

Syllabus

Principles of Economics I
ECON 201HC FALL 2024

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|---------------------------|--|
| Instructor | David Youngberg, Ph.D. Department of Business and Economics Montgomery College—Rockville |
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| Course Information | CRN #21385 TR 11:00am to 12:15pm TC 215 |
| Course Length | 09/03/2024 to 12/22/2024 |
| Course Materials | Course materials (lectures, practice exams, syllabus) are available on my website and on Blackboard. |

IMPORTANT: Zoom Recording

While our class is in person, circumstances might demand that we are sometimes remote. Please be advised that these remote class sessions will be recorded (in video and audio format), capturing student participation in class discussions or activities. Any student profile image used may be captured in the recording. As permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), recordings of each class session may be shared with students currently enrolled in the course as reference material or when they are unable to attend a live class session. Recordings may not be shared with any other parties, without the prior written consent of those captured in the recording; however, the College reserves the right to use recordings to investigate alleged Code violations.

Students with a profile image, activated camera and/or audio features during a class session, agree to have their profile picture, video image, and/or oral statements recorded during the class session. If you choose not to have your profile picture, video image, or oral participation recorded:

- A. Do not use a profile image,
- B. Disable the video feature, and
- C. Mute the audio component of Zoom for each class session.

This will allow you to share in the learning without being captured in class recordings. To participate while muted, you can submit comments or questions in the Zoom chat feature.

NOTE that when I record sessions, the only video recorded will be from my camera (with perhaps some glimpses of who is ever in the Zoom room during the initial set up period). Your video feed will not be captured during normal class sessions.

I. Course Description

Covers macroeconomic theory half of a one-year course in economics including central problems of economic society, supply, and demand; national income and product; saving, consumption, and investment; income determination; money supply and deposit creation; monetary and income analysis and alternative economic systems. Three hours each week.

Prerequisites: High school algebra or its equivalent or consent of department.

Assessment levels: ENGL 101/101A; MATH 093/096; READ 120. Three hours each week.

II. General Education

ECON 201 fulfills a General Education Program Behavioral and Social Sciences Distribution. Montgomery College's General Education Program is designed to ensure that students have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to carry them successfully through their work and personal lives.

This course provides multiple opportunities to develop two or more of the following competencies: written and oral communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. For more information, please check www.montgomerycollege.edu/gened.

III. Resources

- Greenlaw, Steven A. and Timothy Taylor. *Principles of Macroeconomics*. Openstax. (This is a free online textbook.) <https://openstax.org/details/principles-macroeconomics>
- Frank, Robert. *The Economic Naturalist: In Search of Explanations for Everyday Enigmas*. 2007. (Note this is not required, only strongly suggested.)
- You must sign up and use Blackboard; homework will be on Blackboard and papers will be submitted through it.
- In addition, there are online readings. ***Do not neglect them.***

IV. Technical Requirements for Remote Instruction

- a. General Technical Requirements:
 - i. Computer with internet connection
 - ii. Up-to-date internet browser(s)
 - iii. Webcam and microphone

- iv. Install at least one alternative browser (i.e. Chrome or FireFox) in addition to the default browsers provided with the operating system (The browser Internet Explorer no longer works with most applications)
- b. Hardware:
 - i. Processor – Intel Core i3 (8th gen, 2 core, 4MB cache, 2.1Ghz and up)
 - ii. RAM (memory) – 4/8GB
 - iii. Drive (disk space) – 128GB Solid State Drive (or 500GB Hard Disk Drive)
 - iv. Web Camera and Microphone
 - v. Wireless Computer Network (WLAN - 802.11ac)

IV. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Apply basic economic concepts such as scarcity, opportunity cost, and comparative advantage to everyday life situations.
- 2) Use the market model to explain how prices are set, quantities are bought and sold and how resources are allocated.
- 3) Analyze the basic structure of capitalism and contrast with alternative economic systems.
- 4) Measure unemployment and inflation.
- 5) Analyze functions of money and the U.S. banking system.
- 6) Use the model of aggregate supply and demand to examine unemployment and inflation and how these can be affected by government policy.
- 7) Identify the primary purposes, limitations, and controversies regarding the use of fiscal and monetary policies. Use the model of aggregate supply and demand to examine unemployment and inflation and how these can be affected by government policy.
- 8) Identify the factors of economic growth for both developed and less developed countries.
- 9) Examine globalization and its impact on the economy.
- 10) Measure gross domestic product (GDP) and analyze its shortcomings.

V. Format and Procedures

This course is made up mostly of lecture with class discussion and class activities to underline important concepts. Class discussion is paramount to the class, since I find interaction of this sort particularly valuable in understanding the economic ideas and how they fit into the world.

VI. My Assumptions

I assume you have a basic curiosity about the world around you. I assume you are familiar with basic algebra and can correctly interpret diagrams and tables. I assume you will do the indicated readings.

VII. Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for all information in class even if you are late or absent. You are also responsible for checking your campus email daily. Course changes, suggestions for study, and other important messages will be posted by campus email. Bear in mind your Montgomery College email is the official means of communication.

You will turn off cell phones during exams and during class. Keep disruptions (e.g. side conversations) at a minimum (i.e. zero).

If you have a question, you are strongly encouraged to email me or visit my office hours. Your method of contact should be through my email address at Montgomery College. Do ***not*** email me through other methods, including Blackboard. I will not respond to such messages.

VIII. Asking For Help

Please let me know if something is going on in your personal life that's making it difficult for you to succeed in this course. I don't need to know the details if you don't want to share them but if you're struggling with something, it's worth it to reach out to me (or another professor, or counseling, if you prefer).

To quote a Facebook post of the late, great Steve Horwitz:

I know you think you can handle it, and I know that you think coming to us this way is a sign of weakness. But you're wrong. Coming to us is smart. It's brave. It's strong. It shows that you want to succeed. Most faculty are reasonable about these sorts of things, but we can't help you if we don't know.

We are here to help you succeed.

IX. Basic Needs Statement

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Affairs on your campus. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable the professor to provide any resources that they may possess. We know this can affect performance in the course and Montgomery College is committed to your success.

The Dean of Student Affairs on the Rockville campus is [Dr. Tonya R. Mason](mailto:tonya.mason@montgomerycollege.edu),
tonya.mason@montgomerycollege.edu.

The Student Health and Wellness/Fuel for Success website offers information about resources for food on our campuses and in the community and has links for community resources. The site offers the schedule for the mobile markets, locations of the food pantries as well as a link for those

who wish to contribute their time or money to support our students.
<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/student-health-and-wellness/fuel-for-success/>

Each of the main campuses has a pantry stocked with snacks and food. Students are welcome to come pick up a snack to carry you through your next class, and to take a few items home.

| Campus | Pantry Location | Days & Hours of Operation |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Germantown | <i>High Tech (HT) Food Pantry</i> In the hallway, near HT300 | 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. |
| Rockville | <i>Women's' and Gender Studies Program Food Pantry</i> Hallway outside of MT212 --- <i>Biology Department Food Pantry</i> Science Center, 2 nd floor hallway | Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. --- Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. |
| Takoma Park/Silver Spring | <i>Commons Food Pantry</i> CM 110 <i>Institute for Justice, Race and Civic Engagement Food Pantry</i> Pavilion 4, #202 Vincent.intondi@montgomerycollege.edu | Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Saturdays 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday and Wed: 12:30-4 Tuesday and Thursday: 2-4 |

IX. Standards of College Behavior

This section is quoted from the Student Code of Conduct. For more information, please visit https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/_documents/policies-and-procedures/42001-student-code-of-conduct.pdf

The College seeks to provide an environment where discussion and expression of all views relevant to the subject matter of the educational forum are recognized as necessary to the educational process.

However, students do not have the right to interfere with the freedom of the faculty to teach or the rights of other students to learn, nor do they have the right to interfere with the ability of staff to provide services to any student.

Faculty and staff set the standards of behavior that are within the guidelines and spirit of the Student Code of Conduct or other College policies for classrooms, events, offices, and areas, by announcing or posting these standards early in the semester.

If a student behaves disruptively in the classroom, an event, an office, or an area after the instructor or staff member has explained the unacceptability of such conduct and the consequences that will result; the student may be asked to leave that classroom, event, office, or area for the remainder of the day. This does not restrict the student's right to attend other scheduled classes or appointments.

If the student does not leave, the faculty or staff member may request the assistance of Security.

The faculty or staff member must communicate with the student about the incident before the next class meeting to resolve the issue. If a second incident occurs that warrants removal from class, the faculty member again communicates with the student and must send a written report about the incident to the Dean of Student Development with a description of the incident and whether or not the incident is being referred to the formal disciplinary process.

The Dean of Student Development or designated instructional Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education should be informed in writing about any situation that should be addressed through the formal disciplinary process. The faculty or staff member will provide the Dean of Student Development with a written summary of the facts or conduct on which the referral is based within 48 hours of the incident for appropriate and effective disciplinary process, which must include the date, time, place, and a description of the incident.

X. Academic Dishonesty

Part of this section is quoted from the Student Code of Conduct. For more information, please visit <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/documents/policies-and-procedures/42001-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>

The maintenance of the highest standards of intellectual honesty is the concern of every student, faculty and staff member at Montgomery College. The College is committed to imposing appropriate sanctions for breaches of academic honesty.

See the above link for more information concerning what constitutes academic dishonesty and misconduct as well as possible sanctions imposed as punishment.

Some students have used websites that provide answers to exam or homework questions or write essays for them. To be abundantly clear, using these websites in this way is **always** cheating. For example, Chegg (which I know is popular) posts answers to homework or exam questions. Even if you didn't post the question, using that website to find answers is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and posting questions is a particularly egregious violation because you are not only cheating yourself but also enabling others to cheat.

XI. Disability Support Services

Any student who needs an accommodation due to a disability should make an appointment to see the course instructor during office hours. In order to receive accommodations, a letter from Disability Support Services will be needed. Furthermore, any student who may need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation must identify the Disability Support Services Office.

XII. Veterans' Services

If you are a veteran or on active or reserve status and you are interested in information regarding opportunities, programs, and/or services, please visit the Combat2College website at <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/combat2college/>.

XIII. Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. In cases involving excessive absences from class, the instructor may drop the student from the class, but you are ultimately responsible for dropping yourself from the course. Auto-drop should not be assumed. Excessive absence is defined as one more absence than the number of classes per week during a fall or spring semester; the number of absences is pro-rated for accelerated sessions.

XIV. Withdrawal and Refund Policy

It is the student's responsibility to drop a course. Non-attendance of classes or failure to pay does not constitute official withdrawal. To view specific drop deadlines, log into your MyMC account, click on "My Class Schedule" under "Student Quick Links." Select the current term and click "View Drop Deadline Dates" at the bottom of the page.

XV. Audit Policy

All students registered for audit are required to consult with the instructor before or during the first class session in which they are in audit status, and students are required to participate in all course activities unless otherwise agreed upon by the student and instructor at the time of consultation.

XVI. Delayed Opening or Closing of the College

On occasion, Montgomery College will announce a late opening or early closing of a specific campus or the entire college because of weather conditions or other emergencies.

- If a class can meet for 50% or more of its regularly scheduled meeting time *or* if the class can meet for 50 minutes or more, it will meet.
- Montgomery College will always operate on its regular schedule unless otherwise announced. Depending on the nature of the incident, notifications of emergencies and changes to the College's operational status will be communicated through one or more communication methods include the College's web page.

XVII. Tutoring

Montgomery College Learning Centers provide academic support resources, including virtual tutoring, to currently enrolled students. All students have access to the STEM Learning Centers, the Academic Success Center, and the Writing, Reading, and Language Centers. Information about specific learning centers and tutoring schedules can be found at <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/academics/support/learning-centers/virtual-tutoring.html>

There is free economic tutoring available through the Takoma Park/Silver Spring's Academic Success Center. ~~You can get face-to-face tutoring at CM110 at TP/SS. You can get online tutoring via Skype in Rockville's Digital Learning Center at HU307 and in Germantown's Writing/Reading Center at HS150.~~

The Skype user name is ***ASC-tutoring*** and keep in mind ***no campus has priority***; this is a first-come, first-serve basis regardless of which campus the student comes from. ~~Face-to-face does not have priority over online tutoring.~~

Keep in mind the tutor may not be able to help you on all material, notably the material that's not part of the official course description. The tutors are least likely to be helpful concerning material that has a N/A next to it under the "Text" section of the course schedule.

The tutoring schedule changes each semester and will be released sometime shortly after the semester begins.

XVII. Course Changes

The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule of the course if necessary but will notify the students of any changes to the schedule before the changes are implemented.

XVIII. Grading, Evaluation, and Assessment Procedures

Weight of Assignments

| <i>Assignment</i> | <i>Weight</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Course Orientation | 1% |
| Edpuzzles | 1% each (4% total) |
| Economic Naturalist Questions | 3% |
| Economic Naturalist Paper | 12% |
| Blackboard Homework | 1% each; lowest two dropped (10% total) |
| Exams | 24% total (lowest is 10%, highest is 14%) |
| Final | 20% |
| Participation | 6% |
| Cost-Benefit Analysis Paper | 5% |
| EconTalk Paper (Group Project) | 15% |

Note: The weights here indicate that your grade will be determined by a weighted average. Blackboard, by default, posts an unweighted average. (I've tried hiding this number but it still posts in certain places.) As an unweighted average, it's a meaningless number and does not measure your grade to date at all. Ignore it. To determine your grade-to-date, use the Excel file linked on my website called [WhatsMyGrade.xlsx](#).

Course Orientation.

This Blackboard “homework” is a short quiz about the syllabus.

Edpuzzles.

There are four episodes of Planet Money I’m assigning. To ensure you listened to these episodes, you’ll be listening to them via Edpuzzle. Edpuzzles prevents you from skipping ahead and requires that you answer some basic questions about the episode as you listen to it. You can find the link to the Edpuzzle assignment via Blackboard. Note the first Edpuzzle is due immediately.

Blackboard Homework.

There will be twelve homework assignments completed through Blackboard. The lowest two will be dropped.

You will have two attempts to complete each homework. After each submission, you will be informed which questions were wrong. Your score for the homework will be your best score among all attempts.

Answers will be displayed after the due date has passed. Therefore, you **cannot** start the homework after the due date has passed and any homework submitted after the due date will **not** be accepted. Blackboard is very strict in this regard; even being one second late will mean you cannot start the homework.

To access the answers, and the feedback for each question, select the View Attempts option that becomes available after the due date has passed. It will display all your attempts’ scores; select one of these scores to see the answers and feedback.

Economic Naturalist Assignment.

This semester you’ll be reading *The Economic Naturalist* by Robert Frank. It’s a collection of short essays that his student wrote for his economic naturalist assignment. You’ll be doing the same assignment and these examples will not only help you understand the material but also what to expect of the assignment.

Economics is a widely applicable discipline, able to shed light on a variety of everyday puzzles. But it all boils down to the same principles and themes. This assignment is about you using one of the ideas we discussed in class to explain a puzzle from the world around you.

A document on Blackboard called ***The Economic Naturalist Advice*** offers additional tips for both asking questions and for answering them.

- *Questions.* I thought about giving you a list of questions to choose from in case you couldn't think of one. But this robs you of one of the advantages of the assignment: forming your own questions and thinking about if they are good or bad and why. So instead you will submit five questions you've come up with. ***Don't answer them***—this is to encourage you to practice seeking puzzles and discourage procrastination. ***Do not use questions from the Frank book, from the readings, or from class. A document on Blackboard call Questions Used in The Economic Naturalist lists all questions from the book; reference that to ensure you aren't repeating a question.***

I suggest you consult the book for ideas and to understand the sort of questions I have in mind. To gather your questions, I suggest you visit the world around you and examine it with a critical eye. Notice the differences in products or procedures. Visit a variety of stores. Study your fellow humans—it's called the economic naturalist because this is the sort of thing biologists do. Using basic principles of biology you can unravel a variety of mysteries from the world around you. So it is with economics.

- *Economic Naturalist Paper.* With the proliferation of AI and large language models (ChatGPT being the most famous) making academic dishonesty difficult to detect, I'm trying an experiment this semester. Instead of writing your essay, you will ask an LLM your question and then evaluate its answer.

Your paper will thus consist of three parts:

1. The prompt you give the LLM.
2. The text, word for word, the LLM gave back to you.
3. Your answer. You have a maximum of 400 words—the best papers are concise and approachable—and the answer has two parts:
 - A **clarification** of your puzzle. Give context to your question so the puzzle is clear. If your puzzle includes differences in prices, for example, then give numbers. If your puzzle asks why something takes “so long,” then use this space to describe how long it takes and why that's strangely long.
 - Your **revision** of the AI's answer. Treat the AI answer as a draft essay and your job is to make a better essay. If the AI made a great essay (which is unlikely), you have to explain why it's a great essay.

Keep in mind that you are building on what the LLM did, and this requires judgement on your part. Some Dos and Don'ts:

- **Don't** feel the need to respond to everything the LLM suggests. The LLM will likely give you several ideas, but many of them will be bad. Dismiss bad ideas with a sentence or ignore them completely. Treating bad answers seriously will get you marked down.
 - Example: When answering why some things are sold in bulk, an LLM claimed it was because it was good for the economy and boosts GDP. Terrible answer! Why would a firm care about that?

- **Don't** simply repeat the LLM. Some repetition may be necessary to bridge its answer with your content, but the focus of what you write should be on making its answer better.
- **Do** keep in mind the LLM may bring up ideas we haven't discussed. If it does, look them up, talk to me, or ignore it in favor of another explanation. These other concepts could act as helpful ways to answer your question, but I'll understand if you want to steer clear of them to avoid getting it wrong.
 - Example: When answering why Germany has zero-tuition college but the U.S. doesn't, the LLM stated that it was because college in Germany is treated like a public good. But "public good" has a precise definition in economics and college clearly doesn't fit in that definition.
- **Do** remember to make the answer is complete. The best questions have an element of paradox to them so unless you solve the paradox you haven't really answered the question.
 - Example: one student once asked "Why are there Phillips head and straight head screws?" An excellent question. But the student answered by describing the history of the Phillips head. The cross shape prevented the screwdriver from slipping away from the screw. But this does not explain why we still have straight screws. The question remained only partially answered.
- **Do** keep "digging" into an answer, asking questions like "but why?," until you reach the economics.

Remember to double-space your paper.

Exams.

The two exams will comprise of short answer, matching, and multiple choice. Since all exam dates are listed here, you will be expected to attend them. Failure of attendance results in a zero for the exam. Exceptions will only be made in extreme circumstances (such as a death in the family) and in those cases written proof (such as a death certificate) must be presented.

The use of any calculator which is built into a phone is not permitted.

Final.

The final is comprehensive. It'll have a similar structure as the normal exams, but longer. I suggest you review past exams to help prepare.

The final schedule for December is available now, on the college's website. You have signed up for these classes with this knowledge at hand. I will not let you take your final at a different time just because you don't like your schedule.

Participation.

I'm a strong believer that people learn best if they speak up. It's a good rule not just for learning but for life in general. Because there's a lot of material to cover, we cannot always have an in depth class discussion. Thus, the expectations for participation reflect that—a substantive comment or question once a week will fulfill the requirement just fine.

Note that while you are encouraged to send me emails with questions, that does **not** count to your participation grade. The whole point of a participation grade is to encourage questions and answers that everyone can benefit from.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Paper.

This paper requires you to select a major life decision you made and write a paper no more than 500 words long describing the costs and benefits associated with that decision.

Because you have limited space, it's important to focus on the most critical aspects of your decision and to demonstrate to the reader that these are noteworthy considerations. For example, if your decision involved moving to the U.S. or staying in your home country and you indicate a cost is being away from friends, you should make some indication that those friendships are very important to you (say, perhaps because they've been your friends for many years).

A cost all papers should include is the opportunity cost and the opportunity cost should be a major component of every paper. Papers should conclude with which option you decided on and a summary of why the cost-benefit analysis favors that decision. Keep in mind that you should double-space your paper.

EconTalk Paper (Group Project).

This paper requires you to develop and defend a thesis about something in economics, especially macro-economics. This paper is about synthesizing and integrating information from not just class material but also three EconTalk episodes, with at least one episode that does not share a [category](#) with the other episodes.

EconTalk is a weekly podcast hosted by economist Russ Roberts. Episodes usually involve interviews with another economist about his or her research but Roberts has also interviewed businesspersons, non-economist academics, and journalists. These interviews cover a lot of ground; each episode is about an hour long. Keep in mind that not all episodes are about economics (Roberts has done many episodes on philosophy, literature, and other areas that don't strictly apply to this course; I suggest you avoid those episodes.)

Keep in mind that the reference of an episode can be very minimal. In the wide-ranging conversation of EconTalks, there's sometimes a throw away comment the host or the guest makes but they don't explore. These comments are sometimes fruitful areas to develop a thesis around. The comments section for each episode can also be helpful.

It's important that your thesis statement is bold rather than boring. I'm much rather read something that makes an interesting claim which doesn't quite make sense than a paper that makes an obvious claim which it fully answers. The former may be wrong, but is at least provocative and demonstrates creative thinking. The latter is not even wrong.

It's also important to make your thesis statement specific. You have limited space and saying "lots of things matter" means you're not going to have the room to cover every aspect sufficiently. A focused thesis is better than a broad thesis.

The most natural way to do this paper is to propose or eliminate a specific government policy. It could be some new spending or deregulation or law, and then use the economic implications to show that your proposal is a good idea.

Resist the temptation to focus on summary. While you'll surely summarize some to provide the necessary background information, the heart and soul of your paper lies in the application of those ideas.

The paper should:

- Have a clear, focused thesis statement.
- Have a compelling introduction and effective conclusion.
- Provide relevant background information from the EconTalk episode as well as other sources, if necessary. Note this background should be very short.
- **Defend the thesis with solid economic reasoning.**
- Utilize language to interest the reader while keeping it well organized.
- Be free of grammatical, spelling, and other kinds of errors.
- Include a works cited page, including at least the three episodes you used. (This page does not count towards your page limit.)

To emphasize, this is an economics paper and so you should take the discipline's core ideas seriously. Because a policy proposal is the most natural way to write this paper, I reference that approach when clarifying how to employ these ideas but this is not the only way to write the paper.

- *Incentives matter.* If you are not thinking in terms of incentives, then you're not doing economics. It's not enough to think in terms of how incentives will work your way, you also have to think in terms of how they won't. If you're arguing for or against a government policy, what are the potential unintended consequences of your argument?
- *Everything is trade-offs.* Saying that there are always opportunity costs is another way of saying that getting something good means you have to give up something else that's good. It's a bad idea to treat any proposal as only up-side. As economist Thomas Sowell once

said, “There are no solutions. There are only trade-offs.” Show that you understand the trade-offs in question and that your policy is, on net, helpful.

Other ideas: connecting zoning laws and the housing market with the opioid problem; make an argument about how the world works (link between wealth exposure and low mobility); evidence in different episodes that suggest a compelling thesis (e.g. corruption is good)

You have a maximum of **four** pages. This is a group project, with a recommended number of three students in the group (so each student listens to one episode and then the three have a discussion to integrate it). See Group Project Rules, below.

Group Project Rules.

I did not like group projects when I was an undergraduate for much the same reason many don’t like them: some people do all the work while others do nothing. But group projects reflect a reality of the working world. Teams are common so it makes sense to incorporate them into an undergraduate class.

Teams are common because (a) big projects requiring multiple skill sets are common and because (b) employers can choose whom to hire and whom to fire, thus mitigating the free rider problem. Of course, you cannot be “fired” from the course and I have no say in who is “hired” into it, but we can emulate this incentive structure by creating a miniature market.

You will start out in groups of three or four, but you may fire any group member (or hire another student in the class). The actual procedure of this will vary from group to group. One group may elect a group leader who has sole authority in firing and hiring. Another group may decide to be a group of equals, in which case firings and hirings would be determined by majority rule. Group members can quit for whatever reason they wish. Groups are encouraged to try to “poach” members from other groups.

Companies have an incentive to get rid of employees that don’t perform: it’s good for morale and they save money on salary. Similarly, you have an incentive to fire group members: smaller groups will have a higher base score for their project. Of course, a smaller group means there’s more work so make sure that if you fire someone, you’re coming out ahead! Here’s a table of score ranges based on the overall quality of the work and the number of people in the group.

| | | Overall Quality | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Size of Group | | A | B | C | D | F |
| | 1 | 105-95 | 95-85 | 85-75 | 75-65 | 65-0 |
| | 2 | 105-95 | 95-85 | 85-75 | 75-65 | 65-0 |
| | 3 | 100-90 | 90-80 | 80-70 | 70-60 | 60-0 |
| | 4 | 95-85 | 85-75 | 75-65 | 65-55 | 55-0 |
| | 5 | 90-80 | 80-70 | 70-60 | 60-50 | 50-0 |

You'll notice that as a group grows, each member gets a lower score for the same quality of work. This is because a group of four should produce better work than a group of two; if each produces the same quality of work, the smaller group should get a higher score.

You might also notice that going from a group of two to a group of one offers no additional benefit. That's because I want to incentivize some group activity, even if the groups are small. I offer the points for a group of one in case either someone is left without a group or a group of two discovers they really don't want to work with each other. Either way, you can complete the project on your own if you really wish, but it is something I advise against.

XIX. Late Policy

For *every* 24-hour period (rounded up) an assignment is late, there is a 10% penalty. Because all assignments are turned in through Blackboard, weekends count towards this period (turning something in Monday morning when it was due Friday at 11:59pm would count at a 30% penalty).

If you miss an exam, you make appropriate arrangements with me and the Montgomery College Assessment Center. There is a form to fill out (the Faculty Test Request Form). I will not allow you to make up an exam after I've graded and passed it back.

Poor Internet or other technical problems is not a compelling reason to turn in an assignment late; this is a foreseeable problem—akin to traffic—and it's a possibility that should be accounted for.

XX. Challenges

Students are encouraged to challenge how any assignment was graded. To challenge the score on a question, *type* a paragraph explaining why your answer is the correct one and are thus deserving of additional points. I am not, repeat *not*, interested in reading about any mistakes you made but why you believe you are more correct than I gave credit. These challenges are due one week after the graded assignment was passed back or posted on Blackboard.

XXI. Reviewing Papers

I'm happy to look at your paper before you turn it in. However, you *must* send it to me at least 72 hours before the assignment is due. It is not possible for me to review dozens of papers at the last minute and will refuse to look at any paper any closer to the deadline.

I strongly prefer that you email me your drafts. It prevents long lines outside my door, gives me sufficient room to read and craft thoughtful feedback, and gives you a written record of my thoughts. Barring unusual circumstances, I will email you my thoughts on your draft at least 24 hours before the paper is due, giving you ample time to make revisions.

I will not review a paper more than once. If you send me a draft and I give you some advice, I won't review a second draft, even if you send me a second draft more than 72 hours before the paper is due.

XXII. Comments

I will always provide comments for your economic naturalist questions because that helps you write your economic naturalist paper. However, it's not clear to me that students generally read these comments. Therefore, comments for your economic naturalist paper and your Second Looks papers will *only* be provided if you opt in by writing "please provide comments" or something like that in the comment section when you submit your papers via Blackboard.

XIX. GroupMe

To facilitate student inquiries, I've set up a GroupMe chat for the class. You are encouraged to ask questions to me or the class in general. See Blackboard for the link to join the GroupMe chat.

Please note that all of my 201 sections share the same group chat, including the honors section which has additional assignments. The content is the same but deadlines may differ.

XX. Study Advice

The general rule of thumb for studying for college classes is at least 2 hours per hour of class per week. That means for this course alone, you should be studying at least six hours a week, not including the time you are in class.

Obviously, this is a crude rule. People learn at different paces and some courses are harder than others so I'm not saying that you must do this to get a grade you'd be proud of, but if you're dissatisfied with how you're doing in this (or any course), adjusting your study time is a good first step, especially if you're like the many college students who study far below that six-hour suggestion.

I get questions about studying—often too late in the semester to do much good—so it's worthwhile to consider *now* the different things you can do to study. Some of these things will seem labor intensive and that's the point. There's no secret trickity trick to understanding something complex. It takes hard, meaningful work and that takes time.

- Form a study group and meet regularly. The best way to learn is to teach others.
- Read the lecture notes before class.
- Read the lecture notes the day after class. Reading them out loud is also helpful.
- Reorganize the lecture notes so that different ideas connect in different ways.
- Take practice exams under time pressure. Only look at the key after you've completed the exam.
- Work through any bonus problems I've created. Only look at the key after you've worked through the problems.

- Review the homework before trying it. Sometimes students will look at the homework before the class we covered in the material in, which I suspect is helpful.
- Copy your notes, by hand. This can lead to you discovering gaps in your notes that you didn't realize you had, allowing for ample time to fill the gaps.
- Visit office hours. Remember, you do not need an appointment; you can just drop in.
- Read the suggested textbook. You might also want to look at YouTube videos but if they contradict the class materials or seem confusing, talk to me.

XXI. What's My Grade?

If you want to know your grade-to-date, multiply your score on each assignment by its weight (indicated in the previous section). Then divide by the total percent assigned so far. Compare the result with the grading scale (below) to determine your grade.

Linked on my website, there's an Excel file called [WhatsMyGrade.xlsx](#). Download this file and then follow the instructions: (1) selecting the correct class from the tabs at the bottom; (2) fill in the scores for the assignments you've completed so far, marked in blue; and (3) look in the yellow area for your grade-to-date. Note this is not a perfect measure, especially since participation has an outsized influence in the start of the semester, but it should give you an accurate idea of where you stand.

Note that the first two homeworks don't add to your weight total because I drop the lowest two homeworks for your final grade.

Grading Scale (points or percent needed for specific grades). Your grade, for both the midterm and the semester, will be determined by how many points you've accumulated throughout the class (by the table below).

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|------------|
| A: 90+ | | B: 80-89.99 | | C: 70-79.99 | | D: 60-69.99 | | F: 0-59.99 |
|--------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|------------|

Note that these are strict bounds: if you get 89.89 points for the semester, that's a "B," not an "A." I will only "round up" if I feel it's appropriate. This may mean you:

- Regularly went above and beyond what's required for full credit (such as participation);
- Exhibited increasing mastery of the material as the semester moved forward (impressive, since the material gets harder as the semester moves forward); and/or
- Consistently demonstrated an understanding of particularly important question(s), especially if your fellow students had trouble with such question(s).

XXII. Tentative Schedule

The following table describes this course day-by-day. "#" indicates which numbered lecture is covered that day which will aid you finding the lecture notes on my website. "Text" indicates the chapter of the textbook we will be referencing that day but are not required. That column only

exists for your own reference. “Readings” ***are required***—you’re expected to read before class that day. EN Essays are found on my website [here](#). Blackboard homework is always due at 11:59pm.

| UNIT | DATE | # | TOPIC | TEXT | READINGS |
|-----------|--------------|---|---|-------|----------------------------|
| I | 09/03 | 01 | Introduction | 1 | |
| | 09/04 | EDPUZZLE: THE PICKLE PROBLEM DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 09/05 | 02 | Economic Systems | 1 | EN Essays Part 1 |
| | 09/09 | COURSE ORIENTATION DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 09/10 | 03 | Opportunity Cost & Marginal Analysis | 2 | Bastiat¹ |
| | 09/12 | 04 | Supply and Demand | 3 | EN Essays Part 2 |
| | 09/17 | 05 | Reviewing Supply and Demand | | |
| | 09/18 | HOMEWORK 1-2 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 09/19 | 06 | Trade | 2, 10 | |
| | 09/24 | 07 | Income Inequality | N/A | |
| | 09/25 | COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS PAPER DUE EDPUZZLE: RIGGING THE ECONOMY DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 09/26 | 08 | Public Choice | N/A | |
| | 09/30 | HOMEWORK 3-4 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 10/01 | EXAM 1 | | | |
| II | 10/03 | 09 | The Government Budget | N/A | |
| | 10/08 | 10 | GDP I | 6 | |
| | 10/10 | 11 | GDP II | 6 | |
| | 10/15 | 12 | Unemployment | 8 | |
| | 10/16 | ECONOMIC NATURALIST QUESTIONS DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 10/17 | 13 | Reviewing Budget, GDP, and Unemployment | N/A | |
| | 10/22 | NO CLASSES—ADVISING DAY | | | |
| | 10/23 | HOMEWORK 5-6 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 10/24 | 14 | Growth & Development | 7 | EN Essays Part 3 |
| | 10/28 | EDPUZZLE: VIDEO GAMING THE SYSTEM DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 10/29 | 15 | Inflation | 9 | |
| | 10/31 | 16 | Nature of Money | 14 | Radford² |
| | 11/04 | HOMEWORK 7-8 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 11/05 | EXAM 2 | | | |

¹ Intro and section 1 (stop when you see The Demobilization):

https://www.econlib.org/library/Bastiat/basEss.html?chapter_num=4#book-reader

² <https://dyoungberg.com/Radford.pdf>

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------------|--|--|--------|-------------------------|
| III | 11/06 | EDPUZZLE: BRILLIANT VS. BORING DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 11/07 | 17 | Personal Finance & Investment | N/A | |
| | 11/12 | 18 | Signaling Theory & Education | N/A | EN Essays Part 4 |
| | 11/14 | 19 | Basics of AD-AS | 11 | |
| | 11/19 | 20 | Shifting AD-AS | 11 | |
| | 11/20 | HOMEWORK 9-10 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | | ECONOMIC NATURALIST PAPER DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 11/21 | 21 | Reviewing AD-AS, Investment, & Signaling | N/A | |
| | 11/26 | 22 | Banks & the Great Depression | 14 | |
| | 11/28 | NO CLASSES—THANKSGIVING BREAK | | | |
| | 12/03 | 23 | The Great Depression & the Multiplier | 17 | |
| | 12/05 | 24 | Fiscal Policy | 17, 18 | |
| | 12/10 | 25 | Monetary Policy | 14, 15 | |
| | 12/12 | — | <i>Review</i> | N/A | |
| | 12/15 | HOMEWORK 11-12 DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | | ECON TALK PAPER DUE AT 11:59PM | | | |
| | 12/19 | FINAL EXAM 10:15-12:15 IN OUR USUAL ROOM | | | |

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.