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

University of Toronto
Department of Economics

2023-24

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

Instructor: Professor Michael Baker
Office: Department of Economics
150 St. George Street, #238

Course email: eco339h1f.a@course.utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants: Xiner Xu
Anita Zabojsnikova

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: 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.

Data Analytics Focus

This course is part of the Economics Department's Data Analytics Focus. As such, the course includes a meaningful amount of hands-on data analysis. This includes tasks such as downloading datasets like the Labour Force Survey, loading them into statistical software, and writing statistical command files to analyse the data. The take home assignment, worth 20% of your final grade is an empirical study of a Canadian public policy issue. The TAs will provide tutorial support for this work; nonetheless, students without experience doing this will face a steeper learning curve due to less prior exposure.

Course Delivery

We meet on Thursdays 1pm-4pm in UC179.

Each week there will be a lecture, 1pm-3pm

In many weeks there will be a tutorial, 3pm-4pm.

The tutorial schedule will be posted on Quercus.

You will be assigned problems for most tutorials. I encourage you to attempt them in the preceding week.

Office Hours

Michael Baker	Wednesdays 10am-12 noon	150 St. George Street, GE274
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Xiner Xu	Wednesdays 4pm-5pm	150 St. George Street, GE213
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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.
- Email should be addressed to the course email eco339h1f.a@course.utoronto.ca
- 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 we will 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 remarks, 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.

Required Resources

The required course textbook is:

Benjamin, D., Gunderson, M. Lemieux, T., Riddell, C. and T. Schirle, *Labour Market Economics*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2021 (9th edition). (BGLRS)

Stata is the strongly recommended software, which students can purchase a 6 month single-user license for through the University (a six month license for Stata/BE is listed at \$48 dollars): <https://oneseach.library.utoronto.ca/ic/stata-gradplan-u-t> Students who also plan to take ECO340H may want to purchase the annual license, although the saving relative to two 6 month licenses are very small. **Students should acquire statistical software within the first week of classes --- data analysis will begin early.**

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

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.

Evaluation

Overview

The course grade is based quizzes, a writing assignment and a take home assignment:

Task	Weight	Due Date
Quiz #1	23.33%	Thursday October 5, 2023 (1:10pm in class)
Writing Assignment	10%	Friday October 27, 2023 (8am-6:30pm online)
Quiz #2	23.33%	Thursday November 2, 2023 (1:10pm in class)
Quiz #3	23.33%	Thursday November 30, 2023 (1:10pm in class)
Take Home Assignment	20%	Saturday December 16, 2023 (11:00pm online)

In the writing assignment you will be presented with one of the graphs we have studied in the period prior to Friday October 27, 2023 and be asked to describe what it means in words. In your

description you should avoid specific references to specific features of the graph, instead focusing on its overall message. The assignment will be available on Quercus, and once you start it (any time between 8am-6:30pm) you will have one hour and 25 minutes to complete it. Further instructions as well as an example of what is expected will be provided before the assignment on the class website.

The Take Home Assignment is an empirical exercise in which you will be asked to analyze data using STATA. The exercise will be made available on the course website by the start of November. While the due date for the assignment is in the midst of the final exam period, you are welcome to submit your assignment earlier (e.g., before the end of term).

Missed Quizzes, Missed Assignments and Late Assignments

- A student who misses one of the quizzes will have the weight transferred to a make-up quiz which will be on **Friday December 8, 2023 at 1pm (room TBA)**. The makeup quiz will cover material from the entire term to accommodate students who missed the different quizzes.
- If you miss a second quiz, you will get a grade of zero unless you arrange alternative accommodation through the registrar of your college.
- A student who misses the writing assignment will have the weight transferred to a make-up writing assignment which will be on **Friday December 8, 2023 at 1pm (room TBA)**. The make-up writing assignment will cover the graphs we have studied over the entire term.
- There is no accommodation for a missed take home assignment unless you go through your registrar of your college.
- If you submit the Take Home Assignment up to two-hours late, you will receive a 10% deduction. If you submit between 2 hours and 24 hours late, you will receive a 30% deduction. If you submit 24 to 48 hours late, you will receive a 50% deduction. Assignments submitted more than 48 hours late will receive a grade of zero.
- Students who face a longer-term issue (or multiple issues) affecting assignments or multiple tests should meet with an academic advisor from their college's Registrar's Office. It is only in consultation with an academic advisor would there ever be further accommodation than indicated in the syllabus.

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 by email to the course email within one week of the date on which the tests are returned 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.

Declaring an Absence

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Up to date information on the rules for declaring an absence can be found here:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academics/student-absences>

Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI. For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

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 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, collaborating on webwork/online quizzes are serious offences that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

For a writing assignment:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. This includes verbatim copying of any lecture notes distributed by the instructor.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids, including smartphones.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
- Misrepresenting your identity.

On the online quizzes:

- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Collaborating.

More generally in an academic context:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

There is good advice at the following sites: Perils and Pitfalls <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls> and Smart Strategies <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/smart-strategies>

Crowdmark

This course will use Crowdmark, a collaborative online grading tool for marking and providing feedback on graded term assessments. Crowdmark provides efficiencies with grading, data recording, returning term assessments and handling regrade requests. Copies of student work marked in Crowdmark, including grading and feedback, will be available online to students for at least one year. Digital (i.e., online) copies will serve as the authoritative record for course administrative purposes, and paper copies of assessments scanned and uploaded to Crowdmark will be destroyed after the term has ended and final grades are approved. If students have questions about how your information is stored on Crowdmark, please contact your course instructor.

Ouriginal

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Student Well Being

The University provides a number of resources to help you stay healthy and be well: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

There are also a number of resources to support your mental health: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/>

In case of emergency, call 911. For ongoing injury, illness, or personal/family problems, or if you feel you are falling behind in your courses, you must contact your College Registrar immediately. The earlier you do, the easier it is to find solutions.

If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) will assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS. For more information on services and resources available to instructors and students, please contact Accessibility Services at <https://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca>

READING LIST & COURSE SCHEDULE

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

BGLRS Chapter 1, Appendix

2) Labour Supply (2 weeks)

BGLRS Chapters 2 & 4

3) Income Maintenance Programs (1-2 weeks)

BGLRS Chapter 3

4) Labour Demand (4 lectures, 2 weeks)

BGLRS Chapter 5

5) Minimum Wages (1-2 weeks)

BGLRS p. 207-216

6) Monopsony (1 week)

BGLRS p. 200-207

7) Equilibrium (1 week)

BGLRS Chapter 7