

SYLLABUS

Course Overview

This course is the first course of a two-course sequence in microeconomics required for the major in Public Policy Studies. As such, my aim this semester will be to help you make economic sense of the world and apply economic reasoning to everyday life. I will thus make sure to present as many examples as time allows for each topic covered in lecture. In addition, I will keep the math at a level that most students will be comfortable with. We will be covering the usual topics for a course at this level, i.e., consumer behavior, the theory of the firm, choice in the face of risk and uncertainty, basic game theory, market power, public goods and externalities, the principal-agent model, etc.

Course Information

Lecture

<i>Time:</i>	T-Th 11:40-12:55 in Rubenstein 153
<i>Instructor:</i>	Marc F. Bellemare
<i>Office:</i>	Rubenstein 110
<i>Email:</i>	marc.bellemare@duke.edu
<i>Office Hours:</i>	Tuesday all day, by appointment. Please schedule office hour visits at least 24 hours ahead of time, for at most 15 minutes.

Problem-Solving Sections

<i>Time:</i>	W 1:30-2:20 or W 3:05-3:55
<i>Teaching Assistant:</i>	Samuel Rauschenberg
<i>Email:</i>	sam.rauschenberg@duke.edu
<i>Office Hours:</i>	Th 4:15-6:15 in the Fleishman Commons

<i>Time:</i>	W 3:05-3:55
<i>Teaching Assistant:</i>	Alexis D'Agostino
<i>Email:</i>	alexis.d.agostino@duke.edu
<i>Office Hours:</i>	M 12-2 in the Fleishman Commons

Textbook

We will be using the following textbook for this course:

- Nechyba, Thomas J. (2011), [*Microeconomics: An Intuitive Approach*](#), Mason, OH: South-Western CENGage Learning.

Because this course will require lots of graphs, I will teach the old-fashioned way, i.e., using pen and whiteboard. You are thus strongly encouraged to take notes. Some of the material I cover might not be in the textbook, and vice versa, and I will often email you with links to blog posts or newspaper articles illustrating certain concepts. A good first step toward understanding the material is to take rough notes in lecture and transcribe them in clean handwriting at the end of every week.

Assignments and Grading

1. *Problem Sets*: I will assign a few problems every week, your answers to which will be due to your TA the following during section. These will be graded on a check minus, check, or check plus basis, with roughly 30 percent of students receiving a “check minus” (5 out of 10); 50 percent of students receiving a “check” (7.5 out of 10); and 20 percent of students receiving a “check plus” (10 out of 10). These proportions are predetermined to avoid significant discrepancies between sections. Of course, should you choose not to turn in a problem set, you will receive grade of 0 out of 10. These will be worth 10% of your grade.
2. *Preliminary Exams*: There will be two preliminary exams, each covering the material taught between the beginning of the semester and the lecture preceding it. In other words, the second preliminary exam will be comprehensive in light of the missed exam policy outlined below. These will be respectively worth 20 and 25% of your grade.
3. *Final Exam*: There will be a final held during exam week which will be comprehensive. This will be worth 35% of your grade.
4. *Participation*: I will not keep track of whether you attend lecture or not. Because I make a point of learning your names, however, I will have a good sense of whether I have seen you in lecture often or not, and of whether you have volunteered to answer some of the questions I ask the class during lecture. I will also have a good sense of whether you have been respectful of your peers and your instructors. This will be worth 10% of your grade.

Grading Policy: The Sanford School’s target for mean 100-level core course grades is 3.2, and I tend to aim for that target. Should you disagree with me over a grade, you must notify me within one week of receiving the grade by submitting a written explanation of why you think you deserve a (presumably) higher grade. Your exam or assignment will then be regraded in its entirety. If you do not follow this procedure, do not be surprised if I am unwilling to discuss grades: I am using this paper trail system in order to prevent problems for everyone down the road. Note, however, that I will be looking at trends, i.e., if you perform poorly on the first prelim but perform really well on the second prelim and on the final, I will adjust your grade accordingly.

Finally, note that I will not tolerate frivolous requests for regrades (e.g., requests born of a desire to go to law school, for example). There needs to be a nondegenerate grade distribution in every class, if only to set up the proper incentives for you to learn the material. This means that grades may span the full grading scale.

There will be no make-up exam. Should you justifiably be absent from an exam, the other exams will simply account for the entirety of your exam grade, with adjustment with respect to the mean of the exam you were absent from. Should your absence not be justified, you will receive a grade of zero.

Email and Social Media Policy: I do not interact with (current) students via Facebook, but you are strongly encouraged to read my blog at <http://marcfbellemare.com> since I will often post examples of micro problems I find interesting, and which are thus likely to become exam questions.

Academic Integrity

I will strictly enforce [Duke's Academic Integrity Policy](#), reproduced in part here as a reminder:

"Intellectual and academic honesty are at the heart of academic life of any university. It is the responsibility of all members of our academic community to abide by Duke's strict expectations regarding proper citation of sources. It is also critically important to resist strenuously the temptation to cheat. Acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, are considered very serious offenses. Students found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty are generally suspended. The academic and nonacademic offenses recognized at Duke and the range of sanctions imposed for them are explained in the Bulletin of Information and Regulations distributed to each incoming student. Please read the bulletin carefully and make sure you understand its content."

Calendar

Week	Topic	Assignment
1. January 13	Nechyba, ch. 1	-
2. January 18 and 20	Nechyba, ch. 2 and 4	Problem Set
3. January 25 and 27	Nechyba, ch. 5 and 6	Problem Set
4. February 1 and 3	Nechyba, ch. 7 and 10	Problem Set
5. February 8 and 10	Nechyba, ch. 16 parts 1 and 2	First Prelim on February 8
6. February 15 and 17	Nechyba ch. 11 and 12	Problem Set
7. February 22 and 24	Nechyba ch. 13 and 14	Problem Set
8. March 1 and 3	Nechyba ch. 15	Problem Set
9. March 8 and 10	Spring Break	-
10. March 15 and 17	Nechyba, ch. 23 and 21	Problem Set
11. March 22 and 24	Nechyba, ch. 24	Second Prelim on March 24
12. April 5 and 7	Nechyba, ch. 22	Problem Set
13. April 12 and 14	Nechyba, ch. 27 and 28	Problem Set
14. April 19 and 21	Nechyba, ch. 29 and 30	Problem Set
15. April 26	Review Session	-

Note: Problems will be assigned on Thursdays at the end of lecture and will be due the following Wednesday at the end of section.