predict changes in the labor market
- Analyze, present, and interpret microeconomic data
- Craft an argument and support it with appropriate evidence
- Participate actively and substantively in class discussions
- Read and analyze economics journal articles
- Effectively present your ideas and work with a group

Your Instructor

Instructor: [Kalina Staub](#)

Department: Department of Economics

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 4-5pm and Wednesdays TBD in the EconAid Center. Thursdays 4-5pm at TRU on Franklin. I am also always available to answer your questions during class time, and 15-minute office hour appointments are bookable on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at: <http://calendly.com/staub>

Required Materials

Textbooks

The following texts are required:

- George Borjas. 2024. *Labor Economics, 9th Edition*. McGraw-Hill Publishing.

It is recommended to purchase or rent the textbook through Perusall (link on Canvas), which will allow you to collaborate and communicate with classmates while reading. If, instead, you prefer a hard copy of the text, you may use any edition, and it is your responsibility to make sure you are doing the correct readings.

Materials and Technology

- Calculator
- **Zoom.** You may need Zoom to join to access my office hours or if we have to move a class online. Zoom is freely available to you and you can sign up here (unc.zoom.us). You can access the live Zoom sessions with your phone, computer, or tablet. If you have any issues with Zoom (or Sakai), you should contact [ITS](#).
- **Gradescope.** You will submit most of your graded work to Gradescope. You can register for Gradescope and enroll in the course by clicking "Gradescope 1.3" on the left-hand side of the Sakai site. 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 scanning a document, make sure the pages are properly oriented and ordered numerically, and clearly indicate where each problem appears. See [here](#) for more information on how to [submit homework to Gradescope](#) and other frequently asked questions. There is also a Module on using Gradescope on Canvas.
- **Perusall.** Course readings and lecture videos will be available on Perusall. To access the course textbook readings on Perusall, you will need to purchase access to the course textbook through Perusall or by purchasing a code at UNC Student Stores. Perusall helps you [learn faster](#) by collaboratively annotating the readings and communicating with your classmates. Collaboration gets you help whenever you need it, makes learning more fun, enables you to help others (which research shows is also a great way for you to learn), and helps the instructor make class better by emphasizing information that you need. To register for Perusall, click "Perusall 1.3" on the left-hand side. You may be asked to create an account; please use your **unc email** to register, and when asked for your Student ID, please put in your **onyen** in all lower case (e.g. `staubkal`). There is a module with Perusall help on Canvas.

Library Services

The [UNC Libraries](#) offer support for research. Nancy Lovas, the economics librarian, is your point of contact. You can email or meet with her to talk about developing a research question, identifying databases, how to search for information, literature reviews, finding datasets, and more. Make an appointment with Nancy at <https://calendar.lib.unc.edu/appointments/business> or contact her via email at nancy64@email.unc.edu

Recommended Twitter Feeds

[@BetseyStevenson](#)
[@ShellyJLundberg](#)
[@Kearney_Melissa](#)

@JustinWolfers
@JenniferDoleac
@HShierholz
@nomaDJ1s
@MarieTMora

Course Expectations and Format

This course will meet in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:15pm, and your attendance in class is expected. For each lesson, you should complete the readings and/or watch the accompanying lecture videos, and complete the reading assessments (in Perusall) by the date indicated on the schedule. The following class day, we will complete an activity designed to prepare you for the short answer portion of the exams, and the day after that, you will complete a quiz in class designed to prepare you for the multiple choice section of the exams. The days we will complete each activity and quiz is listed on the Schedule tab of our Sakai site. Please take the time to read this syllabus carefully and use Perusall to ask general questions or email me directly for more personal questions.

Expected Work Load

- This is a 3 hour course, so I expect that you are spending an average of about 9 hours per week on this course or about 6 hours per week outside of the time spent in class.

Course Components

Your performance in this course will be evaluated based on the following assignments. Please read the "Grading" section on this syllabus for information on how each assignment will impact your course grade. All assignments are to be completed on your own unless specifically stated.

Perusall Assignments

I will provide readings and lecture videos on Perusall for each lesson as well as sets of questions to check your comprehension of the readings/lecture videos each week. They are due on Perusall by class time the day we work on that material in class. Be sure to check Canvas frequently to stay on top of the course readings/videos and reading assessments. These assignments are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the readings and lecture videos and focusing on the important aspects of the reading. These assignments are to be completed individually, but they are open note and open book.

Activities

There will be an activity accompanying each lesson. I will bring printed copies for you to work on during class, and you may work on these in small groups during class time on the specified days. At the end of class, you will submit the activity. These activities are designed to prepare you for the short answer questions on the exams and will be submitted individually in

class. Activities will be graded based on completion and effort. You must attempt all problems to receive a passing score.

Quizzes

For each lesson, you will have a quiz to complete during class. These quizzes are designed to prepare you for the multiple choice portion of the exams and will be more challenging than the questions on the reading assessment. You must score at least a 70% on the lesson quizzes in order to pass. You may use your notes to complete these quizzes, but you should work individually. We will discuss the quizzes afterwards.

Valuing Your UNC Degree Project

In this project you will map out a hypothetical career path, use salary data from recent university graduates to estimate the rate of return to your UNC degree, and present your findings in a short report. More detailed guidelines and a rubric will be posted on Sakai and discussed in class. You may discuss the Excel portion of the assignment with your classmates, but every student must do their own research, make their own spreadsheet, and write their own assignment. Guidelines and a detailed rubric will be provided on Sakai after the first midterm. The purpose of this assignment is to help you apply the theory for class and give you practice with Excel.

Presentations

You will put together a presentation on the labor market effects of different policies and record them on Zoom. All presentations will be completed in small groups. The purpose of this presentation is for you to practice applying the theory from class to real-world situations, for you to learn how to read peer-reviewed economics papers, and to practice your research and virtual presentation skills.

Midterm Exam (100 points)

The midterm exam will take place in class on Thursday 2/22, it will cover Lessons 1-4 and be closed book and closed note. There are no make-up midterms without a University approved absence (see Late Work Policy below).

Final Exam (160 points)

The final exam will be cumulative and cover all material covered in the course. The date and time of the final exam is set by the University Registrar. The final exam will take place at noon on Tuesday 5/7 and be closed book and closed note.

Grading

Except for the midterm and final exams, 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” on each assignment either on the syllabus or on rubrics posted

on Sakai. The number of assignments that you pass and your performance on the exams will determine your course grade.

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

- Passing 5 of 10 Perusall Assignments by the deadlines
- Completing 6 of 13 Activities by the assigned deadline
- Passing 5 of 10 Quizzes
- Completing the Presentation and attending the in-person Presentation Workday
- Earning at least 100 points across the midterm and final exams (D)
- Earning at least 130 points across the midterm and final exams (D+)

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

- Passing 7 of 10 Perusall Assignments by the deadlines
- Completing 9 of 13 Activities by the assigned deadline
- Passing 7 of 10 Quizzes
- Passing the Presentation and attending the in-person Presentation Workday
- Earning at least 140 points across the midterm and final exams (C-)
- Earning at least 151 points across the midterm and final exams (C)
- Earning at least 163 points across the midterm and final exams (C+)

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

- Passing 8 of 10 Perusall Assignments by the deadlines
- Completing 11 of 13 Activities by the assigned deadline
- Passing 8 of 10 Quizzes
- Passing the Presentation and attending the in-person Presentation Workday
- Earning at least 175 points across the midterm and final exams (B-)
- Earning at least 186 points across the midterm and final exams (B)
- Earning at least 198 points across the midterm and final exams (B+)

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

- Passing 8 of 10 Perusall Assignments by the deadlines
- Completing 11 of 13 Activities by the assigned deadline
- Passing 8 of 10 Quizzes
- Passing the Presentation and attending the in-person Presentation Workday
- Passing the Valuing Your UNC Degree project
- Earning at least 210 points across the midterm and final exams (A-)
- Earning at least 225 points across the midterm and final exams (A)

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

Tokens

You will each have three tokens each of which can be used to

- resubmit a project or presentation that was submitted but not passed within 5 business days of that assignment being returned
- Change a maximum of 1 Quiz that you took during class from a failing grade to a passing grade.
- Change a maximum of 1 Perusall lesson assignment from a 0 to a 1.

If your group does not pass the presentation all group members will need to use a token to resubmit it. Any unused tokens may be converted to 5 points on the final exam.

Course Policies

Regrade Policy

If you feel that your work has been graded unfairly, you may submit it for a re-grade within two class days of your work being handed back. In order for your re-grade 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 I reserve the right to re-grade 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.

Late Work/Missed Work Policy

All due dates of assignments are firm. Flexibility has been built into the course by not requiring you to complete all assignments and giving you opportunities to incorporate feedback and resubmit assignments using tokens.

If you are unable to complete the midterm exam due to severe illness, religious reasons, death in the family, or University-sponsored events, you are required to contact the professor BEFORE the exam begins (via email is fine) AND provide documentation of the absence or to the Office of the Dean of Students ASAP to receive a University Excused Absence. If you are unsure of anything, please contact the instructor before the exam.

If all of the requirements described above have been met, you may take a make-up exam within 1 week of the missed midterm or the weight will be shifted to the final exam.

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 get an official exam excuse. Please see the University policy regarding final examinations (http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#final_exams). If you have an official exam excuse for the final exam, you may take the make-up final exam on the last reading day of finals.

Academic Integrity

As a student of the University of North Carolina you are expected to behave in accordance with the school's honor code. Plagiarism, forgery, unauthorized collaboration and the use of unauthorized materials are only some of the behaviors that I will not tolerate in this course. If you have any uncertainties about any of your work, please approach me before an assignment's due date. 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.

The Instrument of Student Judicial Government can be found here:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>

Email Policy

Please feel free to contact me by email if you have any questions about course policies or any personal concerns. I will try to respond to emails promptly. If you haven't heard from me in 48 hours, please ask yourself if your question has already been answered in the syllabus or on Sakai. If not, please resend the email, as I may have not received your original message. Please use your UNC email, as emails from other clients will most likely be sent to my spam folder. Please indicate in the subject of your email that you are in ECON480. For example the subject of your email might read, "[ECON480] question about office hours."

Accessibility Resources and Service Office

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill 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.

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/>

Medical and Counseling Services

If you are having any mental, physical, or other personal problems that are interfering with your ability to focus on your coursework, please contact the UNC Campus Health Services (919-966-2281 or <https://campushealth.unc.edu/>) right away.

Schedule

Below is a *tentative* weekly schedule. Readings/Videos for each class will be listed under the Canvas Module for that lesson and posted on Perusall. It is your responsibility to check the readings for each day. Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

- Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are **due by 11:59 PM EST**.

Week	Dates	Topics/In class assignments	Assignments Due Online
1	1/8-1/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Integrity Quiz (1/14)• Making the most of learning with Perusall (1/14)• Syllabus and Schedule assignment in Perusall (1/14)
2	1/15 - 1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Lesson 1: Review◦ Activity 1• Thursday<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Lesson 2: Labor Supply◦ Quiz 1◦ Activity 2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson 1 Perusall (1/16)• Lesson 2 Perusall (1/18)

Week	Dates	Topics/In class assignments	Assignments Due Online
3	1/22-1/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 2 Continued ◦ Activity 2.2 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 2 Continued ◦ Quiz 2 	
4	1/29-2/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 3: Labor Demand ◦ Activity 3.1 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 3 continued ◦ Activity 3.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 3 Perusall (1/30)
5	2/5-2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 3 continued ◦ Quiz 3 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 4: Labor Markets ◦ Activity 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 4 Perusall (2/8)
6	2/12-2/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No Class-Wellness Day • Thursday work day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 4 continued ◦ Quiz 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PS6 due (2/19)
7	2/19-2/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Review • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Midterm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for Midterm
8	2/26-3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 5: Education ◦ Activity 5 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 5 continued ◦ Quiz 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 5 on Perusall (2/27)

Week	Dates	Topics/In class assignments	Assignments Due Online
9	3/4-3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mandatory Presentation Workday • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Presentation Workday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation due (3/8)
10	3/11-3/17	Spring Break	
11	3/18-3/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 6: The Wage Distribution ◦ Activity 6 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 6 continued ◦ Quiz 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 6 Perusall (3/19)
12	3/25-3/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Valuing Your UNC Degree Project Workday • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ no class 	
13	4/1-4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 7: Compensating Differentials ◦ Activity 7 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 7 continued ◦ Quiz 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing Your UNC Degree Project (4/1) • Lesson 7 Perusall (4/2)
14	4/8-4/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 8: Labor Mobility ◦ Activity 8 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 8 continued ◦ Quiz 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 8 Perusall (4/9)

Week	Dates	Topics/In class assignments	Assignments Due Online
15	4/15-4/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 9: Labor Market Discrimination ◦ Activity 9 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 9 continued ◦ Quiz 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 9 Perusall (4/16)
16	4/24-4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 10: Incentive Pay ◦ Activity 10 • Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lesson 10 continued ◦ Quiz 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 10 Perusall (4/25)
17	4/29-4/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Evaluations
Exam	5/7	12:00pm Final Exam	Exam