San José State University
Department of Economics
ECON 1B: Principles of Microeconomics
Spring 2026

Section 3

Instructor:	Steve (James) O'Brien
Office Location:	Dudley Moorhead Hall 219
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Office Hours:	Thursday 1:30pm-2:30pm (by appointment)
Class Days/Time:	TUE/THUR 12PM-1:15PM
Classroom:	Washington Square Hall 207
Prerequisites:	May be taken concurrently or prior to Econ 1A.
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area D1: Social Science, Human Behavior

Course Description

Allocation of resources and distribution of income as affected by the workings of the price system and by government policies

Course Goals and Course Learning Objectives (CLO)

GE Learning Outcomes

Economics 1B is a general education course that meets the requirements for area D1 in the social science area. The GE writing requirement (1500 word minimum) will be satisfied by a two-part written assignment; details will be provided as we move forward in the semester.

Course Learning Outcomes

- **Incentives Matter** (law of demand; law of supply; rational decision makers weigh marginal costs versus marginal benefits; the power of self-interest and how it contributes to broader social interest)

- **Opportunity Costs** (production possibilities; tradeoffs in consumption and production; gains from 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 versus shift)

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Define economics.
- Explain the concepts of scarcity and opportunity cost and how they relate to the definition of economics.
- Distinguish between the following pairs of concepts: demand and quantity demanded, supply and quantity supplied, demand schedule and demand curve, supply schedule and supply curve, movement along and shift in a demand curve and a supply curve.
- Describe the important role that prices play in the marketplace; how they are formed and the valuable information they convey to market participants.
- Define price inelastic, unit elastic, and price elastic demand.
- Explain the concepts of increasing, diminishing, and negative marginal returns and explain the law of diminishing marginal returns.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook and Other Technology Requirements

Modern Principles: Microeconomics by Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrok (2nd,3rd or 4th Edition)

This textbook is available for rental as well as purchase from many different sources. I would recommend browsing Amazon. Purchasing the textbook is a requirement for this course, and questions for quizzes and exams will include information from the readings.

Grading Information and Assignments

Your grade in this course consists of two midterms, one final exam, ten in class quizzes (out of twelve possible scores) and a writing assignment. The midterms and final exam cover material presented both in class and in the textbook. In class quizzes will cover both lecture and reading materials.

While attendance is not mandatory, in class quizzes are an important component of your grade. I will not list a schedule of quizzes; they will generally be unannounced "pop" quizzes. Twelve quizzes will be offered, of which, your ten best scores will count toward your grade. These quizzes will be excellent preparation for questions on the midterms and final exams. If you miss a quiz, there are no opportunities for makeups. I will periodically allow notes to be used for quizzes. Please come to class prepared to participate in small group and larger class discussions. I reserve the right to call on you in class at my discretion.

Your final grade will be based on the following categories and weights:

Midterm 1	20%
Midterm 2	20%
Final Exam	25%
Written Assignment	15%
Quizzes	20%

Your final numerical grade will be the weighted average of your scores in the above categories, and your corresponding letter grade will be assigned as follows:

Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade
97.5% - 100%	A+	93% - 97.49%	A	90% - 92.9%	A-
87.5% - 89.9%	B+	83% - 87.49%	B	80% - 82.9%	B-
77.5% - 79.9%	C+	73% - 77.49%	C	70% - 72.9%	C-
67.5% - 69.9%	D+	63% - 67.49%	D	60% - 62.9%	D-
0% - 59.9%	F				

To earn GE credit for this course, you must earn a C- or better.

If for whatever reason you must miss a midterm, your final exam will have the midterm's value added to it and will become 45% of your overall grade.

Final Examination

The final exam will be a cumulative assessment, meaning it will have questions on all material covered throughout the semester. It will be 100 multiple choice questions. Two thirds of the final exam will cover material from the first two midterms, and the remaining third will be material covered after the second midterm through the end of the semester. We will discuss it in greater detail as we approach the final exam date.

Classroom Protocol

My hope is to have a fun and engaging class. We will be covering and discussing topics and concepts that may be new to some, but familiar to others. Please come to class prepared to engage in discussions with an open mind and curiosity regarding how our class can relate to the world around us. Let's be respectful of the time and effort we all put into this class. If you arrive late, please quietly find a seat. Please turn cell phone ringers off. If you need to take a call, just excuse yourself.

A simple calculator **only** will be allowed for exams and quizzes.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

ECON 1B: Principles of Microeconomics, SPRING 2026

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice in class and/or through Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week	Date		Topics, Readings and Due Dates
1	TUE	1/20	Introductions and Course Overview
	THUR	1/22	Cowen and Tabarrok (CT) Trade, Opportunity Cost and Comparative Advantage
2	TUE	1/27	CT Supply/Demand
	THUR	1/29	CT Supply/Demand and Equilibrium
3	TUE	2/3	CT Elasticity
	THUR	2/5	CT Elasticity
5	TUE	2/10	CT Taxes and Subsidies
	THUR	2/12	CT Taxes and Subsidies
6	TUE	2/17	**Catch up Review for Midterm**
	THUR	2/19	**Midterm #1**
7	TUE	2/24	CT Price Ceilings and Floors
	THUR	2/26	CT International Trade
8	TUE	3/3	CT International Trade/CT Externalities
	THUR	3/5	CT Externalities **Discuss Paper Assignment**
9	TUE	3/10	CT Ch. 11 Costs and Profit Maximization
	THUR	3/12	CT Ch. 11 Costs and Profit Maximization
10	TUE	3/17	Costs and Profit Max

Week	Date		Topics, Readings and Due Dates
	THUR	3/19	Ch. 13 Monopoly
11	TUE	3/24	Monopoly
	THUR	3/26	**Midterm #2**
12			**SPRING BREAK**
			SPRING BREAK
13	TUE	4/7	CT Ch. 15 Oligopolies **Paper Topic and Outline Due**
13	THUR	4/9	CT Oligopolies/CT Ch. 18 Labor Markets
14	TUE	4/14	CT Ch. 18 Labor Markets
	THUR	4/16	CT Ch. 19 Public Goods
15	TUE	4/21	CT Ch. 20 Political Economy and Public Choice
	THUR	4/23	**FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER DUE**
16	TUE	4/28	CT Ch. 20-21 Economics and Public Policy
	THUR	4/30	CT Ch. 25 Consumer Choice
17	TUE	5/5	CT Ch. 25 Consumer Choice
	THUR	5/7	Review for Final Exam
FINAL EXAM	TUE	5/19	**Final Exam** **Tuesday May 19 10:45AM-12:45PM**