

San José State University
Department of Economics
ECON 1B — Principles of Economics: Microeconomics
Section 14 — Class Number 50774
Fall 2023

Instructor:	Mark Brady
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Office Hours:	MW 2:30 – 3:00 PM; and by appointment MTWTh
Class Days/Time:	MW 3:00 – 4:15 PM
Classroom:	DMH 166
Prerequisites:	May be taken prior to ECON 1A

Course Description (from the catalog)

Allocation of resources and distribution of income as affected by the workings of the price system and by government policies.

Course of Study

- How the study of economics has changed over four centuries with reference to some important economists and key economic concepts;
- Production possibilities frontiers and opportunity cost;
- Absolute and comparative advantage, and specialization and the gains from trade;
- Supply and demand;
- Elasticity and its applications;
- Taxes and subsidies;
- Price ceilings and price floors;
- Economic calculation, central planning, and the role of markets and prices in coordinating exchange;
- Externalities;
- Production and costs;
- Competitive process;
- Competition and monopoly (price takers vs. price searchers);
- Monopoly and price discrimination;
- Further topics in industrial organization;
- Labor markets;
- Public goods and the “tragedy of the [unmanaged] commons”;
- Public choice; economics, ethics, and public policy;
- Throughout we apply economic analysis to understand the world around us.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives (SLO)

The goal is to promote both economic understanding and application (Econ SLO 1 & 2). Specifically, students are expected to gain familiarity with analytical methods and model-based argument; and relationships between verbal, graphical, mathematical and statistical representations of economic ideas and analysis (Econ SLO 1.3).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should have an understanding of the principal ideas in microeconomics, including

- **why incentives matter** (law of demand; law of supply; rational decision makers weight marginal costs versus marginal benefits; the power of self-interest)
- **opportunity cost** (sunk costs; production possibilities; the free-lunch fallacy; tradeoffs in consumption and production; grains from interpersonal and international trade; comparative advantage)
- **supply and demand** (understanding the S&D model as a representation of individual choices in exchange based on individual preferences, knowledge and circumstances; ability to examine current events using S&D tools; movement versus shift; welfare analysis)

Course Format

In-person classes and exams.

Texts/Readings

Textbook

Our textbook is Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrok, *Modern Principles: Microeconomics*. The fifth edition (2021) is the most recent and costs more, but the buy-back price is higher. If you're short of money, buy the fourth edition (2018), third edition (2015) or even the second edition (2013), but avoid the first edition (2010), which is significantly different. Or you may prefer to rent the e-text. (Please note that I customarily refer to the chapter numbers, and I'll be sure to mention where they differ between editions.)

Make sure that you are buying the **Micro** and not the Macro text. I've had students buy the wrong book. Of course, you would never do that!

And be aware that anyone can access the authors' website *Marginal Revolution University* at <https://mru.org> and watch hundreds of short videos for free.

<https://mru.org/principles-economics-microeconomics>

Other Readings

I distribute handouts that I expect you to read alongside the textbook.

Course Requirements and Assignments

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities.” More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S16-9, Course Syllabi at <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>

There are three components to your grade: three examinations (70%), your twenty best quizzes (20%), and a writing assignment (10%).

The **three exams** consist very largely, if not entirely, of multiple-choice questions created by your instructor. The **two shorter exams** on **Monday, September 25**, (worth 20%) and **Monday, November 6**, (also worth 20%) emphasize what we have covered in the previous five weeks. The **final exam** on **Friday, December 8, 12:15 – 2:30 PM** (worth 30%) is comprehensive but with a major emphasis on what we have covered since the second exam.

There are at least 25 objective **quizzes** worth 20%. Each quiz is worth one point, allowing students to drop or miss at least five quizzes. Quiz scores are calculated pro rata so that 10/10 on a quiz is worth one point, and 5/10 is worth half-a-point. **There are no make-ups for any quizzes.**

Many quizzes, including the first four, are based on my lectures. Others are based on chapters from Cowen and Tabarrok, *Modern Principles: Microeconomics*, and test your knowledge of key concepts.

The **writing assignment** (details TBA) is worth 20%, and is due by **6 PM on Monday, November 13**. The Writing Center is there to help you.

<https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

Grading Information

Converting number grades to letter grades

95% to 100% A plus	90% to 94% A	85% to 89% A minus
80% to 84% B plus	75% to 79% B	70% to 74% B minus
65% to 69% C plus	60% to 64% C	55% to 59% C minus
50% to 54% D plus	45% to 49% D	40% to 44% D minus
F 39% and below		

If every student does first-rate work, I'd be delighted to award everyone an A.

I am happy to help you. If you experience any difficulty in this course, please do not hesitate to come to me for help. I am available after our class and by appointment, and I am always happy to clarify difficult concepts, resolve any lingering confusion, or otherwise assist you in making this course enjoyable and rewarding.

“A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 SJSU Studies (R, S, & V) shall be required of all students as a graduation requirement.” To see full text, review University Policy S11-3 at <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S11-3.pdf>

Classroom Protocol

Class attendance is not mandatory and will not directly affect a student's grade. However, students who miss several classes, in addition to dropping quizzes, will very likely consign themselves to doing extremely poorly on their examinations. I therefore strongly encourage students to attend fully every class.

Please note that the university is closed for Labor Day (Monday, September 4), in lieu of Veterans Day (Friday, November 10), and the Thanksgiving Holiday (on Wednesday, November 23 the campus is open but it is a non-instructional day, and on Thursday-Friday, November 24-25, the campus is closed).

University Policies <https://www.sjsu.edu/students/>

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current academic year's Catalog at

<https://catalog.sjsu.edu/> Add/drop deadlines can be found on the Registrar's fall 2022 calendar here: <https://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/fall-2023.php>

And the academic year 2022-23 calendar is here:

https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/docs/Academic_Calendar-AY2023-24.pdf

Undergraduate Late Drop and Semester Withdrawal is available at

<https://www.sjsu.edu/ue/student-petitions/drops/index.php>

Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at

<https://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.

“Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”

“Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/prospective/register-with-aec/index.php> to establish a record of their disability.

Course Schedule—and this is subject to change with fair notice (announcement in class)

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Exams, Deadlines
1	Thursday, August 17 Saturday, August 19 Sunday, August 20 Monday, August 21 August 21 & 23	Academic year begins—Fall semester begins Late Registration begins on MySJSU at 7am Last Day to Drop for 100% Refund First Day of Instruction Introduction to economics and the economic way of thinking
2	Monday, August 28 Tuesday, August 29 August 28 August 30	Waitlist ends Permission number is required to add a class Specialization and the gains from trade Supply and demand
3	September 4 September 6	Labor Day—campus closed Supply and demand (cont'd)
4	Friday, September 15 September 11 & 13	Last Day to Drop Classes without a "W" Grade and Last Day to Add Classes via MySJSU; Last Day to submit Audit Credit/No-Credit Option Request (DocuSign); Last Day to submit Instructor Drops Elasticity and its applications
5	Monday, September 18 Tuesday, September 19 September 18 & 20	Enrollment Census Date (No Enrollment allowed) Late Add Post Census Request required Taxes
6	Monday, September 25 September 27	First (shorter) exam (20%) Subsidies
7	October 2 & 4	Price ceilings and floors
8	October 9 October 11	The price system: Signals, speculation, and prediction Economic calculation, central planning, and the role of markets and prices in coordinating exchange International trade
9	October 16 & 18	Externalities
10	October 23 & 25	Production, costs, revenues, and profit/loss; the competitive process
11	October 30 & November 1	Competition and monopoly (price takers vs. price searchers)
12	Sunday, November 5 Monday, November 6 November 8 Friday, November 10	2 AM: Clocks go back by one hour (PDT → PST) Second (shorter) exam (20%) Monopoly and price discrimination Veterans Day observed—campus closed
13	Monday, November 13 Monday, November 13 November 13 November 15	Semester Withdrawal Deadline; Late Enrollment Post Census ends The writing assignment is due by 6 PM Further topics in industrial organization Labor markets
14	November 20 Wednesday, November 22 November 23 & 24	Labor markets (cont'd) Non-Instructional Day—campus open Thanksgiving Holiday—campus closed; Rescheduled Holiday—campus closed
15	November 27 November 29	Public goods and the tragedy of the (unmanaged) commons Economics of ideas and intellectual property
16	December 4 December 6 Wednesday, December 6 Thursday, December 7 December 8-9, 11-14 Friday, December 8	Public choice Economics, ethics, and public policy Last Day of Instruction Last Day to Complete Coursework for “Incomplete Grades” Study/Conference Day (no classes or exams) Final exams Final exam (30%) DMH 166 12:15 – 2:30 PM
17	Friday, December 15 Mon-Tues, December 18-19	Final exams make-up day Commencement