ECO333: URBAN ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, SUMMER 2021

1. Basic Information

Section L0101

- Synchronous class: Wednesday 9:10–10:00am
- Tutorials:
    - Monday 9:10–10:00am
    - Wednesday 10:10–11:00am
- Exams: For one hour during Monday 10:10am–12:00pm (except May 24th, when it will be on Tuesday, May 25th)
- All classes, tutorials, and office hours are via https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/82073482342 (passcode 990169)
- First day of live class: 5 May 2021
- First test: 10 May 2021
- Last day of live class: 9 June 2021
- Last test: 14 June 2021

Instructor: Jonathan Hall
Email: jonathan.hall@utoronto.ca
Office hours:

- Monday, 5:00–6:00pm
- Tuesday, 8:30–9:00am
- Thursday, 5:30–6:00pm
- Friday, 8:00–9:00am

Teaching assistant: John Cairncross
Office hours:

- Tuesday, 9:00–10:00am
- Thursday, 9:00–10:00am
- Friday, 9:00–9:30am

Course website: http://q.utoronto.ca

2. Course Description and objectives

This class is primarily online asynchronous. Most course content will be provided by prerecorded video. Every Wednesday we will meet using Zoom for a class discussion.

In this course we will apply the tools you learned in your first and second year courses to understanding urban and transportation policy. By the end of this course, you will be able to

- Explain the fundamental economic forces causing cities to exist
- Explain the fundamental economic trade-offs driving urban spatial structure, and use this understanding to explain differences within and across cities
- Understand the key issues in urban transportation, be able to explain the trade-offs between different transportation systems, and analyze how different government policies affect mobility within cities
- Analyze how different government policies affect the housing market

See the end of the syllabus for a detailed list of specific questions we will address in this course.

In addition, you will

- Improve your ability to use models to answer questions. This requires mastering the ability to translate back and forth between English and mathematics.
- Improve your ability to interpret tables and graphs.

3. Approach

Most of the content of this course will be taught using prerecorded lectures. Every Wednesday we will have a 50 minute class discussion. To facilitate discussion, these will not be recorded.

The bi-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.

4. Policies

First rule of holes. Stop digging and get help! Come see me, your college registrar's office, CAPS, or any of the other resources listed in Section 6.

Communication: Email and Quercus. I check my University of Toronto email accounts once each business day and expect you to do the same. I will respond to all emails within two business days. Emails should be sent from your official University of Toronto email address. When emailing, please prefix the subject line with [ECO333] so that I can prioritize your message.

In order to help me get to know you better, I prefer that you ask questions in class or during office hours; rather than by email. I hold additional office hours in part to make this feasible.

I use the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post course information, announcements, and assignments. I expect you to either check Quercus, or set Quercus to email you notifications and check your email, at least once each business day.

We also have a course Piazza page, accessible via Quercus. Piazza is an ideal place to post questions, and it allows fellow classmates, the TAs, and me to collaborate on answering them.

Accommodation. I am willing to provide reasonable accommodations for a variety of reasons, including disability, health problems, religious observance, participation in an extra-curricular activity, death in the family, illness, or injury. I require a written request for an accommodation. If you need an accommodation for a disability you should register with Accessibility Services (`http://accessibility.utoronto.ca`).

Missing an exam. The most common accommodation request is to miss an exam. There is no need to request an accommodation for your first missed exam. I will automatically drop your lowest exam.

If you need to miss subsequent exams, you must email me, from your official University of Toronto email account, *before* 9AM the day of the exam. You must not have started or looked at the exam. Your email must concisely explain why you missed the test, contain the statement "I understand that it is a punishable academic offense to present false or misleading information with my request for a make-up test" and close with your name and student number. I do not require a medical note. To make up any subsequent exams that are missed, there will be a makeup exam on 18 June 2021. This exam will cover the entire course.

Requests due to non-medical reasons must be received by the end of the second week of class.

For medical issues that last longer than a few days, you should consult with your college registrar.

Homework. As an automatic accommodation for sickness, technical problems, etc. that impact your ability to complete the homework or quizzes done on Quercus on time, your worst 10% of homework or quizzes on Quercus will be dropped. There are no other accommodations made regarding the homework.

Late homework. Late homework will be assessed a 10 percentage point penalty per day.

Appealing grades. If you believe an assignment, quiz, or exam has been incorrectly graded, you may for it to be re-evaluated. A form will be posted on Quercus where you can sumbit this request. 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.

Academic Integrity. All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offense that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at `http://www.writing.utoronto.ca`. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see `https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity` and `http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca`.

Copyright. Course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. These materials are made available to you for your own study purposes, and cannot be shared outside of the class or "published" in any way. Lectures, whether in person or online, cannot be recorded without the instructor's permission. Posting course materials or any recordings you may make to other websites without the express permission of the instructor will constitute copyright infringement.

5. Important dates

Date	Activity
May 5	Class discussion
May 10	Midterm 1, covers Weeks 1–2
May 12	Class discussion
May 17	Midterm 2, covers Weeks 1–4
May 19	Class discussion
May 25	Midterm 3, covers Weeks 3–6
May 26	Class discussion
May 31	Midterm 4, covers Weeks 5–8
June 2	Class discussion
June 7	Midterm 5, covers Weeks 7–10
June 9	Class discussion
June 14	Midterm 6, covers Weeks 9–12

6. Resources

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

Accessibility Services. http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as

Health & Wellness Centre. http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc

College Registrars' offices. https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices

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/`

Advice for thriving at university.

- `http://www.vox.com/2015/1/7/7500705/college-advice`
- `http://www.vox.com/2014/6/24/5824192/study-smarter-learn-better-8-tips-from-memory-researchers`

7. GRADES

Grades will be based on

- 6 exams (75%)
- Homework and quizzes (25%)

Final grades will automatically be curved up to ensure the median grade is at least a B-. Final grades will never be curved down.

Exams. 75% of your final grade will come from your average on your five best exams. There is an exam every Monday, except that the exam the week of May 24th will be on the 25th due to Victoria Day. Each exam covers the previous two weeks (four modules), though with a greater weight put on the previous week.[1]

The exams will be administered using Crowdmark. You will receive an email at 10am each morning there is a test with a link that will take you to the exam. You can begin the test anytime between 10am and 11:59am. You will need to either handwrite or type (in Word/etc) answers and then upload them. You can scan handwritten answers using a smartphone app such as Scannable, Dropbox, Scanbot, or Microsoft Office Lens. The test is written to take 25 minutes, and you have 50 minutes to complete the test and 10 minutes to upload your answers. Exams will be open notes, but you cannot collaborate with others on them.

Should you have any difficulty in uploading your answers, you must email the TA immediately. I recommend first sending an email letting the TA know you are having problems, and then sending a second email with your answers.

Please remember that Crowdmark keeps a log of your activity, which you can review (`https://crowdmark.com/help/verifying-that-an-assignment-was-submitted/`), and it should show that you're trying to promptly upload during the last 10 minutes and not continuing to revise your answers.

The exams will be a mix of short answer and mathematical questions. Because each exam is short, a given test may have only short answer or only mathematical questions.

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[1]The first exam covers just the first week (two modules).

Homework and quizzes. 25% of your final grade will come from your homework and quizzes.

Via Quercus there will be a large number of short quizzes and response questions. For most of these you will be able to use any resources you have available, including working with classmates. There will be some quizzes that you will not be able to work with classmates, but they will still be open notes.

For the purposes of academic integrity, the homework and quizzes within a given third of the course are considered as one. This means the typical penalty for cheating on a problem set is receiving a zero for all problem sets in that third of the course.

8. Course outline

Below is a list of topics and questions we will address in this course. This is subject to change. Readings will be posted on Quercus.

(1) Introductions, definition of cities, and why cities exist
  (a) What is a city?
  (b) How do we split urban areas into cities?
  (c) Why do cities exist?
(2) Agglomeration economies
  (a) Why are some cities so big?
  (b) Why do industries cluster in a given city, or within the same area of a given city? To be more specific, why is Bay Street a thing?
(3) Systems of cities
  (a) Why don't we all live in one big city?
  (b) Are cities too big, too small, or just right?
  (c) Why are cities different sizes?
  (d) What explains how wages and housing cost differs across cities?
(4) Basic trade-offs governing urban spatial structure
  (a) What determines land use within a city?
  (b) Why is housing more expensive downtown than in the suburbs?
  (c) Why are buildings taller downtown than in the suburbs?
  (d) Why are homes smaller downtown than in the suburbs?
(5) Using model of urban spatial structure to understand differences across cities and how policies will change cities
  (a) Why is Toronto's tallest building 50% taller than Montreal's tallest building?
  (b) Why is Phoenix cheaper and less dense than Toronto?
  (c) What happens to a city as its population grows?
  (d) What happens to a city if we add a highway?
(6) Urban sprawl

  (a) Is urban sprawl a problem?
  (b) What are the causes of urban sprawl?
  (c) What should we do about urban sprawl?
(7) Cities and the environment
  (a) Are cities good or bad for the environment?
  (b) How can cities adapt to climate change?
(8) Housing
  (a) How can we make housing more affordable?
  (b) What are the effects of rent control?
  (c) Who does rent control help?
  (d) What causes gentrification and who gains and loses?
(9) Addressing traffic congestion
  (a) Why are our roads so congested and what can we do about it?
  (b) If economists are such big fans of congestion pricing, why don't we see it more often in the real world?
  (c) How could we implement congestion pricing so that it would make all road users better off?
(10) Addressing traffic congestion (part 2) and parking policy
  (a) Is there too much or too little parking?
  (b) Is parking priced correctly?
(11) Autonomous vehicles
  (a) How have previous changes in transportation technology affected cities?
  (b) What are possible benefits and costs from AVs?
  (c) How can public policy address the downsides from AVs?
(12) Public transportation
  (a) Why do so few people use public transportation?
  (b) What could we do to encourage additional transit ridership?
  (c) Should we subsidize transit fares?
  (d) Should we build subways, light rail, or buses?