
ECO 339H1 LEC101, LEC201, LEC9101, LEC9201
Labour Economics: Employment, Wages, and Public Policy

University of Toronto
Department of Economics

2020-21

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to use the tools from microeconomic theory and statistics to analyze peoples' actions and interactions in the labour market. We examine public policies such as minimum wages, childcare subsidies and social assistance that affect people's decisions to work and/or firms' decisions to employ. At its conclusion, you should be familiar with the broad empirical facts of the Canadian labour market, and have an understanding of the tools economists use to evaluate policy.

Instructor

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Prerequisites

Students must have the following prerequisites, as listed in the Calendar, to take this course:

Intermediate Microeconomics: ECO200Y1/ECO204Y1/ECO206Y1

Statistics: ECO220Y1/ ECO227Y1/ (STA237H1, STA238H1)/ (STA247H1, STA248H1)/ (STA257H1, STA261H1)

Exclusion: ECO339Y1, ECO343H5, ECO344H5

The Department of Economics checks prerequisites in all economics courses, and students who do not have them will be removed from the course. Details on course prerequisites are available at:

http://calendar.artsci.utoronto.ca/crs_eco.htm

This course draws heavily on the material covered in ECO200Y/ECO204Y/ECO206Y and ECO220Y/ECO227Y. Individuals who received grades of less than C in these courses will likely need to spend a considerable amount of time throughout the course reviewing this material.

Course Delivery

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the delivery of the course will be exclusively on line.

Each week I will post video lectures of the course material. The links to these videos will be provided on the course Quercus site.

Please Note: Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Each section of the course will meet synchronously on line through Microsoft Teams in the designated slots:

LEC101, LEC9101	Tuesdays:	10:00am to 12:00pm
LEC201, LEC9201	Wednesdays:	2:00pm to 4:00pm

The first hour of these meetings will be used to review any particularly challenging material from the video lectures for that week. The second hour will be used for virtual office hours and catch up tutorials (due to quizzes, see below). Note this division of time will be flexible depending on need. It is extremely important that students view the video lectures for the week before these synchronous meetings.

The four sections of the course will meet synchronously on line through Microsoft Teams on Fridays 11:00am-12:00pm for a tutorial. These tutorials will be used to review any supplementary course material, review answers to problem set questions and for synchronous online quizzes.

Email Policy

Email can be a useful tool in facilitating communication between faculty and students, but there are serious limitations to how useful email can be to address questions in labour economics:

- If the response requires more than one sentence, email is not the appropriate medium for discussion of course materials. If it takes more, class time or office hours are the more appropriate venue;
- In conformance with university policy, students are advised to ONLY use their utoronto email addresses.
- Always identify yourself in your email. You should include “ECO339H” and a brief statement of the subject matter in the subject heading. Please do not send attachments of any kind, and never use email to submit term work.
- While I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours (except on weekends), if you do not get a response to your email, please attempt to contact me again.
- Please also note that it is not appropriate to request marks, or the solutions to problem set or midterm questions by email.

Course Website

Copies of the syllabus, class announcements and other course material can be found on the course's Quercus site. It is expected that students pay attention to notices and announcements posted there. Some lecture summaries will also be posted (see below).

Required Resources

The required course textbook is:

Benjamin, D., Gunderson, M. Lemieux, T. and C. Riddell, *Labour Market Economics*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2017 (8th edition). (BGLR)

Students should purchase the 6 month (at minimum) single-user license for Stata/IC through the University at this link <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/ic/stata-gradplan-u-t>

Students should have access to a computer capable of running Stata/IC.

Students should have access to a scanner or an app for their phone which converts photos to files for the submission of synchronous quizzes.

Additional required and optional readings will be announced in class, and made available through the course website. Such readings may include working papers, journal articles, and supplementary notes.

Evaluation

Overview

The course grade is based on the following assignments:

1. Four online quizzes worth a total of 60%;
2. A take home data exercise/problem set worth 20%;

The timing of these assignments is as follows:

Task	Weight	Due Date
Quiz #1	20%	Friday, October 2, 2020 (11:00am online)
Quiz #2	20%	Friday, October 23, 2020 (11:00am online)
Quiz #3	20%	Friday, November 6, 2020 (11:00am online)
Quiz #4	20%	Friday, December 4, 2020 (11:00am online)
Take home data exercise/problem set	20%	TBA (final assessment period December 11-December 22 2020)

Completing Assignments

The quizzes will be administered either through Quercus. The questions will be made available to the class through the Quercus class page at 11:10am on the indicated days. Each quiz ends at 12 noon. Students will have until 12:15pm to finish submitting their answers.

Quizzes on Quercus: Students will directly type their written answers online. When a diagram is needed, students who have access to a computer or tablet with a stylus and appropriate software can create a file containing the diagrams and upload it. For students who do not have access to this hardware should hand draw the diagrams on paper of their choice and then scan or take pictures and upload. For these purposes it is necessary that students have access to either a scanner or an app on their phone that converts photos of their diagrams to files for uploading. In either case it is important that students clearly indicate question numbers for their diagrams.

Some suggestions for submitting handwritten work can be found here:

http://ito-engineering.screenstepslive.com/s/ito_fase/m/quercus_student_guides/1/1222974-how-can-i-submit-handwritten-or-paper-based-work

Take home data exercise/problem: The take home problem set/data exercise will be administered through Crowdmark. Students should upload all answers (typed or handwritten), graphs and computer output in a single file.

Missed Quizzes

- A student who misses a quiz for a documented medical reason (see below) will have the weight shifted equally to the remaining quizzes. For example, if a student missed the second quiz, the third and fourth quizzes would be worth 30% each. If a student missed the fourth quiz the weight will be transferred the take home problem set/empirical exercise (i.e., it is worth 40%).
- If you are sick for a Quiz you will need to submit the University of Toronto “Verification of Student Illness or Injury” form. The form may be found at

<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php>

Please submit the form within the week following the date of the missed Quiz or test. *There are no exceptions to this rule:* Notes submitted several weeks after the missed Quiz or test or at the end of the term will not be accepted. If you are late getting the note submitted you will receive a mark of 0 for the missed evaluation.

Appeal Procedure (for Quizzes)

Students who have concerns about the grading of their tests should follow this procedure:

Step 1: All requests for remarking must be made in writing. Students must compose a statement indicating which questions they would like reviewed, and why the mark that they received does not reflect the answer. They must explain in detail why they should have a higher mark, and should refer to course texts, lecture notes and/or the test answer reviewed in tutorial.

Step 2: This request must be submitted in by email to Professor Baker within two weeks of the date on which the tests are released to the class. If there is an addition error, this can be dealt with quickly, but should follow the same procedure.

Step 3: Once reviewed, the test will be returned to the student. The review will indicate what changes, if any, were made, and which questions were re-read. In the review, the marker has the right to review the grade of the entire exam, not just the requested re-read, and grades may actually go down.

Step 4: If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you may appeal to Professor Baker. This must be completed within two weeks of the re-read test being returned.

Lecture Summaries

Summaries of some of the more difficult material covered in class, and of the empirical evidence discussed in class, will be posted on the course website after the class in which it was covered.

Problem Sets

As in other economics courses, the only way to learn labour economics is to *do* labour economics. Students are therefore encouraged to do problems at the end of the textbook chapters. A selection of questions from previous tests and finals will be packaged into problem sets. While these questions will not be collected for grading, you are strongly encouraged to complete them. Solutions to the problem sets will periodically be discussed in Friday 10-11 time slot, but will not otherwise be posted.

READING LIST & COURSE SCHEDULE FOR VIDEO LECTURES (*Tentative and Approximate*)

1) Review of Statistics and Consumer Theory (4 lectures, 1-2 weeks)

BGLR Chapter 1, Appendix

2) Labour Supply (4 lectures, 2-3 weeks)

BGLR Chapter 2

3) Income Maintenance Programs (2 lectures, 1-2 weeks)

BGLR Chapter 3

4) Labour Demand (4 lectures, 2-3 weeks)

BGLR Chapters 5 & 6

5) Equilibrium (2 lectures, 1-2 weeks)

BGLR Chapter 7

Note—I will attempt to make each video lecture approximately 20+ minutes in duration. As a result the number of lectures for each topic is likely to increase to accommodate this objective.