

## Course Introduction

- **Course Name:** Labor Economics
- **Course Number:** Econ 3100-001 (Class number: 3939)
- **Prerequisite:** There are no prerequisites listed for this course. However, this course will make use of graphs and basic algebra. Previous knowledge in microeconomics (intro. level) will be helpful but not necessary.
- **Course Credits:** 3 Credit Hours. This course also fulfills the “Quantitatively Intense (QI) Requirement” for bachelor of science degrees.
- **Course Days/Time/Location:** Monday and Wednesday, 3:00pm-4:20pm via Canvas
- **Faculty:**
  - Name: Eunice Han
  - Office: Gardner 4033
  - Phone: (801) 587-1398
  - E-mail: eunice.han@economics.utah.edu
  - Office hours: By appointment

## Course Description and Objective

Labor Economics is a study of the market for labor services in the economy. In this course, we will address four main issues:

1. The relative scarcity of labor and other productive resources provides an incentive for society to use such resources efficiently.
2. The importance of labor economics is reflected in (i) current socioeconomic issues and problems, (ii) the quantitative dominance of labor as a resource, and (iii) the unique characteristics of labor supply and demand.
3. The economic perspective assumes that (i) individuals and institutions make rational or purposeful decisions, and that (ii) decisions are altered or adapted in the light of changing economic circumstances.
4. An understanding of the theories and analytic tools of labor economics contributes to more efficient personal and social decisions and leads to better labor policies.

## Required Course Material

The textbook for the course is Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy 13th Edition, by Ehrenberg and Smith (ISBN-13: 978-1138218154). Earlier editions (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>) are also acceptable. Short articles and other readings will be assigned frequently. The readings may include newspaper, magazine, and journal articles, as well as excerpts from books. The readings will help you understand more about substantive economic issues and apply the economic ideas and methods you learn in class to real-world problems.

## Course Assignments/Exams

## 1. Problem Sets

There will be 12 problem sets. Problem sets are due on Sunday by 11:59pm, MT. Late problem sets will not be accepted under any circumstances, but you are allowed to drop the two lowest problem sets. You may work with other students, but you must submit your own problem set. Problem sets will be graded on a 1-10 point scale.

## 2. Two Midterm Exams and the Final Exam

Exams cover material from both lectures and the readings. You are only responsible for the materials covered during lecture. We will hold review session in class, and I will also provide review sheet with list of topics you need to focus for each exam. No make-up exam will be given unless you provide doctors' notes.

## 3. Article Report

You will write a short report on four reading assignments, totaling five reports. Each report should include two-three paragraphs of summary and two questions you developed during your reading. The article report will be graded on a 1-10 scale. Late reports will not be accepted under any circumstances, but you are allowed to drop one report.

## 4. Class Participation

We will have several in-class discussion sessions throughout the semester, and it will be the main channel for the class participation. Class participation is not formally graded, but will be taken into account if you are on the border between one grade and the next. If you cannot attend a class, you need not notify me. If you need to miss more than one class in a row, please notify me in advance. Please make sure to obtain any copies of class notes from your classmates, if you miss a class.

## Grading Scheme

Basic semester grades are determined by the final exam (30%), two midterm exams (20% each), problem sets (20%), and article reports (10%). There will be no make-up midterm exam. If you miss one of the midterm exams, the other midterm exam will be counted as 40%. Your final grade will be curved. For instance, the top 30% of students will receive a grade of A range (A and A-), of B range for the next 45%, C for the next 20%, and D or F for the remaining 5%. The exact breakdown depends on the shape of the distribution.

## Course Resources

### 1. Canvas Information

Canvas is the where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course. To ensure you are viewing due dates and time correctly, as well as events in the calendar, set your student Canvas time zone to Mountain Time.

- **Canvas login:** [instructure.com](https://instructure.com)
- Problems with Canvas? Please contact [Uonline Help Desk](https://classhelp.utah.edu) at [classhelp@utah.edu](mailto:classhelp@utah.edu) or call 801-581-6112 and press 2 (M-F 8:00am-5:00pm MST).

## 2. Office Hours and Email

If you have any questions or concerns regarding class material or other related issues, please come visit me during office hours; if you are not free during my regular office hours, please email me so that we can find another mutually convenient time to meet. I will usually respond to an email inquiry within 24 hours, but this is not guaranteed, especially on weekends, so plan accordingly if you have time-sensitive questions.

## Other Class Policies

### 1. Attendance

I will not check attendance during lecture.

### 2. Classroom Etiquette

Be mindful of others and respect one another. Please be on time. We are meeting over Zoom, and I would like you to use the video option when possible. Stay on mute if you're not talking.

### 3. Copyrighted Materials

Throughout the course you will receive copyrighted materials, such as test questions and sample answers. These materials are provided to you as a student of this section of Econ 3100, for use in this course only. Please remember that you may not copy or share these materials with others (including posting any of these materials online) without permission. Not only can such copying raise questions regarding academic integrity, but in many cases it is a violation of copyright law. If you have any questions about whether you can share course materials or work with students from other sections of Econ 3100, please see me.

## Course Calendar

### Unit 1: Introduction

Wednesday, Jan 20      Lecture 1: Overview of the Labor Market  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapters 1 & 2*

**Unit 2: Labor Demand**

Monday, Jan 25      Lecture 2: The Demand for Labor  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapters 3*

Wednesday, Jan 27      Lecture 3: The Demand for Labor (Cont.)  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 3 (Cont.)*

Monday, Feb 1      Lecture 4: Labor Demand Elasticity  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 4*

Wednesday, Feb 3      Lecture 5: Labor Demand Elasticity (Cont.)  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 4 (Cont.)*

Monday, Feb 8      Lecture 6: Frictions in the Labor Market  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 5*

Wednesday, Feb 10      Lecture 7: Frictions in the Labor Market (Cont.)  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 5 (Cont.)*

### **Unit 3: Labor Supply**

Monday, Feb 15      Lecture 8: Supply of Labor to the Economy: The Decision to Work

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 6*

*Midterm 1 Review*

Wednesday, Feb 17      NO CLASS: President Day

Monday, Feb 22      **\*\* MIDTERM 1 \*\* (Chapters 1-5)**

Wednesday, Feb 24      Lecture 9: Supply of Labor to the Economy: (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 6 (Cont.)*

Monday, Mar 1      Lecture 10: Labor Supply: Household Production and Life Cycle

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 7*

Wednesday, Mar 3      Lecture 11: Labor Supply (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 7 (Cont.)*

### **Unit 4: Compensating Wage Differentials**

Monday, Mar 8      Lecture 12: Compensating Wage Differentials and Labor Market

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 8*

Wednesday, Mar 10      Lecture 13: Compensating Wage Differentials (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 8 (Cont.)*

### **Unit 5: Human Capital**

Monday, Mar 15      Lecture 14: Investment in Human Capital: Education and Training

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 9*

Wednesday, Mar 17      Lecture 15: Investment in Human Capital (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 9 (Cont.)*

Monday, Mar 22      Lecture 16: Investment in Human Capital (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 9 (Cont.)*

Wednesday, Mar 24      Lecture 17: Investment in Human Capital (Cont.)

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 9 (Cont.)*

### **Unit 6: Worker Mobility**

Monday, Mar 29      Lecture 18: Worker Mobility

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 10*

Wednesday, Mar 31      Lecture 19: Worker Mobility (Cont.)  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 10 (Cont.)*  
*Midterm 2 Review*

Monday, Apr 5      NO CLASS: Non-Instructional Day

Wednesday, Apr 7      **\*\* MIDTERM 2 \*\* (Chapters 6-10)**

### **Unit 7: Discrimination**

Monday, Apr 12      Lecture 20: Gender, race, and ethnicity in the labor market  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 12*

Wednesday, Apr 14      Lecture 21: Gender, race, and ethnicity in the labor market (Cont.)  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 12 (Cont.)*

### **Unit 8: Labor Unions**

Monday, Apr 19      Lecture 22: Unions and the Labor Market  
Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 13*

### **Unit 9: Inequality**

Wednesday, Apr 21      Lecture 23: Inequality in Earnings

Ehrenberg and Smith, *Chapter 15*

Monday, Apr 26      *Final Review*

Monday, May 3      **\*\* FINAL EXAM \*\* 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm**

*Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.*