

Labor Economics (Online)¹
Econ 153 – Section A01
Summer 2020

The Class:

Time: Tue / Thurs: 2:00 PM – 4:50 PM (or anytime you want)
Place: Online (ilearn and Zoom)

Instructor:

Opinder Kaur
Office: 3124 Sproul Hall (Office Hours will be through Zoom)
Office hours: Tue / Thurs: 12:00 PM – 1:45 PM
(or on any day by appointment)
Email: okaur001@ucr.edu (feel free to email me if you need to. I will respond to you fast)

** Coming to the Zoom office hours is the best way for me to address your questions. If my office hours don't work for you, then we can make an appointment to meet through Zoom at a time that better fits your schedule. I also do my best to promptly respond to your emails, but make sure you identify yourself with your full name and course number (**ECON153**) when emailing me. Also, please feel free to reach out to me if you ever need anything. **

Prerequisites:

You must have completed Econ 102 (Intermediate Microeconomics) or Econ 104A (Intermediate Microeconomics Theory) with a grade of D- or better to remain enrolled in this class. A basic course in statistics or econometrics (at the level of Stat 100 or Econ 107) will be helpful in understanding the material, but it is not required.

Course Materials:

1. Text (Optional)

Labor Economics by George J. Borjas, 8th edition, McGraw-Hill.

Please note that this textbook is optional and not required. It covers the same material and has additional study questions. We will use information from this text, but we will also supplement it with information from other texts and readings (many of which will be posted on blackboard). So, the best course material for doing well will be the notes from our lectures. (Prepared in collaboration with Dr. Michael Bates)

2. Access to ilearn and Zoom (required). I'll be posting all assignments on ilearn and sending you links to our office hours on Zoom every week.

** I will also be emailing to your campus email account and posting grades on blackboard (<https://ilearn.ucr.edu/>) so please check these frequently. Since UCR is a public institution,

¹ I have the right to amend this syllabus in any way that I see fit to better serve the class.

email messages are subject to open access requests and other intrusions, so do not state your Social Security Number on any message. **

The class Blackboard site is restricted for use of class-related material. Any files, including videos, are intended for educational use for this class only. The material is subject to copyright laws and should not be downloaded and distributed.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will study empirical analyses of wage and employment determination by using microeconomic theory. This course will study the aspects of labor supply and demand using microeconomic theory. The course will then focus on education (human capital theory), income inequality, and discrimination.

More specifically, the purpose of this course is to:

1. Make you familiar with the stylized facts and institutions of the labor market.
2. Help you understand the empirical tools used to analyze labor market and public policy issues.
3. Help you become fluent in using economic theory to discuss labor issues.
4. Teach you to identify the benefits and costs of public policies.
5. Learn about the profession of labor economics so that you can make an informed decision as to if you want to pursue it as a career.
6. Develop our critical thinking skills.

Classroom Etiquette:

This class will be taken completely online in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and, therefore, success in this class will depend on your ability to be largely self-sufficient in completing the weekly modules and assignments on time. You will be given a lot of freedom to watch the course lecture videos and complete the assignments at your own pace, but it is up to you to make sure you are completing assignments by the due date and not falling behind in the course. Here is what a typical weekly module will look like:

Step 1: Watch the lecture videos for this module

Step 2: Do the assigned readings for this module (some modules will have readings, others won't)

Step 3: Complete the Assignment

Please note that some modules will contain homework assignments and others will contain exams. During the Zoom office hours, please come prepared with questions that you would like me to answer as I am always happy to answer your questions at that time. If someone is already asking a question, please mute your microphone and wait for your turn. If the office hours don't work for you, then just email me and we can make an appointment for another time that works better for you. Also, please always be respectful of your fellow classmates when interacting with one another whether it be during office hours, or a review session.

Grading:

Assignment	Weight
Homework Assignments (3)	30%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

I will post scores and points from classroom assignments on Blackboard as quickly as possible after they are turned in. You will have ***one week*** from the posting date to appeal or correct that information. After that, no adjustments will be allowed for any reason. It is your responsibility to monitor your grades on a regular basis.

Homework Assignments:

There will be three homework assignments which will involve answering short-answer and analytical questions and all homework assignments will be completed and submitted through ilearn. The structure of these homework assignments will be similar to that of your exam, so doing well on these homework assignments will go a long way in helping you prepare for the upcoming exams. I will provide detailed answer keys of the entire problem set. It will be your responsibility to read these carefully and correct any misunderstandings in the remaining questions before the exams. I will always be there to help you understand things.

Homework #1: Due by 6:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on Thursday, July 2nd

Homework #2: Due by 6:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on Friday, July 17th

Homework #3: Due by 6:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on Thursday, July 23rd

Midterm and Final Exams:

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. These exams will be taken through ilearn with the midterm taking place during your regular class day and time on Thursday July 9th, and the final exam taking place during your normal final exam day and time on Saturday, July 25th. In the event that you have to miss the midterm for any reason, the weight of the midterm will shift to the final exam, making the final exam worth 70%. The final exam is cumulative in that it will cover everything we learned throughout the entire class. A higher score on the final exam will replace a lower midterm exam score. For example, if you get a 60 on the midterm, and then get an 80 on the final, then the midterm exam score will become an 80. If the final exam score is lower than the midterm exam score, then neither score will change. The dates of your exams are below:

Midterm Exam: Thursday July 9th from 3:00 PM – 4:50 PM Pacific Standard Time

Final Exam: Saturday, July 25th from 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM Pacific Standard Time

Using any unauthorized materials, attempting to look up the answers online, or receiving assistance from somebody else during the exam is a violation of academic honesty and is strictly forbidden. All students involved in such behavior will automatically receive a zero for the exam and will be subject to the penalties outlined by the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures at UC Riverside.

Tentative Course Outline reading list:

- Week 1 Module: Introduction to the Course and the Labor Market
 - a) Chapter 1
- Week 2 Module: Labor Demand
 - a) Short Run Firm Demand for Labor Under Perfect Market Conditions, Chapter 3
 - b) Labor Demand in the Long Run and Demand Elasticities, Chapter 3
 - c) An Application: The Minimum Wage, Chapter 3
 - d) Card, David, and Alan Krueger, "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," *American Economic Review*, Volume 84, pp. 772-793
- Week 3 Module: Labor Supply
 - a) Labor Force Participation and Hours of Work, Chapter 2
 - b) Family Labor Supply
 - c) An Application: Welfare Reform
- Week 4 Module: Human Capital Theory
 - a) Human Capital Theory
 - i. Chapter 6
 - ii. Ashenfelter, Orley, "How Convincing is the Evidence Linking Education and Income?" *Labour Economics and Productivity*, Volume 6, Number 4, 1994, pp. 1- 12
- Week 5 Module: Labor Market Equilibria
 - a) Discrimination
 - i. Chapter 9
 - ii. Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review* 94.4 (2004): 991-1013.

Class Format and Suggestions for Completing the Course:

The modules are laid out to optimize your success as a student, so the best way to do well in the class is to complete all of the steps for each module. It is also important that you watch the video lectures carefully and take notes as the material on the tests will come from these lectures. If time allows, I would also recommend re-writing or typing your notes as soon as you can after watching all of the video lectures for that module as this will increase your understanding of the material and give you a clean set of notes to study from (this was the most valuable tip I received for success in my college classes as a young undergraduate). Finally, please contact me if you feel lost or have any questions regarding the class. It is my job to make sure that you get the most you can out of this course, so I am always more than happy to meet with you.

Important Dates

Thursday, July 2nd – Homework Assignment #1 is due

Thursday, July 9th – Midterm Exam from 3:00 PM – 4:50 PM Pacific Standard Time

Friday, July 17th – Homework Assignment #2 is due

Thursday, July 23rd – Homework Assignment #3 is due

Saturday, July 25th – Final Exam from 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM Pacific Standard Time

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who wish to request special accommodations are encouraged to contact me via email, during office hours, or by appointment, and I will be happy to help you in any way that I can. Please understand that the earlier you contact me, the more I will be able to accommodate you for the course. For an appointment with a counselor, call 951-827-3861 (voice) or email at specserv@ucr.edu.

Course Policies:

1. **Communication:** Email is the best way to reach me. I will try to respond to your email in a timely manner (within 24 hours).
2. **Understanding:** If you become ill, experience the death of a loved one, or have a major life disruption that is negatively influencing your performance in our class, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss your options. I cannot help, if I am unaware near the time of the hardship.
3. **Rules are non-negotiable:** The rules of the syllabus, content of the exams, content of the lectures, and calculation of the grade you earned are not a starting point for negotiations. While I am always willing to work with students on an individual basis, I cannot negotiate individual terms with each student.

Other Important Reminders:**1. Academic Honesty:**

For all of your papers and assignments, please make sure that your work is original! Please understand that intentionally copying another person's paper or submitting someone else's work as your own is considered cheating and is against the academic integrity policies and procedures here at UCR. All students involved in such behavior will automatically lose all points for that assignment and will be subject to any

additional penalties as outlined by the administration at the University of California, Riverside. Check [here](#).

Please don't cheat as there is no reason for it. I will be more than happy to help you with any problems you may have in the class.

2. **Observing a Major Religious Holiday:** You may make up course work missed to observe a major religious holiday only if you make arrangements in advance with the professor.
3. **Commercialized Lecture Notes:** Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.