University of Alberta – Department of Economics – Winter 2022
ECON 431-531 – Labor Economics / Labour Economics I – Marchand

COURSE OUTLINE

Websites

eClass: https://eclass.srv.ualberta.ca/course/view.php?id=76873

My Teaching: https://sites.ualberta.ca/~jmarchan/teaching.htm

Class Hours	Instructor	Office Hours
Monday and Wednesday	Joseph Marchand	Monday and Wednesday
Zoom / HC 2-38: 12:30 - 1:50 pm	jmarchan@ualberta.ca	Zoom / T 7-29: 1:50 - 3:00 pm

Description

Labor Economics / Labour Economics I (ECON 431-531) at the University of Alberta is a blended course that serves as senior-level undergraduate and graduate level exposure to the market for labor, in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the field.

This course will explore the fundamental topics of the field, including: an introduction to labor economics; labor markets; labor supply; labor 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* (2018), 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 (for ~$215 CAD). (https://bookstore.ualberta.ca/p-43842-labor-economics-principles-in-practice.aspx)

A digital rental is also available through VitalSource (for ~$60 CAD) for 180 days. (https://bookstore.ualberta.ca/p-47100-labor-economics-180-day-ebook.aspx)

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, participation is worth more)
Packback (w/ 10 of 12)	20%	(one due weekly by Saturday night at 11:59 pm)
Exam #1 (or seminar)	30%	(on Monday, February 28th, 12:30 pm, 80 minutes)
Exam #2 (everybody)	30%	(on Thursday, April 21st, at 9:00 am, 120 minutes)

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.

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).

Due to the blended nature of the course, graduate status will also be taken into account.

Grammarly software is available (for free) to help clean up any writing that you may do.

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 speaking or written comments. Please treat our time together like a language course, as we will focus our discussions solely on labor 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 will be able to see. Please sign up soon (~$29 CAD). There will be twelve of these questions, with roughly one question each week throughout the semester, with questions typically being posted on Wednesday and answered by Saturday. The 431 and 531 sections each have separate communities, as the expectations will differ between the two sets of students, as will the questions, mostly. The 431 questions will mostly relate to identifying Canadian content to replace the US examples from the textbook, whereas the 531 questions will be more Canadian data driven. Grading will be based evenly on the order of answers received (from first to last), the completeness of the answer (based on Curiosity Score), and its originality (as determined by myself and maybe also a TA). Your best ten answers to the twelve questions will be used for this portion of your grade.

Seminars

The presentation that the graduate students will give to the class will help walk the undergrads through the graduate versions of the same concepts that they are studying (such as showing us the calculus behind a model or the statistical code for an estimation), as well as help us understand some Canadian and US academic papers, where applicable. Graduate students will work together with the professor to identify what they will cover. Grading for these talks replaces the first exam and is based on how useful it is to the class.

Exams

Undergraduates must complete a mid-term exam and a final exam, whereas graduate students must instead complete a seminar and a final exam. Previous exams will not be provided, as they are no longer applicable from the switch back to the in-person version. The mid-term exam will cover the first six chapters of the textbook, and the final exam will cover the final six chapters. The final exam may be deferred through your faculty, but approval requires at least half of your assigned work had already been completed.

January	5th	Wed	(1)	C1 - Intro to Labor Economics (Q #1, due 1/8) [Zoom]
	10th	Mon	(2)	C1 - Intro to Labor Economics [Zoom]
	12th	Wed	(3)	C2 - Labor Markets (Q #2, due 1/15) [Zoom]
	17th	Mon	(4)	C2 - Labor Markets [Zoom]
	19th	Wed	(5)	C3 - Labor Supply (Q #3, due 1/22) [Zoom]
	24th	Mon	(6)	C3 - Labor Supply
	26th	Wed	(7)	C4 - Labor Demand (Q #4, due 1/29)
	31st	Mon	(8)	C4 - Labor Demand
February	2nd	Wed	(9)	C5 - Job Attributes (Q #5, due 2/5)
	7th	Mon	(10)	C5 - Job Attributes
	9th	Wed	(11)	C6 - Schooling (Q #6, due 2/12)
	14th	Mon	(12)	C6 - Schooling
	16th	Wed	(13)	C1-6 - Student Seminars (graduates only)
	21st	Mon	*	No Class (Statutory Provincial holiday)
	23rd	Wed	*	No Class (Reading Week)
	28th	Mon	(E1)	C1-6 - Mid-Term Exam (undergraduates only)
March	2nd	Wed	(14)	C7 - Training, Turnover, and Migration (Q #7 due 3/5)
	7th	Mon	(15)	C7 - Training, Turnover, and Migration
	9th	Wed	(16)	C8 - Discrimination (Q #8, due 3/12)
	14th	Mon	(17)	C8 - Discrimination
	16th	Wed	(18)	C9 - Unions (Q #9, due 3/19)
	21st	Mon	(19)	C10 - Wage Inequality
	23rd	Wed	(20)	C10 - Wage Inequality (Q #10, due 3/26)
	28th	Mon	*	No Class (APPAM Conference)
	30th	Wed	(21)	C11 - Compensation Strategies (Q #11, due 4/2)
April	4th	Mon	(22)	C12 - Unemployment
	6th	Wed	(23)	C12 - Unemployment (Q #12, due 4/9)
	21st	Thr	(E2)	C7-12 - Final Exam (all students) (@ 9:00 am)

<u>Policies</u>

"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)