

“Economics deals with society's fundamental problems; it concerns everyone and belongs to all. It is the main and proper study of every citizen.” *Ludwig von Mises*

ECONOMICS 1B—PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS
Tuesday 6:30PM—9:15PM
Washington Square Hall 207

San Jose State University
Fall 2017

INSTRUCTOR: DR. NINOS P. MALEK
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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 9:15PM—10:15PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Economics can be defined as *the study of exchange given certain institutional arrangements* or it can be viewed as *the study of human action—people making choices*. This course will teach you about economic reasoning and how the social science of economics applies to the real world and to your daily life. ***This is NOT a course in business, personal finance, or investing.***

My goal is to teach you how economic analysis can be used to evaluate actions taken by individuals and the government. Topics that will be covered include fundamental concepts of economics such as scarcity and opportunity cost; trade and government barriers to trade; the role of prices in allocating goods and services; applications of supply and demand to public policy issues including the minimum wage, rent control, “price gouging” laws, drug prohibition, and human organ shortages; institutional differences between market and command economies; market structures and antitrust; public choice analysis, public goods theory and externalities; property rights and environmental economics.

My method is to teach this class from a philosophical and practical point of view. I will not focus on the mathematics or the technical aspects of the economics. I want you to have an intuitive understanding rather than a mechanical understanding. However, you will be expected to learn and apply the basic supply and demand model (graph). ***The goal by the end of the semester is to get you to analyze personal situations, listen to the news, discuss politics, and argue with your friends and family using the “economic way of thinking.”***

I understand that students have different learning styles. Some learn by reading (verbal), others by listening (auditory), and still others primarily by doing. I do my best to address all styles of learning by incorporating lectures, class discussion, group problem-solving exercises, simulations, and videos throughout the semester.

Because this is a 4-unit class, there will be a lot of reading/homework during the semester. I will assign numerous essays to read and video clips to watch as homework.

I will also show videos and video clips in class on various policy topics.

The goal of these essays and videos/video clips is to make you think critically and to look at issues from a perspective you probably have not considered before this class. Of course, **there will also be reading from your three required books.**

I expect that you will have read all the required reading/watched all the video clips and that you can intelligently discuss and answer questions based on the essays, books, and video clips during class.

BOTTOM LINE: IF YOU COME TO CLASS, BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND BE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS.

COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

My primary goal in a “principles” class is to teach you to think like an economist. This skill can take you very far in the business, government and nonprofit sectors alike as well as in your personal life.

Specific SLO’s that the Economics Department emphasizes in this class include:

- **Incentives Matter** (law of demand; law of supply; rational decision makers weigh marginal costs versus marginal benefits; the power of self-interest)
- **Opportunity Cost** (sunk costs; production possibilities; the free-lunch fallacy; tradeoffs in consumption and production; gains from interpersonal and international trade; comparative advantage.)
- **Supply and Demand** (understanding the S&D model as a representation of individual choices in exchange based on individual preferences, knowledge and circumstances; ability to examine current events using S&D tools; movement along a curve versus shift; welfare analysis.)

Economics 1B is a general education course that meets the requirement for area D1 in the social science area. Students will learn to apply microeconomic theory, to evaluate social information, draw on different points of view, and formulate policy implications. Issues of diversity will receive special attention in the analysis of price

controls, labor markets, income distribution, and environmental issues. Finally, students will be able to place social events in an appropriate context. ***The GE writing requirement will be satisfied by writing FOUR 750- 1,000-word essays (approximately 3-4 pages each, double-spaced, 12-point font).*** You will apply economic theory to four topics that I will choose. ALL four essays will be due **on Tuesday, December 5** at the beginning of class. I will grade only **ONE** of the four essays **but I will not tell you which one.** **You must write all four if you want to receive credit for the one I eventually grade.** I will let you know which essay I am grading after I collect all the essays.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

Students are expected to be familiar with the SJSU Policy on Academic Dishonesty which can be found in the University Schedule of Classes and the University Catalog. The Department of Economics Academic Fairness Standards states: “An individual instructor who discovers, or is presented with, conclusive evidence of cheating shall assign a course grade of ‘F,’ and inform the Chairman of the Department the reasons for the grade and for further disciplinary action.”

Plagiarism is defined as the act of representing the work of another as one’s own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to: **1.** The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another’s work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one’s own work, knowingly or unknowingly or **2.** Representing another person’s scholarly or artistic works as one’s own.

Plagiarism is unacceptable. The instructor will discuss any instances of suspected plagiarism with the student involved and apply appropriate sanctions. Evidence of plagiarism will result in course failure and may also result in expulsion from San Jose State University. To avoid plagiarism, a good rule of thumb is to use quotes and citations if you use five words from someone else.

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please talk to me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu> to establish a record of their disability.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

I expect all students to behave professionally during class. This means that I will not tolerate **cell phone** text messaging, catching up on **Facebook** during class or looking at **irrelevant websites** on

your laptop, **reading** the school newspaper or other materials, or **talking** while another student is asking a question, during a video, or when I am lecturing.

Talking is very disruptive to students who want to learn and to me as the instructor. I will also not tolerate any **sleeping** or **heads down** during class. If you get tired, **excuse yourself** and **go outside** and walk around until you wake up. If you get **bored**, please do not let me know that by putting your head down on your desk. Just please **leave** my lecture hall.

If sleeping in class (or putting your head down) becomes an issue (if I have to talk to you more than once), I will ask you to leave my class.

NO CELL PHONES WILL BE ALLOWED DURING CLASS. IN OTHER WORDS, NO CELL PHONES ARE TO BE ON YOUR **DESK OR LAP** UNLESS I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO USE YOUR PHONES TO LOOK SOMETHING UP ONLINE.

IF YOU NEED TO TEXT OR CALL, JUST GO OUTSIDE PLEASE.

IF YOU NEED TO USE A **LAPTOP/IPAD**, YOU **MUST SIT IN THE FIRST ROW (ACROSS)—THE VERY FRONT ROW.**

IF YOU ARE TEXTING OR HAVE YOUR PHONE OUT, SITTING IN THE FRONT ROW WITH YOUR LAPTOP LOOKING AT IRRELEVANT WEBSITES,

CHECKING EMAIL, OR ON FACEBOOK (AND I CAN TELL WHO IS DOING THAT), OR ARE USING A LAPTOP/IPAD WHEN NOT SITTING IN THE FRONT ROW, I WILL ASK TO YOU LEAVE MY CLASS.

BOTTOM LINE: ONLY COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE READY TO LEARN AND PAY ATTENTION.

Also be **realistic** about your **personal discipline** and **commitment** to this class. If you know that you will not be focused or if your job/extracurricular activity/other commitments will make it difficult for you to attend class, pay attention, or to stay the entire time, you should reconsider taking this class at another time.

REQUIRED BOOKS

1. *Economics Today: The **Micro** View, 19th edition* by Miller
2. *The Economics of Public Issues, 20th edition* by Miller, Benjamin, and North
3. *Economics in One Lesson*, Hazlitt

DROPPING AND ADDING

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the Current Academic Calendar web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising>.

GRADES AND MAKEUP POLICY

- ✓ Four Tests: the **highest three** will count—even if you get an “A” on the first three tests, I highly recommend that you do not slack off. The Final will cover material from all the tests and you are required to take the Final!) **100 points each**
- ✓ Essay: **100 points for the one essay topic I choose**
- ✓ Final (**comprehensive plus** any remaining material after Test 4 **plus all essays/video clips** that I assigned/showed in class during the semester): **600 points**

Grades will be based on the highest three tests (300 points maximum), the one essay topic that I choose (100 points maximum), and the Final (600 points maximum). There will be a total of **1,000 points**. *Whatever percentage you earn out of 1,000 points will determine your semester grade.*

If you are absent the night of the test, you will receive a “0” and I will drop that test (NO MATTER WHAT THE REASON IS: PERSONAL PROBLEMS, FAMILY SITUATION, ILLNESS, WORK-RELATED, ETC.). SO, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO ME AND ASK ME IF THERE IS AN EXCEPTION.

If you are absent on any additional test nights, those tests will be given a zero. You must turn in your own test. You cannot have a friend turn it in for you.

I will not drop you after the appropriate date because of poor performance or missing scores.

GRADING SCALE

A+: 96.5—100	D: 59.5—69.4
A: 92.5—96.4	F: 59.4—BELOW
A-: 89.5—92.4	
B+: 86.5—89.4	
B: 82.5—86.4	
B-: 79.5—82.4	
C+: 76.5—79.4	
C: 72.5—76.4	
C-: 69.5—72.4	

ATTENDANCE

It is up to you to measure the costs and benefits of your class attendance. However, I highly recommend regular attendance because the quizzes and tests will cover more than just the books and homework readings.

If I were you, I would exchange phone numbers/email addresses with other members of the class, especially if you cannot get a hold of me. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed if you are absent or late or if you leave early. ***Do not assume anything regarding the schedule. I reserve the right to change the schedule.*** I will always give you notice if there are any changes, but if you are absent the next class meeting or if you come in late or leave early, there could be another change to the schedule while you are gone.

Bottom line: if you come in late and I am already talking, assume I made an important announcement and ask me during the break if indeed I did make any announcements. If you have to leave early, send an email to me or another student to make sure that I did not change my mind about the schedule or make any further announcements. It is always a good idea to send an email to me or another student to confirm what we covered if you are absent for the entire class.

SCHEDULE AND AGENDA

See my website for the **“Topics”** file which lists what will be covered for each of the four exams (book chapters, lecture notes, readings, and videos). I will give you a tentative schedule for the first exam due date and then I will give you updates for the remaining three exam due dates upon completion of each exam. For example, after you turn in test 1, I will give you the tentative date for test 2. I will repeat this for test 3 and test 4.

**The four essays are all due on Tuesday,
DECEMBER 5 at 6:30PM**

**The Final is on Tuesday, DECEMBER 19 at
7:45PM.**

**NO EXTENSIONS/CHANGES WILL BE
ALLOWED**