

**ECO333H1: URBAN ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, FALL 2016**

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Section L0101

- Lecture: Thursday 10:10AM–12:00PM in LM 161
- Tutorials: Friday 10:10–11:00AM in SS 2102

Section L0201

- Lecture: Thursday 3:10–5:00PM in SS 2135
- Tutorials: Friday 11:10AM–12:00PM in SS 2102

Instructor: Jonathan Hall

Email: jonathan.hall@utoronto.ca

Office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 2:30–3:30PM in GE 356

Teaching assistants

- Tongtong Hao
- Man (Carol) Xiao
- Matthew Walshe

TA office hours: To be announced, only the week of an exam.

Course websites

- Blackboard: <http://portal.utoronto.ca>
- Piazza: <http://piazza.com/utoronto.ca/fall2016/eco333>

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In this class we will study the economic forces that lead to the existence of cities and effect their shape and form, as well as study a variety of issues affecting cities. My version of this course will have a larger focus on urban transportation than other professors' version of this course. If you look below to the course outline you will find a list of questions we hope to address in this course.

3. TEXTBOOKS

All readings will be available online, and most will come from the following textbooks. Readings from O'Sullivan will be posted on Blackboard, and a copy is also on course reserve at the Robarts Library. An electronic copy of the Brueckner book is available on the University of Toronto library website.

Date: September 16, 2016.

- O'Sullivan, Arthur. 2012 or 2006. *Urban Economics*. McGraw-Hill/Irwin. ISBN: 978-0073511474 <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8600615>
- Brueckner, Jan. 2011. *Lectures on Urban Economics*. MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0262016360 <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8842730>

4. APPROACH

This class is primarily lecture based, with some group discussion. The weekly tutorials are an opportunity for you to ask the teaching assistants any questions you have about the material. After an exam or homework assignment the teaching assistants will go over the answers in the tutorial.

5. REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites. ECO200Y1/ECO204Y1/ECO206Y1. Prerequisites requirements are strictly enforced and I am not permitted to waive them.

6. POLICIES

First rule of holes. Stop digging and get some help! Come see me, your college registrar's office, CAPS, or any of the other resources listed in Section 8.

No glowing rectangles. You are not allowed to have computers, tablets, phones, etc. out during class. A growing body of research finds that even when electronic devices are used in the best possible way they still lead to worse student outcomes (Sana et al., 2013; Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014). Each time I see your computer, tablet, phone, etc. in class will be penalized by a one percentage point reduction in your final grade.

Cold calling. I will call on you to answer questions regardless of whether you have raised your hand. I do this for two reasons: to assess how well the entire class is understanding the material and to encourage the entire class to be engaged with the material.

Communication: Piazza, Blackboard, and Email. In order to help me get to know you better, I would prefer that you ask questions in class, after class, or during office hours; rather than electronically.

That said, there are often times where asking electronically is better. These questions should be asked using our class Piazza page at <http://piazza.com/utoronto.ca/fall2016/eco333>. Piazza makes it fast and easy to receive help from classmates, the TAs, and myself. You are not required to use Piazza.

Questions that are private in nature can be sent to me by email. Other questions should be asked in person or using Piazza. Please send your email from your official University of Toronto email address. I will respond to all emails within two business days.

All class announcements will be posted on Blackboard. I expect you to either check on Blackboard, or set Blackboard to email you notifications and check your email, at least once each business day.

Accommodation. I am willing to provide reasonable accommodations for a variety of reasons (such as disability/health problems, religious observance, participation in an extra-curricular activity, death in the family, illness, or injury). To be fair to all the students in the course, I require documentation of the need for accommodation and a written request to consider a reasonable accommodation. For illness, injury, or a death in the family the documentation must be received within a week of the relevant exam or assignment due date. For any other reason the request must be made before the end of the second week of the course.

If you need an accommodation due to illness or injury you must provide me with an original, fully completed University of Toronto Verification of Student Illness or Injury form, available at <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. The doctor's OHIP registration number must be provided. Please familiarize yourself with the FAQ at this website.

If you need an accommodation for a disability you should register with Accessibility Services <http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>.

Late homework. Late homework is accepted. If you turn it in before the teaching assistant finishes grading the assignment there is a ten percentage point penalty. If you turn it in after the teaching assistant finishes grading, then the penalty is thirty percentage points. Late homework is accepted until the last day of class. It is your responsibility to get your homework to the teaching assistant.

Appealing grades. If you believe an assignment, quiz, or exam has been incorrectly graded, you may ask the person who graded it for a re-evaluation. You need to make this request as soon as possible after receiving the work back, and the request must be received within two weeks of the coursework being handed back. The entire work will be regraded and your grade may increase or decrease. I have this policy not to punish you for asking for a re-evaluation, but because notwithstanding all our efforts to achieve precision in grading, grading inevitably involves a degree of randomness and in regrading we wish to reduce the randomness (both in your favor and against) on all parts of the work in order to come to a more precise measure of your true performance on the assignment. If after completing this process you still have a problem with any aspect of your grade, the overall grade appeal process under the university's policies remain available to you (see <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>).

No audio or video recordings. You may not create audio or video recordings of classes, with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability, who must speak to me prior to beginning to record lectures.

Exam rules. We will follow the standard final exam rules for all course exams. For more details see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/exams/reminder>.

Academic Integrity. I expect you to be honest, turn in your own work, and in all other ways follow the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>).

7. IMPORTANT DATES

- First midterm exam: Friday, October 14th, during tutorial. For the morning section the exam is in EX 310, for the afternoon section the exam is in EX 320.
- No class on November 10th.
- Second midterm exam: Friday, November 11th, during tutorial. For the morning section the exam is in EX 310, for the afternoon section the exam is in EX 320.
- Final exam: Between December 9th–20th

8. RESOURCES

Academic Success Centre. <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>

Accessibility Services. <http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>

Counseling & Psychological Services. <http://caps.utoronto.ca/>

College Registrars' offices. <http://uoft.me/advising>

English Language Learning. <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

Office of Student Academic Integrity. <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai>

Rights & Responsibilities. <http://uoft.me/rights>

Writing help. <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

9. GRADES

Grades will be based on

- 2 Midterm exams (40%)
- Comprehensive final exam (40%)
- Homework and quizzes (20%)

I may curve the course grades upwards, but will not curve them down.

Midterm exams. 40% of your final grade will come from your average on the midterms. *The midterms will be given during the tutorials on Friday, October 14th, and Friday, November 11th.* If you cannot take the midterms on these dates, you must tell me before the end of the second week of the course. No non-medical excuses will be accepted after that date.

The midterms are not cumulative, and cover the material taught in class and via problem sets. They will not cover material in that assigned readings not covered in class or the virtual tutorials. The first midterm covers material taught covered in weeks 1–4, and the second midterm covers material taught in weeks 5–8.

Final exam. 40% of your final grade will come from the final exam. The final exam will be given as scheduled by the Office of the Faculty Registrar. The final exam will be comprehensive, but will be heavily weighted towards the last third of the course.

Homework and quizzes. 20% of your final grade will come from your homework and quizzes. A typical quiz will be worth double a typical homework assignment.

There are two types of homework assignments: short responses to a podcast, video, or reading, as well as problem sets. Homework is largely, but not entirely, graded on a completion basis. I encourage you to work in groups on your problem sets. You should attend the tutorials to learn the correct answers to the problem sets.

There will be a quiz covering the syllabus and up to three additional quizzes during the semester. You may use your notes during all quizzes but should not discuss a quiz with other people until after everyone has taken it.

10. COURSE OUTLINE

Preliminary and subject to change. Reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard by the Friday before each class.

- (1) Economic forces in the development of cities
 - (a) Questions we hope to answer
 - (i) Why do cities exist?
 - (ii) Why do industries cluster in a given city, or within the same area of a given city?
 - (iii) Are cities too big, too small, or just right?
 - (iv) Why are some cities bigger than others?
 - (v) How is technology changing our cities? How about lower communication and transportation costs?
 - (vi) What causes some cities to grow and others to decline?
 - (vii) Should we try to save declining cities?
- (2) Urban spatial structure
 - (a) Questions we hope to answer
 - (i) What determines land use within a city?
 - (ii) Is urban sprawl a problem?
 - (iii) Why is there so much spatial segregation of ethnic, racial, and income groups?

- (3) Transportation
 - (a) Questions we hope to answer
 - (i) Why are our roads so congested and what can we do about it?
 - (ii) How should we pay for transportation infrastructure?
 - (iii) Is there too much or too little parking?
 - (iv) Is it priced correctly?
 - (v) Will building new roads or train lines spark economic development?
 - (vi) How should we decide whether to build public transit?
 - (vii) How should we decide what kind of public transit to build?
 - (viii) Should we subsidize the construction of new public transit?
 - (ix) Should we subsidize the operating costs of public transit?
 - (x) Can the answer to those last two questions be different?
- (4) Housing
 - (a) Questions we hope to answer
 - (i) Why does anyone buy a house?
 - (ii) Who does rent control help?
 - (iii) What causes gentrification and who gains and loses?
- (5) Local public goods and services
 - (a) Questions we hope to answer
 - (i) Why does the typical metropolitan area have dozens of municipalities?
 - (ii) Should we try to save struggling cities?
 - (iii) How should cities raise revenue?

REFERENCES

- Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science*: 1–10.
- Sana, Faria, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda. 2013. "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers." *Computers & Education* 62:24–31.