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**Course**           ECON 3100 002  
Labor Economics  
3 Credit Hours  
Fulfills University UI Requirement  
Fall 2013  
MW 11:50 am – 1:20 pm  
Union Theater

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**Professor**       Rick Haskell  
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**Course Text**     Ehrenberg and Smith, Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy 11th Edition (preferred - previous editions are acceptable, but homework assignments will come from the 11th Edition). Additional selected readings from published articles and texts will be available through Canvas. The text can be purchased through the campus bookstore or can be found very reasonably through various online book sellers.

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**Course Overview**   At its core, the discussion of Labor Economics is a discussion of microeconomic principles applied to labor markets and labor market policies in an effort to understand differences in outcomes experienced by various labor market participants. In other words, *labor economics simply seeks to explain why different people receive different wages.*

While the theoretical foundations, microeconomic mechanics, and appropriate application frameworks are all well suited to online delivery, the development of higher level intuitions and judgments are best formed through interactive discussion and application within a forum well suited to real-time response, challenge, assessment, and restatement – in other words, the classroom. As such, this course seeks to combine the efficiency of online learning with the effectiveness of informed personal interaction in such a way as to deliver important qualitative and quantitative skills associated with Labor Economics, and at the same time allow for a forum through which intuition can be developed, judgment skills can be gained, challenged, and restated, and perhaps most importantly, passion for the discipline can be shared.

Since classroom time is limited, it is critical that modules, readings, and assignments be completed before class. Though this isn't an unusual expectation for a university level course, in all practicality most students arrive in class unprepared but still hopeful to receive an above average grade. In this course, such a strategy will certainly end in disappointment. However, for those students willing to prepare and participate this course becomes one of those rare opportunities to gain a comprehensive understanding of a market in which virtually everyone participates. In our classroom discussions we'll apply the science of economic decision

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making to workers and firms in such a way as to help you better understand the world in which we live... and work.

There are no prerequisites for this class. However, some knowledge of microeconomics (at the principles level) will be very helpful. In addition, we will spend time analyzing graphs and doing simple calculations.

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**Course Objective**

Upon completion of this course students will:

- 1) Understand differences in outcomes in the labor market through an exploration and understanding of the historical development of labor markets in western society, inclusive of the role of institutions, and how these markets have influenced individual, household, and firm level choices;
- 2) Be prepared to analyze current economic events and public policy questions through a framework of classical, microeconomic theory of labor supply and demand in respect to competitive markets;
- 3) Develop intuitive and judgments skills in respect to current labor market issues through application, assessment, and exploration of classical and alternative labor market theories;
- 4) Develop a theoretical framework through which they will be prepared to view the role of labor as a form of human capital in modern society.

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**Course Design and Learning Approaches**

This course is separated into two different types of Modules: 1) Learning Modules and 2) Performance Modules. Each Learning Module represents a particular learning activity in support of one of the four Learning Objectives; such as assigned readings from the Smith & Ehrenberg text, review of a Power Point and/or video presentation, Homework Assignment, and graded Quizzes. The Performance Modules include graded assignments such as Reaction Papers and Exams; again in support of the course Learning Objectives. The Modules must be completed in sequential order and progression to a successive Module is only possible once previous Modules have been completed. On average, you will be required to complete one Module each week.

In addition, there is a one 90 minute classroom session each week during which we will seek to explore and answer a particular aspect of the course's core theme, "*why different people receive different wages*". We'll do this by reviewing select homework problems, working through one or more in-class quantitative problems (one of which will be turned in a graded), and discussing the microeconomic fundamentals behind the issue addressed. Participation in the classroom sessions is required; most sessions will include short, graded assignments, students will give their Focus Presentations, and Exams will be administered during these sessions.

This course employs a combination of lectures, readings, discussions, quizzes, exams and analysis to drive home the concepts and applications of economics. The assigned readings and homework assignments should be completed before class, will be discussed in class, and exam material will come from both the assigned readings and class discussions. Please note that you may be called upon in class. You will be required to write four (4) reaction papers and may be called on to present any or all of them (with advance notice). There will be two mid-term exams and one comprehensive final exam. If you anticipate missing a test due to a time conflict, please notify me in advance. No make-up exams will be given if arrangements are not made before the exam dates.

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<b>Homework and In-Class Problems</b>	Homework problems will be assigned with each Learning Module and are to be turned in at the start of the class session after which that module has been discussed. Select homework problems will be reviewed in these class sessions; completed homework answer keys will be available through Canvas after the assignments are due and turned in. A few, randomly selected problems will be scored. In addition, there will be at least one graded In-Class problem assigned during each regular class session. Homework and In-Class problems will account for 20% of your grade.
<b>Quizzes</b>	Graded quizzes may periodically be given based on material covered in the assigned readings and class discussions. If missed, quizzes will not be available for make-up.
<b>Exams</b>	There will be two mid-term exams and a final administered during scheduled class sessions. There will also be optional exam review sessions scheduled for your benefit. The exams will include short-answer questions with longer problems and essays. Each of the Mid-term exams are worth approximately 15% of your final grade and the Final Exam is worth approximately 20% of your final grade. You are expected to be in class to take the exams on the given days. If you anticipate any unavoidable scheduling conflict, please see me immediately. Assigned readings from the text, additional required readings and topics discussed in class may be represented on the exams.
<b>Reaction Papers</b>	<p>You will be required to write four (4) Reaction Papers. For <i>each paper</i> you are required to find an economic blog, national periodical, or published journal article which concerns an issue with particular import to Labor Economics, discuss that paper or article . These papers are to be no less than 500 words in length and will be graded on content, grammar, syntax and appropriate use of graphs and charts.</p> <p>An excellent Reaction Paper (one that receives 18+ points) addresses a timely topic, points out strengths and weaknesses of the author(s) argument(s), includes at least one economic graphic representing the dynamics or effects of the issue being addressed, and offers your personal opinion, or reaction, in respect to the issue.</p> <p><b><i>These papers will be due on 9/15, 10/13, 11/10, and 12/4 and must be turned in via Canvas as a .pdf, .doc, or .docx file no later than 11:59 pm.</i></b></p>
<b>Focus Presentation</b>	<p>You will be required to prepare a Focus Presentation on a particular aspect of Labor Economics discussed during this course. During the first class session each student will be assigned a date and topic for which you will prepare a 15-20 minute presentation. Depending on the number of students in the class, this may be done as a group or as an individual.</p> <p>The Focus Presentation is designed to give you the opportunity to apply the featured topic to Labor Economics in such a way as to illustrate its relevance in our daily lives. This may include applying it to a particular business or business process, current economic problem, anticipated future event/issue. The presentation should include appropriate media; questions and answers time is in addition to the 15-20 minute presentation.</p> <p>These presentations will begin with the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of class and run through the final class period. Each Focus Presentation will be posted in Canvas. Focus Presentation are subject to Peer Review; as part of your graded assignment you will be assigned to review the Reaction Papers of other students just as others will be assigned to review your papers.</p>

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<b>Course Schedule (tentative)</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Module/Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
	Week 1	8/26	Evolution of Labor Markets; Why do different workers receive different wages? Labor Market Overview	E&S Chp 1&2
		8/28	The Demand for Labor	E&S Chp 3
	Week 2	9/2	The Demand for Labor - continued; Evaluating and Graphing Economic Models	
		9/4	<b>Labor Day – No Class</b>	
	Week 3	9/9	Labor Demand Elasticities	E&S Chp 4
		9/11	Labor Demand Elasticities – continued	
		9/15	<b>Reaction Paper #1 Due</b>	
	Week 4	9/16	Friction in the Labor Markets	E&S Chp 5
		9/18	Friction in the Labor Markets – continued	
	Week 5	9/23	Labor Supply	E&S Chp 6&7
		9/25	Labor Supply – continued	
	Week 6	9/30	Mid-Term Exam Review	
		10/2	<b>Mid-Term Exam #1</b>	
	Week 7	10/7	Compensating Wage Differentials	E&S Chp 8
		10/9	Compensating Wage Differentials - continued	
		10/13	<b>Reaction Paper #2 Due</b>	
	Week 8	10/14-16	<b>Fall Break – No Class</b>	
	Week 9	10/21	Investments in Human Capital	E&S Chp 9
		10/23	Investments in Human Capital – continued	
	Week 10	10/28	Worker Mobility	E&S Chp 10
		10/30	Worker Mobility – continued	
	Week 11	11/4	Pay and Productivity	E&S Chp 11
		11/6	Pay and Productivity – continued	
		11/10	<b>Reaction Paper #3 Due</b>	
	Week 12	11/11	Gender, Race and Ethnicity	E&S Chp 12
		11/13	Gender, Race and Ethnicity – continued	
		11/15	Mid-Term Review – optional	
	Week 13	11/18	<b>Mid-Term Exam #2</b>	
		11/20	Unions and the Labor Market	E&S Chp 13
	Week 14	11/25	Unemployment	E&S Chp 14
		11/27	Unemployment - continued	
	Week 15	12/2	Inequality in Earnings	E&S Chp 15

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<b>Grading</b>	12/4 12/8	Inequality in Earnings - continued <b>Reaction Paper #4 Due</b>	
	Week 16 12/9 12/11	International Trade - Globalization Final Exam Review	E&S Chp 16
	12/19	<b>Final Exam (10:30 – 12:30 pm)</b>	

<b>Grading Scale</b>	Focus Presentation	10%
	Reaction Papers	20%
	Homework/In-Class Problems & Quizzes	20%
	Exams	50%

A	94-100%	B-	80-83.9%	D+	67-69.9%
A-	90-93.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D	64-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C	74-76.9%	D-	60-63.9%
B	84-86.9%	C-	70-73.9%	E	0-59.9%

**Expectations** Grades will be determined in accordance with the University of Utah’s grading policies. Written feedback will be provided on all assignments, and more detailed feedback will be provided at any time upon request. If you believe you have received an incorrect grade on any assignment for this class, please bring it to my attention immediately.

**You can expect me to:**

- Treat students and others with respect, expect that as adults we are each responsible for our decisions and actions, and ask “why” often.
- Grade and provide feedback on assignments within one week of the date they are submitted.
- Return email messages and phone calls within 24 hours.
- Use Canvas to enhance student learning, communication, and convenience.
- Follow the syllabus and hold each class session as scheduled. In the event of an unsolvable conflict or emergency, I will make every effort to arrange for a qualified substitute to teach the class.
- Be readily available to meet with students, either during regularly-scheduled office hours or at any other time that works for both of us.
- Complete final grades and provide students with feedback on final grades within two weeks of the date the last course assignment is submitted.
- Bring drinks or some suitable recompense when I screw up in front of the class

**I expect you to:**

- Actively communicate and use Canvas regularly.
- Complete reading and homework assignments, take all quizzes and exams, participate in class discussions and ask “why” often.
- Attend each class session. In the event that you must miss a class, please notify me in

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advance and assume responsibility for the material you missed.

- Read the course syllabus, ensure you have a clear understanding of the course requirements and evaluation methods used in the course, and fulfill the course requirements.
- Come to class prepared and participate fully, honestly, and professionally in class discussions and online class activities.
- Learn about and abide by the University of Utah's academic honesty policy. Specifically, I expect you to not engage in cheating, plagiarism and furnishing false or misleading information to any faculty or staff member.
- Immediately notify me in the event of an emergency that prevents you from submitting an assignment or completing the course.
- Ask questions if any expectations or assignments are unclear.
- Be courteous of others when using technology. Always give speakers your full attention and make sure that any use of technology during class enhances your learning and does not distract you or others from course content.

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**Class Participation**

This course is designed to be highly participative and participation in class discussions is required. We will take time during most classes to discuss current domestic and international labor market issues. **There will be material covered in class that will not be part of the reading or homework assignments, but for which students will be responsible on Mid-Term and/or Final exams.**

**Additional Readings**

There will be two kinds of additional readings posted on Canvas: required and optional. We will discuss these readings in class and material from the required readings may be represented on exams. The list of readings will be updated throughout the semester, and the addition of new readings will be announced in class.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Late assignments will not be accepted for credit without prior permission.

**ADA statement**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. ([www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/](http://www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/))

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**Syllabus changes**

This syllabus is subject to change. Potential changes will be discussed in class and may be posted in Canvas.

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