

SPELMAN COLLEGE

Fall 2013

Economics 242 (CRN # 61971-04), Principles of Microeconomics, Giles 301

Tuesday and Thursday, 09:25 AM to 10:40 AM

Professor: Dr. Angelino C. G. Viceisza

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Office hours: Tuesday, 12:45 PM to 2:15 PM and Thursday, 10:45 AM to 1:45 PM

Office location: Department of Economics, Giles Hall, Room 402 (4th floor)

Office phone: 404-270-6055

Course website: Please check Moodle. *In absence thereof, I will make use of email.*

Personal research website: <https://sites.google.com/site/viceisza/>

Default email: aviceisz@spelman.edu (preferred over phone); viceisza@gmail.com (use *ONLY* as back-up)

Note: I am usually accessible via email to respond to simple questions or quick consultations. If I feel that a question or issue warrants discussion in person, I will refer you to my office hours. This will usually be the case for issues related to course performance. If contacting me by email, please include ECON 242 in the subject line.

TEXT

Campbell R. McConnell, Stanley L. Brue and Sean M. Flynn. **Economics**, 19th edition McGraw-Hill, 2009
ISBN: 978-0-07-351144-3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a systematic study of individual and firm behavior within the context of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. In this course the student will be exposed to a way of thinking which will enable her to use economic analysis as a tool for understanding and making rational decisions and choices associated with real-world social and economic phenomena. Within this framework, the student is expected to acquire traits designed to nurture her leadership skills and she will be exposed to racial and gender diversity through comparative analysis of the impact of various economic factors on women, African Americans and minorities in general.

The course contains the material that is crucial for an adequate preparation for Economics 315 (Microeconomic Theory) and the Management/Organization minor.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

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

1. demonstrate that economics is a social science which focuses on the study of scarce resources;
2. distinguish between macroeconomics and microeconomics and positive and normative economics analysis;
3. use graphical analysis to explain economic theories and phenomena;

4. comprehend the use of the production possibilities frontier to explain opportunity cost and comparative advantage from the perspective of economic efficiency and inefficiency;
5. apply the theory of supply and demand in assessing real world market behavior;
6. comprehend the use of price elasticity of demand and supply to forecast changes in both consumer and producer behavior in the market;
7. explain consumer equilibrium in choice via the method of utility analysis, the budget constraint, and indifference curve analysis;
8. demonstrate an understanding of the production function by explaining and defining distinct stages of production and the associated productivity and cost concepts;
9. comprehend the economic distinction between the firm's short-run and long-run production costs;
10. distinguish between accounting profit and economic profit from the perspective of the firm's profitability;
11. explain the logic of price and output determination in competitive and noncompetitive markets;
12. explain determinants of wage rate differentials
13. comprehend the incidence of poverty by age, gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics;
14. comprehend economic immigration as human investment and its ramifications for economic growth;
15. describe economic conditions of African Americans, other minorities and those existing in poor or developing countries;
16. critique economic issues in both written and oral form, demonstrating logical arguments, clarity, precise articulation, and creativity.

JUSTIFICATION FOR FOUR CREDITS

This is a four credit, three contact hour course. To justify the additional credit, the student will be required to:

1. Complete take-home quizzes.
2. Read assigned book chapters (see course outline) and read/write a critical analysis of four (4) articles (see article critiques for additional detail). Additional articles may be assigned as extra reading.

COURSE GRADING

The course grade will be determined by:

Two (2) exams	30% (15% each)
One (1) comprehensive final exam	30%
Quizzes	15% (six out of nine: 2.5% each)
Article critiques	15% (3% for critiques 1, 2, 4; 6% for critique 3)
Attendance and participation	10% (7.5% for attendance; 2.5% for participation)

The following grading scale will be employed:

Percentage Earned	Grade Earned	Percentage Earned	Grade Earned	
93 – 100	A	75 – 78	C+	
90 – 92	A-	70 – 74	C	
87 – 89	B+	65 – 69	C-	
83 – 86	B	62 – 64	D+	
79 – 82	B-	58 – 61	D; below 57	F

Note: (1) The above scale should be regarded as approximate as the instructor reserves the right to make adjustments in awarding final grades. (2) I typically grade exams on a curve.

ARTICLE CRITIQUES

One component of the course is to write a summary/critique (see formatting requirements below) of four (4) articles. Additional guidelines on what is expected in the summary/critique will be posted on the Moodle site; however, crudely the critique should comprise the following components:

1. A clear statement of the issue being examined by the author.
2. A clear statement of the position taken by the author on the same issue.
3. The student's critical evaluation of the position taken by the author on the issue.
4. The relationship between the issues in the article and the content of the course. If the student would like to further complement her discussion with economic concepts seen "outside of the course"; that is fine, as long as the student stays within the page limits. Priority should be given to topics discussed in the course!

There will be four (4) article critiques (see course outline for due dates and Moodle site for articles):

1. Critique 1
 - a. Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, "Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live with their Moms?," *Freakonomics*, 2005, pp. 85-114.
2. Critique 2
 - a. Charles Wheelan, "Incentives Matter," *Naked Economics*, 2002, pp. 23-42.
3. Critique 3
 - a. Rachel Croson and Uri Gneezy, "Gender Differences in Preferences," *Journal of Economic Literature* 47(2), 2009, pp. 448-474.
4. Critique 4
 - a. Gary S. Becker, "How Uncle Sam Could Ease the Organ Shortage," *Business Week*, Issue 3510, New York: January 20, page 18.

Critiques 1, 2 and 4 should follow the standard guidelines posted on the Moodle site. Content-wise they should address the issues and questions discussed in the guidelines. Format-wise they should be 2-3 pages in length with Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced and 1 inch margins all around.

Critique 3 should follow the same standard guidelines with the following exceptions. Content-wise it should have a stronger focus on using the models and material discussed in class to analyze the main issues and synthesize the compendium of articles. For example, the explicit use of graphs, equations, or verbal description of economic concepts and logic are strongly encouraged. Format-wise the critique should be 8-9 pages in length; all else should be the same as for critiques 1, 2 and 4. While the student is allowed to use and cite alternate sources, I do NOT want to see simple copying/pasting from (online) sources. The aim is to show that you can truly apply material discussed in class to analyze real world economic issues.

QUIZZES

Quizzes are due by 11:59 PM of the day after they have been assigned. The dates listed in the course outline are **due dates**, which implies that the quizzes will typically be made available the day before. Quizzes will be completed and submitted via Moodle and will close at midnight. This means that the student's submission should

be complete by 11:59 PM. **The student should plan accordingly since late submissions will receive a zero (0).** Please avoid losing points in this unnecessary manner by starting on time.

MAKE-UP POLICIES AND EXTRA CREDIT

1. **REGULAR EXAMS:** There are absolutely **NO** make-up exams, whether the absence is excused or not. In case an absence is excused by the Office of the Dean within a week of the missed exam date, I reserve the right to prorate the weight of the missed exam over the remaining exams.
2. **FINAL EXAM:** The final exam absolutely **CANNOT** be made up. If a student misses the final exam, she will receive a zero (0) for the exam. An exception **may** be made if a student seeks approval from me **PRIOR** to the exam by providing a valid documented excuse approved by the Office of the Dean. Even in this case, I still reserve the right to deny the student's request.
3. **QUIZZES:** There are absolutely **NO** make-up quizzes, whether the absence is excused or not. I will drop the three (3) lowest quiz grades when determining the student's overall grade. For example, if a student misses three quizzes, she will receive a zero (0) but those will be dropped.
4. **CRITIQUES:** There are absolutely **NO** make-up critiques, whether the absence is excused or not. Unlike the quizzes, I will **NOT** drop any of the critique grades. If a student misses an article critique, she will receive a zero (0).
5. **TARDINESS:** Late submissions will **NOT** be accepted. They will receive a zero (0) even if late by one second.
6. **EXTRA CREDIT:** It is my experience that most students fail to submit all possible assignments. As such, it does not make economic sense to give opportunities for extra credit since students are not making use of the opportunities already afforded to them. So, I will **NOT** give extra credit, regardless of the student's circumstances.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO ANY OF THESE RULES.

ACCESS TO EXAMS

Exams in this course are not permitted to enter "the public domain". Although there is no obligation to allow the student to review exams after they have been reviewed in class and collected, if a student wishes to review her exam, I will attempt to accommodate her during office hours.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Class attendance and participation are mandatory, as these are integral parts of the class. *As such, 10% of your class grade comes from these components.* Please note the following:

1. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class.
2. For students who have the habit of arriving after the class begins (late arrival), I reserve the right to count late arrivals as absences. The student is considered late if she is not present when class begins. I typically count tardiness as an absence if the student arrives after I finished taking attendance. In case of excessive lateness (ten minutes after class begins), I reserve the right to bar a student from entering the classroom.
3. Any student with three (3) or more absences (*excused or unexcused*) will receive a zero (0) for the attendance portion of her grade. *This means that this student loses 7.5% of her course grade.*

4. Any student with five (5) or more absences (*excused or unexcused*) will be administratively withdrawn from the course. I will email the student a notification and proceed by processing such withdrawal through the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
5. Class participation will be judged based on thoughtful questions and discussions initiated by the student and lack of disruptive behavior during class (see General Code of Conduct section of this syllabus).

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO ANY OF THESE RULES.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following is Spelman College's **Academic Integrity Policy**:

“At the heart of Spelman College’s mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior towards other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy.”

Violators will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the Spelman College Bulletin.

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT (INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY AND CELL PHONE USE POLICY)

It is understood that any student participating in this course will conduct herself in a manner that is constructive and non-disruptive to the learning environment. This is out of mutual respect for the professor as well as her fellow students.

With this in mind, use of any form of technology—including computers and cell phones—is only allowed if it is absolutely necessary for the student’s learning within the course. If so, the student should see me by the end of the first day of class to discuss and potentially obtain permission to use such a technology. Even if granted, I still reserve the right to revoke this privilege if I note in a future class that such technology is being used for purposes other than learning related to the course.

In the absence of such permission, use of technologies is strictly prohibited unless the professor explicitly requests the students to use such technologies. The student should turn off her cell phone, computer, or any other noise-making device while in class as these can generally be considered disruptive. Any such disturbances will result in automatic eviction from class. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The following is Spelman College's **Disability Statement**:

“Spelman College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, you should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with ODS. The ODS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. ODS serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the ODS at 404-270-5289 (voice), located in MacVicar Hall, Room 106.”

THE SPELMAN COLLEGE TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

For economics majors who are enrolled in the Spelman College Teacher Certification Program, the content of this course is consistent with the conceptual framework of the Department of Education—a framework that emphasizes the teacher as leader. As one of the departments which participate in the Teacher Certificate Program at the college, this framework has been shared and articulated by students and faculty within the Economics department. The course content is also consistent with the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum in Economics as well as the voluntary National Content Standards of the National Council of Economics Education.

LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

The Spelman College Learning Resource Center (see <http://www.spelman.edu/academics/academic-support/learning-resources-center>) is located in the Milligan Building, 2nd floor. The Center provides peer tutors for various subject areas, including economics. The schedule of times when peer tutors will be available can be acquired from the Center. This is a valuable resource for student learning and students are urged to avail themselves of the Center. Peer tutors have previously been very successful students in the course.

GENERAL REMARKS

1. Students are expected to plan their air travel at the end of the semester so that it does not conflict with the final exam. The same applies to other types of travel throughout the semester.
2. Students should select a “buddy” in the course from whom they can obtain materials in case they miss class. It is the student's responsibility to obtain such material and stay up to speed.
3. The syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following course outline is a general plan of action and deviations may be necessary.

Date	Topic	Quizzes	Article critiques
8/22	Syllabus and introduction		
8/27	Chapter 1		
8/29	Chapter 1		
8/30: Add/drop period ends (late registration)			
9/3	Chapter 2	Quiz 1 assigned and due 9/4	
9/5	Chapter 3		
9/10	Chapter 3	Quiz 2 assigned and due 9/11	
9/12	Chapter 4		
9/17	Chapter 4		Critique 1 due
9/19	Chapter 5		
9/24	Chapter 5	Quiz 3 assigned and due 9/25	
9/26	Exam 1 (chapters 1-5)		
10/1	Chapter 6		
10/3	Chapter 6	Quiz 4 assigned and due 10/4	
10/8	Chapter 7		Critique 2 due
10/10	Chapter 7	Quiz 5 assigned and due 10/11	
10/15	NO CLASS DUE TO FALL BREAK		
10/17	Chapter 8		
10/22	Chapter 8		
10/24	NO CLASS; Class time to be used for Critique 3 which is due 10/24		
10/25: Midterm grades submitted			
10/29	Chapter 9	Quiz 6 assigned and due 10/30	
10/31	Chapter 10		
11/1: Last day to withdraw with a "W"			
11/5	Chapter 10	Quiz 7 assigned and due 11/6	
11/7	Exam 2 (chapters 6-10)		
11/12	Chapter 11		
11/14	Chapter 11	Quiz 8 assigned and due 11/15	
11/19	Chapter 12		
11/21	Chapter 13		Critique 4 due
11/26	Chapter 20	Quiz 9 assigned and due 11/27	
11/28	NO CLASS DUE TO THANKSGIVING		
12/3	Review		
COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM DURING THE WEEK OF DEC 9-13 (EXACT DATE TBA)			