
University of Alberta – Department of Economics – Fall 2023
ECON 431 – A1 – Labor Economics – Marchand

COURSE OUTLINE

Website

<https://sites.ualberta.ca/~jmarchan/teaching.htm>

Class Hours

Instructor

Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday Tory 1-005: 10:00 – 10:50 pm	Joseph Marchand jmarchan@ualberta.ca	Monday, Wednesday, & Friday Tory 7-29: 11:00 – 12:30 pm
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Description

Labor Economics (ECON 431) is a course serving as senior-level undergraduate exposure to the market for labour, in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the field.

This course will explore the fundamental topics of the field, including: an introduction to labour economics; labour markets; labour supply; labour demand; job attributes; schooling; training, turnover, and migration; discrimination; unions; wage inequality; compensation strategies; and unemployment; all through a North American perspective.

Undergraduate prerequisites are **ECON 109, ECON 281, and MATH 154 (or equivalent)**.

Resources

There is one required textbook for this course: *Labor Economics, Principles in Practice, Second Edition* (2019), written by Kenneth McLaughlin under Oxford University Press. (<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/labor-economics-9780190856991?cc=ca&lang=en>)

A hard copy version is available through the UofA bookstore or online (~\$80-240 CAD). A digital rental is available through VitalSource (~\$80 CAD) for 180 days (or 6 months).

The first Canadian edition of this textbook is currently being written, by your professor, hopefully due out sometime next year. Therefore, the second US edition will provide US examples and the concepts, and the lectures will give Canadian examples and updates.

Evaluation

Your numerical grade for the course will be calculated using the following weights:

Participation (in class)	20%	(attendance counts but participation worth more)
Packback (all PB Q&A)	20%	(one due weekly by Sunday night before midnight)
Exam #1 (Book C1-4)	20%	(on Wednesday, October 11 th , 10:00 am, 50 min.)
Exam #2 (Book C5-12)	40%	(on Tuesday, on Dec. 12 th , 2:00 pm, 120 minutes)

Your letter grade is then determined based on your absolute and relative performance to the rest of the class, with a historical grade point average of ~ 3.15 out of 4.0 (~ B+/B).

My approach to grading is to read all given answers to a question, and then rank them, with the best answer typically receiving full marks and a sliding scale then being used.

An A minus in any of my courses is the bare minimum requirement for a recommendation letter from me, but it does not guarantee it. I will no longer make exceptions to this rule.

Participation

Participation in class is encouraged. Grading will be based on the attendance of the lectures in person (or online), and then on the contributions made during those lectures, through spoken (or written) comments. Please treat our time together like a language course, as we will focus our discussions only on labour economics and the teaching of it.

Packback

Packback is a software that allows the posting of questions by me and answers by you, all of which we are typically able to see. Please sign up now (~\$40 CAD). There will be eleven questions, with around one question each week throughout the semester, and questions typically posted on Wednesday and answered by Sunday. The 431 questions will mostly relate to identifying Canadian content to replace the US examples in the textbook. Grading will be based evenly on the order of answers received (from first to last answered and edited), the completeness of the answer (based on the Curiosity Score), and its originality (as determined by myself and maybe also a TA). A late penalty of 10 percent per day will be added when applicable.

Exams

All students must complete a mid-term exam and a final exam. Previous mid-term exams might be provided. The mid-term exam will cover the first four chapters of the textbook, and the final exam will cover the final eight chapters. The final exam may be deferred through your faculty, but approval requires that at least half of your assigned work had already been completed.

Schedule

September	6 th	Wed	(1)	C0 – Overview of Course Outline (PB #1 due 9/10)
	8 th	Fri	(2)	C1 – Introduction to Labour Economics
	11 th	Mon	(3)	C1 – Introduction to Labour Economics
	13 th	Wed	(4)	C1 – Introduction to Labour Economics (PB #2 due 9/17)
	15 th	Fri	(5)	C1 – Introduction to Labour Economics
	18 th	Mon	(6)	C2 – Labour Markets
	20 th	Wed	(7)	C2 – Labour Markets (PB #3 due 9/24)
	22 nd	Fri	(8)	C2 – Labour Markets
	25 th	Mon	(9)	C2 – Labour Markets
	27 th	Wed	(10)	C3 – Labour Supply (PB #4 due 10/1)
	29 th	Fri	(11)	C3 – Labour Supply
October	2 nd	Mon	(12)	C3 – Labour Supply
	4 th	Wed	(13)	C4 – Labour Demand (no PB; practice E1)
	6 th	Fri	(14)	C4 – Labour Demand
	9 th	Mon	*	No Class (Canadian Thanksgiving / Columbus Day)
	11 th	Wed	(E1)	C1-4 – Mid-Term Exam (@ 10:00 am; 50 minutes; no PB)
	13 th	Fri	(ER)	C1-4 – Mid-Term Exam Review
	16 th	Mon	(15)	C5 – Job Attributes
	18 th	Wed	(16)	C5 – Job Attributes (PB #5, due 10/22)
	20 th	Fri	(17)	C5 – Job Attributes
	23 rd	Mon	(18)	C6 – Education
	25 th	Wed	(19)	C6 – Education (PB #6 due 10/29)
	27 th	Fri	(20)	C6 – Education
	30 th	Mon	(21)	C7 – Training, Turnover, and Migration
November	1 st	Wed	(22)	C7 – Training, Turnover, and Migration (PB #7 due 11/5)
	3 rd	Fri	(23)	C7 – Training, Turnover, and Migration
	6 th	Mon	(24)	C8 – Discrimination
	8 th	Wed	(25)	C8 – Discrimination (PB #8 due 11/12)
	10 th	Fri	(26)	C8 – Discrimination
	13 th	Mon	*	No Class (Remembrance Day / Veterans' Day in lieu)
	15 th	Wed	*	No Class (Fall Term Reading Week) (PB #9 due 11/19)
	17 th	Fri	*	No Class (Fall Term Reading Week)
	20 th	Mon	(27)	C9 – Unions
	22 nd	Wed	(28)	C9 – Unions (PB #10 due 11/26)
	24 th	Fri	(29)	C10 – Wage Inequality
	27 th	Mon	(30)	C10 – Wage Inequality
	29 th	Wed	(31)	C10 – Wage Inequality (PB #11 due 12/3)
Dec.	1 st	Fri	(32)	C11 – Compensation Strategies
	4 th	Mon	(33)	C12 – Unemployment
	6 th	Wed	(34)	C12 – Unemployment
	8 th	Fri	(ER)	C5-12 – Final Exam Review (no PB; study instead)
	12 th	Tues	(E2)	C5-12 – Final Exam (@ 2:00 pm; 120 min.; exam room)

Policies

“Please note that class times for this course will be recorded. Recordings of this course will be used to allow students enrolled in the course to review the material and will be disclosed to other students enrolled in this section of the class. Students have the right to not participate in the recording and are advised to turn off their cameras and audio prior to recording; they can still participate through text-based chat. It is recommended that students remove all identifiable and personal belongings from the space in which they will be participating. Recordings will be made available until the end of term and accessible on [eClass]. Please direct any questions about this collection to the professor of this course.” (If you feel that a lecture should not be posted, then please let me know.)

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System section of the University Calendar.” (If there is a problem, let me know ASAP.)

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behavior (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behavior which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (Dean’s office makes decisions.) (<http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-integrity>)