Course Syllabus
ECON 3210: Labor Economics
Fall Semester, 2017
3.0 Credit Hours

Professor: Dr. Jamin D. Speer
E-mail: jspeer@memphis.edu
Office: FAB 413

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 11:20 am – 12:45 pm, FCB 259
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 pm, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Corey Richter (crchter1@memphis.edu)

Course Overview:

The primary goal of this course to analyze how labor markets function. The course will familiarize students with economic theories of labor supply and demand decisions, wage determination, human capital, unemployment, gender and race discrimination, work incentives, unionization, and the evaluation of social programs. We will also study current “big topics” in labor economics. More broadly, the course should further the student’s ability to think about real world issues from the mindset of a microeconomist. After completing this course, students should be able to more carefully think through the effects of policies on the decisions and outcomes of firms and workers.

Pre-Requisites/Co-Requisites:

This course is intended for advanced undergraduates. Completion of principles of microeconomics (Econ 2020) is required; knowledge of intermediate microeconomics (Econ 3310) will be helpful, but is not required.

Recommended Texts (and Related Materials):

Fundamentals of Labor Economics by Hyclak, Johnes, and Thornton (2nd edition)

I will sometimes provide you with extra articles, speeches, and/or videos for class. These will be provided and require no additional purchases.
I also recommend that if you want to be a serious student of labor economics, you regularly read news sources like *The New York Times* and *The Economist*. There are many good economics blogs as well. If you would like recommendations, please contact me.

**Location of Course Materials:**

Course information, such as the syllabus, homework assignments, and test grades will be available via ecourseware. To log on to ecourseware, simply go to [http://elearn.memphis.edu/](http://elearn.memphis.edu/) and follow the instructions.

**Course Objectives:**

By successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze a worker’s labor supply decision.
2. Analyze a firm’s labor demand decision.
3. Understand labor market equilibrium and how a change in supply or demand for labor alters the wage and the quantity of labor.
4. Connect theory to important policy issues like immigration and the minimum wage.
5. Analyze the wage dynamics of jobs with desirable or undesirable characteristics.
6. Know the evidence and theory of labor market discrimination.
7. Give a presentation on a relevant policy topic.

**Fogelman College: Learning Outcomes for Your Degree**

This course is designed to help you to meet the overall learning objectives for the BBA degree offered by the Fogelman College. You should take the time to become familiar with the overall learning objectives as a student in the BBA degree program.

- [BBA Program Outcomes](http://elearn.memphis.edu/)
- [BBA in Accounting Program Outcomes](http://elearn.memphis.edu/)

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**Course Methodology**

This is a traditional lecture course. We will meet twice a week.

**Professor’s Expectations of Students:**

I expect you to be in class. This will factor into your grade (see grading section below). Attendance involves not only showing up, but also paying attention and not being disruptive. In addition to being built into the grade itself, good attendance and behavior will earn you the benefit of the doubt if your grade is “close” to being rounded up.

In the interest of promoting a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, you must turn your cell phones on silent before class begins. Additionally, there will be no excessive
talking or disruptive behavior. Failure to observe these rules will affect the attendance portion of your grade.

**Student's Expectations of the Professor:**

In my role as your instructor, there are certain things you can expect from me including: well-organized and engaging learning experience, response to emails within two (2) business days, and feedback on all work submitted within 7-10 calendar days.

**Grading and Evaluation Criteria**

Over the semester, you will have a variety of opportunities to earn points towards your final (overall) letter grade in this course. This section of the syllabus describes the assessed work you will be doing and how overall (final) letter grades will be computed.

**Final Course Grades**

Final course grades are earned according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Assigned Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I reserve the right to give “plus” and “minus” grades at my discretion. For example, a grade of 91 may be given an A-minus and a grade of 88 may be given a B-plus.

I may apply a curve at the end of the course, but this is not guaranteed.

Your overall grade for the semester is based on how well you perform on a mixture of exams, assignments, and a final presentation. A detailed description of each of the assessed activities can be found after the scoring summary table below.

**Summary of Graded Activities**

Points earned on the assessed activities will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments and Quizzes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exams (2 of them)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Total Percentage of Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance and participation counts for 5% of your grade. This involves attending class, paying attention, participating in class discussions, and the like.

You will have several (probably 4 or 5) homework assignments. I will also give unannounced quizzes in class to make sure you are keeping up with the material. All together, these assignments and quizzes will account for 45% of your grade. Homework assignments will consist of questions from class material or material from the textbook, or perhaps of reading an assigned news article and answering questions from it. You will have at least one week from the time I announce an assignment to turn it in. Pop quizzes cannot be made up if you miss class. I will drop your lowest assignment/quiz grade.

You will have 2 midterm exams. Together, the exams are worth 30% of your grade. The midterm exams will take place on September 28 and November 2.

Finally, you will have a final exam worth 20% of your grade. I will give more details on this as it gets closer.

**Course Topics:**

We will study a variety of topics, including theory as well as practical and policy applications. Here are some of the topics we will study this semester:

- Labor supply theory and applications
- Labor demand
- Labor market equilibrium
- Policy applications of labor market equilibrium (minimum wages, immigration, health care mandates, payroll taxes, etc.)
- Human capital and education
- Discrimination
- Compensating differentials
- Inequality
- Current “big topics” in labor economics
  - Decline of labor supply among men
  - Intergenerational mobility
  - Effects of technology and robots on labor
  - Effects of trade, immigration, and refugees on labor markets
Final Exam Schedule

Your final exam will be **Thursday, December 14, from 8-10 a.m.**

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Course Policies

**E-MAIL:**

All students are required to maintain and access their University of Memphis (@memphis.edu) email account. You will receive all official course correspondence at this email account. Any inability to receive incoming mail in a timely fashion (e.g., not regularly checking your email, having a “full mailbox” condition, etc.) is the student’s responsibility.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is expected unless you have a university-approved excuse or other extreme circumstance. If you know you have to miss class, please let me know beforehand.

**Adding / Dropping:**

If you have questions about adding or dropping classes, please refer to this page on the Registrar’s website (opens in new window).

**Academic Integrity:**

The University of Memphis has clear codes regarding cheating and classroom misconduct. If interested, you may refer to the Student Handbook section on academic misconduct for a discussion of these codes. Note that using a “Solutions Manual” is considered cheating. Should your professor have evidence that using a “Solutions Manual” has occurred, he/she may take steps as described on the campus’ Office of Student Conduct website (opens in new window). If you have any questions about academic integrity or plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to review the Fogelman College’s Website on Academic Integrity (opens in new window).

**Participation:**

To be successful in this course as a student, you must stay active and involved throughout the entire semester. Students are expected participate in all interactive aspects of the course. You should also regularly communicate with the instructor as part of your overall learning experience, check into the course frequently for announcements (usually on the course home page), and actively participate in threaded discussion events (both formal and informal). You should plan on logging into the course at least three times each week.

**Classroom or Online Behavior:**

All participants in the course should be considerate of the other course participants and treat them (as well as their opinions) with respect. Insensitivity in this area will not be tolerated. If
you have any questions about online communication, you should review the Fogelman College's Netiquette website (opens in new window).

**Late Assignments:**

Assignments may be submitted anytime up to and including the date due. Please check eCourseware regularly for information about assignments and deadlines. Late work will receive a penalty of 20% if turned in within one day of the deadline, and 50% if turned in within one week of the deadline.

Except in extreme circumstances, exams may not be made up. If you need to take an exam at a different time than what I plan, let me know **as soon as possible.** You must let me know **before the exam** that you are going to miss it, not after.

If you miss an exam or assignment for a medical, legal, or other emergency, I need to see documentation of that reason (like a doctor’s note, for example). If you cannot provide this, then unfortunately, I will have to count the missed assignment or exam as a 0.

**Extra Credit:**

I do not guarantee any extra credit, but I will look for opportunities for extra credit as the semester goes along.

**Reporting Illness or Absence:**

In this course, deadlines are taken very seriously. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit assignments. If an emergency should arise, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the deadline to discuss the matter. A deadline extension will be considered only if **all** of the following conditions are met:
(1) Extreme emergency and (2) Instructor contacted prior to the due date.

**Inclement Weather:**

In the event that inclement weather requires the cancellation of classes at The University of Memphis, local radio and television media will be immediately notified. Additionally, The University of Memphis has established an Inclement Weather Hotline at 678-0888. You should also sign up for the LiveSafe app. Here is information regarding LiveSafe:


Syllabus Changes:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the term of the course, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes both by individual email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course bulletin board.

Student Services

Please access the FCBE Student Services (opens in new window) page for information about:

- Students with Disabilities
- Tutoring and other Academic Assistance
- Advising Services for Fogelman Students
- Technical Assistance