

University of California, San Diego
Department of Economics

Econ 135/USP 102: Urban Economics

Fall 2013

Prof. Michelle White

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TA: Matthew Gibson (magibson@ucsd.edu). Econ 125. Office hours Tuesdays noon-1p.

Class schedule: Tues & Thurs 9:30-11p in HSS 1330.

This course examines economists' models of how land use in cities is determined—whether land at particular locations is developed as jobs versus housing and at what density level. We will also examine how land use in cities has changed over time and how it differs in U.S. cities versus cities in Europe and China. We will also examine a number of policy issues in cities and how they affect urban land use, including zoning/planning, urban transportation, government subsidization of housing, mortgage markets, and the organization of local government.

Course website: Lecture notes, study questions, practice exams, readings besides the textbook, and announcements will be posted on the course website on Ted/webct. (Note that all of the information about the course, including announcements, is posted under “Content.”) Some additional readings besides the textbook (mainly news articles relevant to the course) will be posted on the course website during the quarter. There are also additional study questions and problems at the end of each chapter in the textbook. Note that I will sometimes post updated versions of the lecture notes or study questions.

Textbook: The textbook for the course is *Urban Economics*, by Arthur O’Sullivan. The published made available a new but cheaper edition of the book for this class, but older versions of the textbook are also fine. The new edition is available at the bookstore. (It’s just a copy of the textbook, so you might do better to make your own.) The book is also on reserve at Geisel library.

Grading and tests: There will be two short in-class quizzes—dates to be announced. These will each count 5% of the grade. The in-class midterm will be on Thursday, Oct 31, and the final exam will be at the scheduled time during exam week. The midterm and final will each count 45%. Both the midterm and final will be closed book, with no notes, calculators, iphones, computers, teddy bears, etc., allowed. Students must take the midterm and final at these times—please make sure that you will be in town!

Q/A sessions: Most weeks, there will be an optional Q/A session in the Economics Building on Mondays at 6:30p in Econ 300. These will mainly focus on the study questions. There will also be a Q/A session before the midterm and final exams.

Office hours: please see Matthew to discuss the study questions and see Prof. White for questions about the lectures or anything else related to the course. If you are interested in talking about going to graduate school in economics or any other field, feel free to come in and talk to me.

Regrades: For regrades, you must submit a written request that explains why you think your answer was graded incorrectly. Submit requests to Matthew within two weeks after the exams are returned.

Announcements: Please check the Announcements section of the course website for information about office hours, any changes in the schedule for office hours or discussion sections, posting of additional material, etc.

Current events related to cities: If you see news reports that are relevant to the course, please mention them to Prof. White or bring them up in class. We will discuss them in class.

Reading assignments

0. Review of microeconomics (this material will not be covered in class, but students will be assumed to know it!).

Appendix in O'Sullivan book.

I. Why and where do cities develop? (week 1)

Chapters 1-3 in editions 5-8.

III. Urban land use, suburbanization and commuting (weeks 2-3)

Chapters 6-7 in 6-8 editions, chapters 7-9 in 5th ed.

IV. Zoning (week 4)

Chapter 9 in 6-8th eds, ch 10 in 5th ed.

V. Urban Transportation (week 5-6)

Chapter 10-11 in 6-8th eds, chs 11-12 in 5th ed.

VI. Housing and (maybe) Segregation and Crime (weeks 7-8)

Chapters 8, 2-14 in 6th and 7th eds, chapters 8, 13, and 14-15 in 8th ed.

VII. Local Government (weeks 9-10)

Chapters 15-16 in 6th and 7th eds, chapters 16-17 in 8th ed, chs 19-20 in 5th ed.