



Principles of Microeconomics

ECON 201, FALL 2008
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN MARCOS

Vital Information

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Office: Craven Hall 6231,
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00 – 12:00 and 1:30 – 2:30

Textbook and other assigned materials

The required textbook for this course is

Stone, *CoreEconomics*

We will be using Aplia in this class. Aplia is an online system designed by an economist to provide assignments, quizzes and experiments to complement the class work. It is required that you sign up before the first assignment is due. Aplia will aid your learning in this course by providing practice work with instantaneous feedback. You will need to enroll in Aplia before the first assignment is due (Friday). You have the option of simply purchasing the integrated textbook (digital version) through Aplia to save money on purchasing the text and Aplia separately (see below).

Aplia Registration Instructions

1. Connect to <http://www.aplia.com>.
2. Click the System Configuration Test link below the Sign In and Register sections to make sure you can access all of the features on Aplia's website. This takes just a few seconds and tells you how to update your browser settings if necessary.
3. Return to <http://www.aplia.com>.
 - a. • If you have never used Aplia before, click the New Student button and enter your Course Key: JC22-RFA6-UWZF. Continue following the instructions to complete your registration.
 - b. • If you have used Aplia before, sign in with your usual e-mail address and password and enter your Course Key when prompted: JC22-RFA6-UWZF. If you are not prompted for a new Course Key, click the Enter Course Key button to enroll in a new Aplia course. Enter your Course Key when you are prompted.
4. If you understand your payment options, pay now. Otherwise, postpone your purchase decision by choosing the option to pay later. Your payment grace period ends at the end of the day on 09/14/2008.

Aplia Payment*

Option A: Pay Aplia Directly

- Purchase access to your course directly from Aplia on our website for \$70.00 USD. The website includes:
 - Access to an online copy of your textbook.
 - Content that has been customized for your textbook and course.
- However, if you try using the online textbook and decide you would also like a physical textbook, you can order one from Aplia for \$40.00 USD plus \$7.50 for shipping and handling.

Option B: Purchase at Bookstore

- Purchase a bundle from your school's bookstore, which includes:
 - An Aplia Access Card containing a Payment Code that you can enter on Aplia's website as payment for your Aplia course.
 - A physical textbook.
- Purchase a stand-alone Aplia Access Card from your school's bookstore.
 - Access Cards contain a Payment Code you can enter on Aplia's website as payment for your Aplia course.

*I have ordered the Aplia bundle with our textbook at the bookstore. If you choose to purchase the book from another source, you will need to purchase Aplia separately.

What to Learn

This course is an introduction to microeconomic analysis. Most textbooks will tell you that economics is the study of the production and allocation of scarce resources, but as you will see it is much more. Microeconomics looks at the behavior of rational individuals who make choices when faced with limited means to achieve their goals. This means economics applies to everything from stock markets to criminal behavior to politicians to your own choices for work and school. Economics broadly speaking is a means of studying human behavior. Microeconomics in particular studies the behavior of individuals (called “agents”) in order to predict aggregate behavior (the behavior of groups of individuals).

Two types of individuals or agents that we look at in particular are consumers (what to purchase) and firms (what and how much to produce). But economic reasoning goes beyond issues of money and business to explain (and sometimes solve) a wide array of social issues: traffic, pollution, crime, poverty, abortion, voting and sometimes even games like poker and chess. You will even have the opportunity to apply the economic way of thinking to your own experiences in everyday life.

In economics, we rely on models or abstractions to describe general patterns of behavior. You will be expected to perform basic algebra (solving two linear equations, slope of a line), and arithmetic (calculate percentages). A great deal of the intuition and theory will come from graphs. Anyone in need of a refresher should look over the appendix to chapter 2 and complete the practice problems online. I am happy to meet with anyone in need of extra assistance outside of class.

How to Learn

The following quote exemplifies my teaching philosophy:

[T]here isn't any solution to this problem of education other than to realize that the best teaching can be done only when there is a direct individual relationship between a student and a good teacher – a situation in which the student discusses the ideas, thinks about the things, and talks about the things. It's impossible to learn very much by simply sitting in lecture, or even by simply doing problems that are assigned.

–Richard P. Feynman

If you are not an active learner, you will not be a successful student. A small portion of the class will be lecture based, providing you with the definitions and tools with which to work. But listening to lectures is seldom a good way to learn. Lecturing encourages passivity, and passivity is a major obstacle to learning. Active learning is engagement with the material, the professor and the students around you. Understandable, many of you won't become active learners unless they are required to act on a regular basis. I will provide some of this motivation through in-class problem solving, quizzes, and writing, but it is also up to you to speak up intelligently and thoughtfully and contribute.

It is critical that you come prepared to class having done the reading and assignments for that day. Unannounced quizzes are simply a way to encourage and reward this behavior. If you miss a class period or show up late, you will not be able to make up the lost credit for any assignments that occur that day– no exceptions.

I will also be asking you to participate throughout the class period on various questions and surveys. These in-class assignments are counted towards your participation grade regardless of whether you get the answer correct or not – and many will not have a specific correct answer.

I ask that you be aware of your fellow students who are also working to learn the material. While I encourage you to regularly participate, I expect you to also aid in making the classroom an inviting environment for everyone. Listen to what others have to say – some of the most important insights and unique explanations of material will come from your classmates.

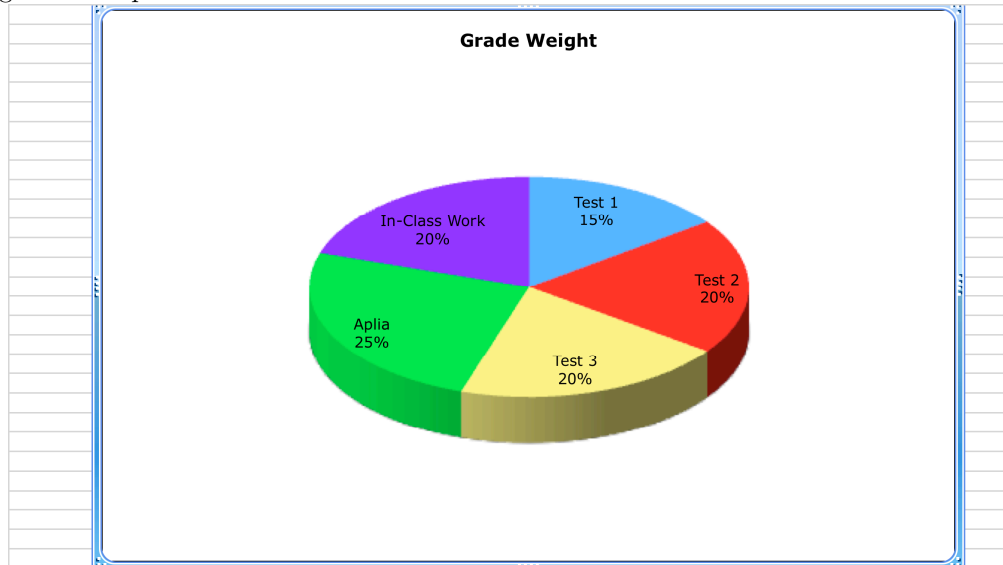
Homework assignments are all listed and administered through the Aplia website. Readings will appear there as well. You are to familiarize yourself with the webpage during the first week. Some of the assignments are due before the class period the topics are introduced so that you can familiarize yourself with the material. These assignments are graded immediately so you can get feedback right away and are typically due a few hours before the Monday class period. Follow-up assignments are due later in the week, typically by Friday at 5pm. Aplia does not accept late assignments and neither do I so be sure to keep up to date. Everything is posted well in advance so you have time to plan accordingly.

The exams are not cumulative, but cover the material of the current “course” (see below). The exam style is a combination of short answer, graphs and multiple choice. A majority of the exam will be in similar style to problem sets and in-class assignments so reviewing the notes and past assignments will well prepare you for the tests. The exam dates are listed, so you are responsible to contact me at least two weeks in advance if there is going to be a time conflict.

There are no extra credit assignments – there is plenty of work without them. If at some point you are concerned about your grade, please come talk to me and we can work together to help you improve.

How Compute Your Grade

I will give three tests (non-cumulative), homework assignments through Aplia, and occasional quizzes and in-class assignments. Your final assigned grade is based on a weighted average of these portions of the class.



How to Get Help

I strongly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours (or just stop by – I'll tell you if I am too busy at that moment). I am available to go over concepts and problems – though I won't answer problem set questions for you.

Student tutors are often available and set up through the economics club. The club has its own webpage. <http://public.csusm.edu/economicsclub/>

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated.

Academic Accommodation

Any student eligible for and desiring academic accommodation due to a disability should provide documentation to Disability Student Services (DSS) within the first two weeks of the semester. Students requesting accommodations due to a qualified condition must register with DSS. I will accommodate students as prescribed by DSS.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

Cheating is any form of intellectual dishonesty or misrepresentation of one's knowledge. Plagiarism, a form of cheating, consists of representing someone else's work as one's own. All members of the CSUSM community are expected to be aware of the serious breach of principles involved in plagiarism. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism shall not be considered a valid defense.

Any form of cheating or plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in a zero not just for the assignment but for that entire evaluation category. Offenders are also reported to the University. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me.



About Me

I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1976. After high school, I moved to Portland, Oregon to go to Reed College where I got my BA in Mathematics. After a year as a food server at a Thai restaurant, cake cutter, actuary and unemployment recipient, I moved to Seattle where I completed my Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Washington in 2004. I enjoy good food, live music, and most things involving sci-fi and ending in "Trek".