

Economics 100A: Microeconomics

Fall 2004

General Information

Professor: Navin Kartik

Office: Economics Building, Room 322

Office Hours: Wednesday, 9.00am-12pm

Email: nkartik@ucsd.edu (this is the best way to reach me)

Course webpage: <http://econ.ucsd.edu/~nkartik/Teaching/100A>

Teaching Assistants:

Name	Office	Email
Chung Chiang Chen	Econ 119	ccchen@econ.ucsd.edu
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Meetings: Lectures on Tuesday and Thursday: 9.30am-10.50am in Center Hall 109 if you are in the morning class; 12.30pm-1.50pm in Center Hall 119 if you are in the afternoon class.

TA sections and office hours TBA (check the website). I urge you to attend at least one TA section a week so that you can go over homework problems and any mathematical concerns.

Course Content

This course is the first of a two-part upper division sequence in microeconomics. We will study various topics in greater detail than you did in your introductory course. These include consumer choice and demand, resource cost and firm production, and the theory of competitive markets. The class emphasizes mathematical analysis in developing the theory, but will also use applications to demonstrate the practical use of concepts.

Prerequisites

You need to have taken the prerequisite courses listed in the UCSD catalog to enroll in this class (Economics 1-2-3 and Mathematics 10/20A-B-C). The general point is that you should be comfortable with basic microeconomics and calculus.

Course Material

The required textbook for the course is MICROECONOMIC THEORY: BASIC PRINCIPLES AND EXTENSIONS, 9th edition, by Walter Nicholson, South-Western Educational Publishing. You can use an older edition of the textbook – I am wholly in favor of you saving money given the exorbitant price of the book – but it is your responsibility to ensure concurrence with the 9th edition (e.g., the 8th edition should be fine but there are some chapter organizational differences that you need to be wary of). The bookstore also has copies of the accompanying Workbook: STUDY GUIDE TO ACCOMPANY MICROECONOMIC THEORY: BASIC PRINCIPLES AND EXTENSIONS, prepared by David Stapleton, South-Western Educational Publishing. Though this is not a requirement, the exercises it contains are a useful tool to practice for exams and test your understanding of the material.

There are many other textbooks you can use as supplements to Nicholson if you wish. The most widely used alternative is "Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach," by Hal

Varian (most recent is 6th edition, W.W. Norton). See me if you want other recommendations.

Exams & Grading

Midterm 1: Thursday, October 14, class time, Mandeville Auditorium

Midterm 2: Tuesday, November 9, class time, Mandeville Auditorium

Final Exam: Finals week, per Finals schedule

Your grade will be a weighted average of your performance on two midterm exams (~25% each) and the final exam (~50%). The 25-25-50 weights are approximate, and I might adjust them in your favor depending on your individual distribution of scores. The first midterm exam will only test material covered up until then; the second midterm exam will focus on the material taught after the first midterm, but could include earlier material as well. The final exam will cover material from the entire quarter.

I will also assign homework regularly. Though it will not be graded and you do not need to turn it in, you are strongly urged to take it seriously and attempt all assigned problems. The TA's will go over solutions during their weekly sections.

Succeeding in the Course

Doing well in this course requires you to not only attend lectures, sections, and read the textbook, but moreover to practice solving problems. Practice really does make perfect here. Glancing at the solution to a problem and just verifying if you understand it is not enough: you must try and solve the problem yourself before checking a solution. I encourage you to attempt solving as many problems as you can on the topics we cover. These include—but are not limited to—the homework problems I assign, the end of chapter exercises in the Nicholson textbook, and the corresponding problems in the Nicholson workbook. Don't hesitate to ask me if you want more problems to solve. The TA's will work through exercises in their sections; this will be most beneficial to you only if you have already attempted some on your own first.

To sum up: unless you learn to solve problems on your own, you will have difficulty in the exams, never mind mastering the material. The only way to acquire this skill is through practice.

Administrative Issues

The Economics department offices handles all matters related to dropping or adding the course, wait lists, etc. Please contact them (Sequoyah Hall 245) regarding these issues. Note that Economics 100A is offered again in the Winter and Spring quarters this year.

You are expected to take all three exams. Make-ups will not be offered unless you have an exceptional medical circumstance that is properly documented (e.g. a doctor's note). Exams are closed book: you may not use any notes, electronic devices, books, or consult other classmates. If you have any doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, talk to me in advance.

If you believe an exam has not been properly graded, you must submit a re-grade request to me *in writing within 2 days* from when it was returned to you. You must explain clearly why you believe your score is in error. I will then go over the *entire* exam and change your score *either up or down* as is necessary—you cannot have me re-grade only part of the exam.

Hence, by submitting a re-grade request, you run the risk of having your score decrease (if you were awarded points generously elsewhere on the exam), so please consider the decision carefully.

If you have a documented disability, please come talk to me early on, and I will make suitable accommodations for exams.

Schedule of Topics (updated October 10)

This is a rough guide only, and coverage is subject to change. The chapters refer to the Nicholson textbook.

DATES	TOPICS	CHAPTERS
Sept 23 and Sept 28	Introduction & Math Review	1 & 2
Sept 30, Oct 5, and Oct 7	Preferences, Utility, and Choice	3 & 4
Oct 12	Comparative Statics of Demand	5
<i>Oct 14</i>	<i>Midterm 1</i>	
Oct 19	Comparative Statics of Demand cont'd	6
Oct 21 and Oct 26	Theory of Production	7
Oct 28 and Nov 2	Theory of Cost	8
Nov 4	Profit Maximization	9
<i>Nov 9</i>	<i>Midterm 2</i>	
<i>Nov 11</i>	<i>No class: Veteran's Day</i>	
Nov 16	Profit Maximization cont'd	9
Nov 18 and Nov 23	Partial Equilibrium with Perfectly Competitive Markets	10
Nov 30	Welfare and Policy	11
<i>Nov 25</i>	<i>No class: Thanksgiving</i>	
Dec 2	Review	