

San José State University
Department of Economics
ECON 1B: Principles of Microeconomics
Spring 2026
Section 80

Instructor:	Steve (James) O'Brien
Office Location:	Dudley Moorhead Hall 219
Email:	james.obrien@sjsu.edu (Email is preferred)
Office Hours:	Email to arrange virtual meeting
Class Days/Time:	Online with no specific designated dates/times
Classroom:	Online
Prerequisites:	May be taken concurrently or prior to Econ 1A.
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area D1: Social Science, Human Behavior

Online Course Format

All content and assignments will be delivered and submitted online. There will be several recorded lectures each week that will be posted online. All exams and quizzes will be taken online

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.
- Describe the concepts of price inelastic demand, unit price elastic demand, 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.

Online Classroom Protocol

Please act respectfully in all online forums; zoom meetings, Canvas messaging, etc...

Grading Information and Assignments

You will need access to a computer/laptop/tablet with reliable wireless connection. This course is completely online. All assignments will be completed/submitted through Canvas

Your grade in this course consists of two midterms, one final exam, ten 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. Quizzes will cover both lectures and reading materials.

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.

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
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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