

Version as of September 16, 2015

ECONOMICS 200
COURSE OUTLINE: 2015 - 2016

William G. Wolfson (w.wolfson@utoronto.ca)

Course Website: On Blackboard (www.portal.utoronto.ca)

Lecture Location: **BR200**

About the Course

- This is a "full year" course in intermediate microeconomics. A strong understanding of first year concepts will be helpful to you. Do not be misled by the appearance that second year is just "more of the same"; although that might on the surface appear to be the case, you will find that reality is much different!
- ECO 200 does rely on certain math concepts, including Calculus. *You MUST have these math skills to succeed!* Note that ECO 206, which is even more intensively math-based, is the course usually required for an ECO specialist degree.

Grades, Tests, Exam

- Your final grade will be determined as follows:

○ Term Test #1	16.6%	Thursday November 5
○ Writing Assignment #1 ¹	4%	Friday December 4
○ Term Test #2	16.6%	Thursday January 28
○ Term Test #3	16.6%	Thursday March 19
○ Writing Assignment #2	6%	Friday March 27
○ Final Exam	40%	Exam Week ²
○ ECO 100 Review Quiz	Bonus	Sunday September 27
- **Please do your utmost not to miss a test.** Those who miss T1, T2, or T3 for a certifiable reason will write a *comprehensive make-up* at the end of the term (likely during the last week). Medical notes **MUST** state clearly that you were too ill to write the test and should be provided within one week. You should use the *U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form* found at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca
- **The final exam** covers the entire course material.

¹ More information about the Writing Assignments will be provided later.

² Could be during the day.

ECO 100 Review Quiz – Are You Well Prepared For ECO 200?

The main prerequisite for this class is ECO 100. Indeed, you must have achieved a 67% grade to enrol.

To give both you and me a better sense of how much of ECO 100 you still remember, there will a Review Quiz on the second Sunday after classes start, covering ECO 100 materials (Microeconomics only). The topics to be covered include (but are not limited to): demand & supply, elasticity, consumer choice, firm's costs and supply choice, competitive industry, monopoly, welfare analysis, public goods and common property.

The Quiz will be available on the BB portal for 24 hours from midnight to midnight on Sunday, September 27th. It consists of 100 multiple choice questions covering various topics discussed in ECO 100. You will have 90 minutes to complete the Quiz.

The Quiz is worth an additional 5% of your final grade in ECO 200, assigned this way:

- If you correctly answer 75 questions or more you will be awarded that full 5%.
- If you answer fewer than 75 questions correctly, but 50 or more questions correctly you will be awarded 2.5%.
- Below that, no marks are awarded.

These cut-offs are firm. If you answer 74 questions correctly, you will be awarded 2.5%. If you answer 49 questions or fewer, you will not receive any marks. No exceptions will be made.

After the quiz you can see immediately your total quiz score, and (usually with a delay of 24-48 hours) your mark on the BB Grade Centre. The aggregate score is a good indicator of how prepared you are for ECO 200. If you score is less than 75, you want to especially make sure you are not falling behind right from the start of the course.

In preparation for the Quiz, the first ECO 200 tutorial will provide an opportunity to work on ECO 100 practice questions. You may also want to review your notes from ECO 100.

Note that the time (90 minutes) starts running once you start the Quiz. Even if you log-out or lose your internet connection, the time is still running. If you log-in again at a later time, you will only have time left to answer questions if you are still within 90 minutes of your start time. It is your responsibility to make sure you have a working internet connection, enough battery power in your laptop, etc. No make-up, alternative assessment, extension of the deadline, etc. will be given.

Finally, here is an incentive to try the Quiz and to do your best to get to 75 or more correct answers:

*The 5% (or 2.5%) will be added as a bonus
to your final grade in ECO 200 as of next April!*

Appeal of Test Grades

- Solutions to tests will be discussed in tutorials only.
- **An appeal of a test grade** must be typed (on paper, not an email) and provided to me together with a full copy of your test. You must identify which question you believe was marked incorrectly, and provide an explanation of why you think your answer deserves additional marks. *The question/answer you point out, plus others, will be reviewed. To use a term that will become clear later in the course, the Expected Value of a re-mark request is not necessarily positive!*
- The appeal must be handed in within two weeks of the date on which graded tests are provided to you.³ You can give me your appeal document at subsequent lectures or leave it for me at the Reception Desk, Department of Economics, Gluskin House, 150 St. George St. If the latter, notify me by email that you have done so.

Text, Study Guide and Publisher Website

- The text is Microeconomics, 5th Edition (publisher Wiley), by authors Besanko and Braeutigam. (You can use the 4th Edition, if you wish.⁴)
- There are various options available to you from the publisher: a soft-cover⁵ textbook (the most costly option); a binder version (unbound, three-hole punched, in a binder, no need to transport the entire text everywhere you go; lowest cost option); an eTextbook (available for download; lower cost); an online eTextbook (accessible online from any computer). You need to figure out what works best for you! In the past, most students have opted for the hardcover textbook.
- There is a Study Guide that accompanies the text, for your consideration; if you acquire an electronic textbook, the Guide is available that way too.
- The publisher also sponsors a website related to the text that you may find useful.
- For more information, visit www.wiley.com/canada/wileyflex .

³ The current plan is to provide access to your graded test online.

⁴ If you use the 4th edition purchased as a used text, you will not have access to the publisher's website, unless you purchase this separately.

⁵ The 4th edition was published as a hard cover text; there is no hard-cover option for the 5th edition.

Course Website

- The website for this course, on Blackboard (www.portal.utoronto.ca), contains all of the information you will need. You must have an @utoronto.ca email address registered on ROSI to access it. You will access it using your UTORID.
- You are expected to obtain course materials via the web. Check it frequently. You will also receive an email when the website is updated with new items.⁶
- Be sure you have entered your @utoronto.ca email address correctly on ROSI. If it is incorrect, you will not receive emails from me or the webmaster.
- Your marks for Term Tests will appear on Blackboard (BB) after you have received these test papers. It is wise to check that your marks have been recorded accurately. If not, email me at w.wolfson@utoronto.ca.
- Note that a correction to marks will not show on BB until the next updating of the entire BB Grade Centre; this may be a few weeks after the correction has been approved.

Course Materials

- A series of "**Lecture Assignments**" (LAs) will be posted on the website. These will be helpful to you as an outline of the lectures. *Note that there are topics in the lectures that are beyond those in the text; typically, you will typically receive additional handouts in class to cover these topics.* You must attend class to obtain answers to the Lecture Assignments; they are not posted on the course website.
- Note that the Lecture Assignments point you to pages in the text (where applicable) that reflect the contents of the lectures.
- **You are strongly urged to bring a copy of the relevant LA to the lectures (or have it available on your laptop), to help you follow what I am presenting.**
- Also posted on the website are **Web Quizzes** (MC questions), **Web Problem Sets** (includes end-of-chapter questions taken from the textbook), and **Sample Tests** (from past years). Solutions to all these are posted as well. *However, you are urged to try these problems without immediately peeking at answers. If you face difficulties, try again and perhaps once more, before looking at the answer. You will find, in the long run, that this approach contributes more to your mastery of the concepts.*

⁶ It is wise practice to check your @utoronto email account regularly and to read those related to ECO 200. In the past, not all students have done so, alas!

- There is a **Preamble** to each of the folders (Lecture Assignments, Web Quizzes, etc.) on the BB course website. *You are urged to read the Preamble before downloading any of the other items in the folder.*

Tutorials

- There will be tutorials (time and place to be announced), at which Tutorial Problem Sets will be discussed. Also, there will be **Tutorial Problem Handouts** – problems for you to try in the tutorial – followed by a discussion of solutions to them. *You must attend tutorials to receive these Handouts.*
- The **Tutorial Problem Sets** will be posted on the course website. Solutions to these Problem Sets will be provided in tutorials only.
- Check the schedule carefully; tutorials do not occur every week. *You are urged to try the tutorial problems in advance, rather than attend to copy answers.*

Key to Success

- *The key to success in this course is the time spent doing problems ... the more, the better.*⁷ Sources of problems include the end of chapter questions in the text, the Study Guide that accompanies the text (should you choose to acquire it), and the many other problems provided to you. None of these are handed in or graded; they are for your study use only.
- The Wiley website is where you can find more problems, if you have purchased access to it.
- Do not be surprised if you find some of the problems difficult or if you “get stuck” on the first try. You will get better with practice. There is merit in working together with other students in a small group, where each one helps the other.

⁷ Does the “law of diminishing returns” apply to practice problems? Up to you to decide when marginal returns equal zero!

Economists Need to Write Too!

- Yes, in addition to being a good problem-solver, you also need to be a good writer. ECO 200 includes two Writing Assignments (WAs) designed to help you build analytical reading and effective writing skills. More information will be provided later.
- For now, I am advising you that TURNITIN (TI) will be used to assess whether an assignment is your writing or contains plagiarized passages. Be aware that plagiarism is a serious academic offence.
- The University statement on Turnitin.com follows:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

- If you choose to opt out of TI, there will be alternate requirements, including a list of every source you consulted, the passages in each source that are relevant to your WA, and the paraphrased component of your WA related to each passage. You may also be required to meet with a TA or me to discuss your assignment.
- **Note that you must inform me with a signed document by November 1st that you plan to opt out of TI;** otherwise you are committed to submitting to TI. Once committed, failure to submit to TI results in a score of 0 on the assignment.

Take Notice!

- Helpful warning message for those who have not taken an evening course before: it is truly tough to stay focussed during a very long lecture, but you need to try your best to do so. Think of it as an endurance test, once per week! A lot of material will get covered in each lecture; we have no choice, as there are a total of 24 lectures (minus 3 for tests) to cover a full academic year's work.
- In other words, expect to face significant challenges when you take ECO 200 in the evening; *if you are not committed to bearing them, you probably should not enrol in the course.*

Sources of Assistance

- If you are having difficulties, do not delay in seeking assistance. There are a number of sources of both informal and formal help. Ask a fellow student. Form a study group. Go to the **ECO 200 Aid Centre** (location and hours to be announced soon on BB) or use **Piazza** for an online dialogue with fellow students with oversight from one of the Teaching Assistants assigned to this section of the course (information to be announced soon on BB). Or attend the **Department of Economics Study Centre** staffed by peer mentors; for more information, go to www.economics.utoronto.ca/index.php/index/undergraduate/load/studyCentre
- If, after trying the Aid Centre and / or Piazza and /or the Study Centre, you are still having difficulty, please see me before or after class, email me at w.wolfson@utoronto.ca or call me at (416) 487-1481. I always stay after lectures until all questions are answered, so do not hesitate to come forward with your enquiries.

More Things for You to Note

- There are entrepreneurs who offer services to ECO 200 students the week before tests / the exam. They typically promise “perfect understanding” through a few hours of intensive study for a fee. *Caveat emptor!*
- These entrepreneurs also sell copies of past tests with “correct answers”. Once again, *caveat emptor!* (For your information, there are considerable differences in the content and the approach to the course you are taking, compared to previous times prior to 2009 when I was teaching it.) Note also that past tests and (correct) solutions are posted on the course website.
- Finally, I encourage you to consider the following message taken from a poster sponsored by ASSU (The Arts and Science Student Union):

Having anxiety before a test is normal. Companies that offer paid review sessions know this and prey on your anxiety.

*Free support is available. Make use of your free resources.*⁸

⁸ As noted above, free resources include Aid Centres, online Piazza, the Department of Economics Study Centre, fellow students and your prof.

Academic Integrity

- **Students should also be aware that cheating is subject to severe academic penalties. Consider yourself warned: DO NOT CHEAT! See <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/what-is-academic-misconduct>**
- Note that the only *electronic device* permitted at tests and the final exam in ECO 200 is a non-programmable, non-graphing calculator.⁹ The Academic Code says that mere possession (not use) of any other device while writing a test or examination is an academic offence; leave these other devices e.g., cell phones, iPads, berries, etc. in your bag at the side of the room. [Recent change in rules: you can leave your cell phone/other valuables under your desk in a resealable plastic bag.]
- *When picking up tests*, it is an academic offence to deliberately take another student's test.¹⁰
- You must stop writing when time is up for tests and examinations. Not doing so is an academic offence and exposes you to academic sanctions.
- *Plagiarism on the Writing Assignments* is also a serious Academic Offence. Be sure you know what constitutes plagiarism, so that you do not inadvertently commit an offence. Ignorance is not an acceptable explanation (indeed, there are NO acceptable explanations).

Email Protocols

- You can expect a timely response to your emails to me. But to get a quick response, you need to follow some protocols, as below.
- The Subject Line of your email should include "ECO 200".
- I prefer (but do not require) that you use your @utoronto.ca email address.
- For administrative questions (e.g., Is there a tutorial this week? Where is the test being held? What topics does the upcoming test cover?), you should check the course website first, as it likely has the answer you are seeking.
- My role is not to be your personal "search engine"! Indeed, some profs will not answer emails when the information is available elsewhere; I will give you one email "freebie"; thereafter, no response.

⁹ Be sure your calculator meets the standard.

¹⁰ May not be applicable. The plan for 15/16 is online access to your marked test.

- However, if I have failed to provide some information, or the web posting is delayed, or there is an error in a posting or the posted document is unclear, it is fine to email me.
- For questions on course materials, I encourage you to try the Aid Centre for face-to-face dialogue and/or Piazza for electronic support. Also, you can see me before class, at break or after class (I always stay until every question is answered). Or make an appointment to see me.
- Email is not a mechanism to receive an extensive private tutorial or to teach materials that were delivered in a lecture you missed. You do need to show evidence that you have worked on a problem before emailing for an explanation.
- Having said all that, you can still email me for help!

Summary of Important Dates

Thursday September 17	First Lecture	
Sunday September 27	ECO 100 Quiz	
Thursday November 5	Test #1	
Thursday December 3	Last Lecture, Fall Term	
Friday December 4	Writing Assignment #1 due by 5pm	
Thursday January 14	First Lecture of 2016	
Thursday January 28	Test # 2	
Week of Feb 15	Reading Week	No Lecture
Thursday March 24	Test #3	
Friday April 1	Writing Assignment #2 due by 5pm	
Week of April 4	Make-up Test	Date TBD
Thursday April 7	Last Lecture, Spring Term	
April 12 - April 29	Final Exam	Date TBD

A DOZEN HELPFUL HINTS ON HOW TO FAIL ECO 200 (!)

1. Skip lectures.¹¹
2. Do practice problems rarely, if at all.
3. Avoid tutorials.
4. Don't try the in-class assignments; just wait to see the answers.
5. Don't bother with the Writing Assignments; who cares – only 10 marks lost.
6. Do not get help when you need it.
7. Use the textbook as a doorstep only.¹²
8. Cram for tests and for the exam.
9. Pay entrepreneurs to save you at the last minute.
10. Find an excuse not to work hard.¹³
11. Rarely consider how ECO 200 concepts apply to your daily life.¹⁴
12. Take a full-time course load and add to that many hours of paid employment.

**In sum,
if you do not challenge yourself to do the best you can do,
your results are not likely to be the best they can be!**

Comment by a former student:

“This course provided more than enough resources to succeed. There should be no excuses for not doing well; the only explanation is not enough effort!”

Cara L.

¹¹ Or attend lectures, but snooze your way through them with minimal intellectual effort.

¹² Electronic equivalent: pay for the eTextbook, but never access it.

¹³ Dislike of the prof, the lecture room, the evening lecture time, the lecture duration or some other feature of the course.

¹⁴ Or do not apply!

