

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON  
EC 350 LABOR MARKET ISSUES

Fall Spring 2022

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Robert McDonough	<b>Lecture Place:</b>	University 208
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:rmcdono2@uoregon.edu">rmcdono2@uoregon.edu</a>	<b>Lecture Time:</b>	T,R 10:00-11:20 (Pacific Time)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	T 11:20-12:00, R 15:00-16:00		
<b>GE:</b>	Emily O'Leary		
<b>GE Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:eoleary@uoregon.edu">eoleary@uoregon.edu</a>		
<b>GE Office Hour:</b>	T 15:30-16:30		

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**Course Page:** <https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/205608>

**2022 is Hard:** *This is a stressful time.* I have built flexibility into our syllabus so that you can all succeed despite less than ideal circumstances. I hope that you will extend the same flexibility to me. Please reach out if you need anything. The sooner I know you need help, the sooner we can make it happen. Nothing we learn in class will be useful without your physical and mental health! Feedback, positive or negative, is always appreciated.

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the economic theory surrounding labor markets and labor market issues. Our first major topics will be labor supply and labor demand, which we will then consider together to see how the labor market reaches equilibrium. We will then discuss human capital development. In the latter portion of the course, we will move on to discussing associated topics such as wage differentials, discrimination in the labor market, alternative pay schemes, and government involvement in labor markets.

**Lecture:** Lecture will be held in University 208 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 11:20AM. Lecture attendance is not mandatory, but you are encouraged to attend lectures if you are feeling healthy.

**Textbook:** The required text is *Contemporary Labor Economics* by McConnell, Brue and Macpherson, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition. The 11<sup>th</sup> edition is also acceptable. Digital versions of either edition are also available and acceptable. As a supplement to the required text, consider consulting *Labor Economics* by George Borjas or *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy* by Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith.

**Prerequisites:** As indicated in the course catalog, EC201 is the required pre-req for this course. While EC311 is not a pre-req, I recommend taking it before or concurrently with EC350, as much of our material will build upon the concepts of optimization covered in that course. I will cover these topics as needed, but I will do so in less time and depth than in EC311.

**Office Hours:** Office hours will be held in person on Tuesday at 11:20-12:00 (directly after class), and also on Thursday at 15:00-16:00 (3PM-4PM). Tuesday's office hour will take place in our lecture hall; Thursday's office hour will take place in my office, PLC 406. I reserve the right to move office hours to Zoom. If you would like to meet outside of scheduled office hours, either in person or via Zoom, please email me to make an appointment. Emily O'Leary, who will be grading most of your assignments, will hold one office hour on Zoom per week on Tuesday, at 15:30 (3:30 PM). See Canvas Zoom page for the link to Emily's office hour.

**Important Dates:**

**Midterm** .....(In class) Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Final Exam** ..... 8:00AM-10:00AM Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>

**Grading Policy:** Your grade in this course will depend on reading quizzes, problem sets, a midterm, and a final. The traditional grade scale (90-100% → an A of some kind, 80-89% → a B of some kind, et cetera, modified by + and - where applicable) will be used as a baseline when determining course grades. The letter grades will not be worse than the traditional grade scale would imply, but a curve favorable to students may be applied depending on the overall performance of the class. Assignment weights are given below:

Assignment	% of Grade
Problem Sets (4; lowest score dropped)	30%
Reading Quizzes (9; lowest 2 scores dropped)	15%
Midterm	25%
Final	30%

Those students taking this course pass/fail must earn a “C-” in the course in order to receive a passing grade. You will receive no grade in this course if it is found that you have not received a “C-” or better in the prerequisite EC201. Further, if you are not able to write the final exam for any reason, drop the course now (i.e., the “no makeup” policy below is not negotiable.)

**Grade Appeals:** Any re-grading requests on a test or homework must be submitted in writing within 2 days of when grades and comments for the assignment are returned. A request should include an argument for why you feel your answer was correct. I will re-grade the entire question when a request is made.

**Problem Sets:** There will be 4 problem sets due during our course. The problem set with the lowest grade for every student will be dropped at the end of the term. The remaining 3 problem sets will each count for 10% of the final course grade. Problem sets can be submitted on Canvas, or in person to either myself or the TA prior to the due date. **Do not slide problem sets under the TA’s office door.** Unless otherwise stated, you are allowed to collaborate in small groups on these assignments (up to 5 people). Each student must turn in their own work and must identify other students with whom they worked. Collaboration on these assignments is encouraged, but word-for-word copying is not and will be penalized with a lower grade. Copying problem set answers from online sources is also prohibited, and will be penalized with a lower grade. Repeated copying will constitute academic dishonesty (see below). Problem sets will generally be due on Fridays at 17:00 (5PM). The rough schedule of problem set due dates is included in the tentative schedule at the end of this syllabus. Exact due dates for each problem set will be listed on canvas and included on the problem set PDFs themselves. Late problem sets will not be accepted after the due date, and no make-up problem sets will be offered. Problem sets may include limited opportunities to earn extra credit points.

**Weekly Quizzes:** There will be one quiz per week, except week 6 when you will take your midterm. Quizzes are focused on the assigned reading for that week. Quizzes will be completed via Canvas, and will be available to complete for two full days (Thursday and Friday). The quiz will open at midnight Wednesday night and be available until midnight Friday night. You will have one 30 minute attempt for each quiz. Once you start the quiz, you have 30 minutes to finish *and submit* it. These quizzes are intended to be relatively easy if you have been keeping up with the readings. Students are not allowed to communicate with each other about quizzes or assist each other in completing a quiz under any circumstances. Doing so will constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of 0 on that quiz. Each student’s two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the term. The two dropped quizzes policy is designed to deal with tech mishaps, a forgotten quiz, or any other snafus. As such, late quizzes will not be accepted and no make-up quizzes will be offered.

**Midterm & Final:** There will be both a midterm and final for this course, administered in person. The midterm will be administered during our scheduled class time. The final will be administered at the time and place indicated by the Registrar's office, and will be comprehensive. Both the midterm and the final will be closed book, closed note. Dates for the midterm and final are given above. Students are not allowed to communicate with each other during the exam or assist each other in completing the exam under any circumstances. Doing so will constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a failing grade on that test. If you know you cannot take the midterm or final for personal reasons you should drop this class. If you miss the midterm due to an unanticipated emergency, you may put the weight of the midterm on the final exam, provided that I am notified within 24 hours of the missed midterm. A missed final due to an unanticipated emergency may be handled with an "incomplete" for the course.

**Academic Integrity:** The University Student Conduct Code defines academic misconduct, which includes unauthorized help on assignments and examinations and the use of sources without acknowledgment. Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. I will report misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards—consequences can include failure of this course. As noted above, collaboration is allowed on homework but **not** on exams. I will ask you to certify that your exams are your own work. In order to ensure that each student is evaluated fairly, I will be very strict in the enforcement of the Student Conduct Code, which is published in the Schedule of Classes each term.

I do not consent to having notes from this class uploaded to the internet, including commercial note-selling websites. My course design is copyrighted by me and I do not consent to mass distribution of these materials. My lectures, including slide content, are my intellectual property and your creation of a derivative work (student notes from lecture) falls under this copyright protection. The distribution of course material (including your notes) to a commercial website falls under the UO's definition of plagiarism (see Student Conduct Code). Furthermore, such action violates UO's information technology "acceptable use policy" which prohibits use of its computing resources for commercial purposes.

**Course Policies Relating to COVID-19:** Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the following policies are in place for our course. These policies, as well as the rest of the syllabus, are subject to change in the event that the University changes or updates any of its COVID-19 policies and procedures.

- **Mask Policy:** Masks are welcome but optional at the UO. In line with University policy, my goal is to create a classroom environment that is respectful of the individual choice to wear a mask or not.
- **Academic Disruption:** In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas. In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.
- **Staying Safe in Class** As the University of Oregon continues in-person instruction, instructors and students play a key role in keeping our community healthy and safe.

**Prevention:** To prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in classrooms and on campus, all students and employees must:

- Comply with vaccination policy
- Wash hands frequently and practice social distancing when possible
- Complete daily self-checks
- Stay home/do not come to campus if feeling symptomatic

- If you have mild viral symptoms that do not require medical attention and you have not tested positive for COVID in the previous 90 days, students can drop by UHS to get a free COVID-19 self-test kit to more quickly determine if you have Covid
- Visit the COVID Case Management page for information on reporting cases.

**Support:** The following resources are available to you as a student.

- [University Health Services](#) or call (541) 346-2770
- [University Counseling Center](#) or call (541) 346-3277 or (541) 346-3227 (after hrs.)
- [MAP Covid-19 Testing](#)
- [Corona Corps](#) or call (541) 346-2292
- [Academic Advising](#) or call (541) 346-3211
- [Dean of Students](#) or call (541)-346-3216

**Accessibility and Special Accommodations:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. If you are uncomfortable discussing these issues with me, or if you require special accommodations of any kind due to a documented disability, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

**Basic Needs:** Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

This UO webpage includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/food/>

**Tentative Schedule:**

Week	Major Topic	Major Assignments	Readings
1	Syllabus, Labor Market Fundamentals		<i>MBM</i> Ch. 1, Ch. 3 p. 54-74
2	Labor Supply		<i>MBM</i> Ch. 2
3	Labor Demand	Problem Set 1	<i>MBM</i> Ch. 5
4	Labor Market Equilibrium & Extensions		<i>MBM</i> Ch. 6
5	Human Capital Development	Problem Set 2	<i>MBM</i> Ch. 4
6	Catch-up, review, <b>Midterm</b>	<b>Midterm</b> (10:00AM Thursday, November 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	
7	Alternative Compensation Forms & Pay Schemes		<i>MBM</i> Ch. 7
8	Wage Differentials & Hedonic Wage Theory	Problem Set 3	<i>MBM</i> Ch. 8
9	Labor Market Discrimination		<i>MBM</i> <i>MBM</i> Ch. 14
10	Government & Final Review	Problem Set 4	<i>MBM</i> Ch. 12
11	<b>Final</b>	<b>Final</b> (8:00AM December 8 <sup>th</sup> )	