

ECON100B MICROECONOMICS
(Production, Cost, Perfect Competition)
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN DIEGO
SUMMER SESSION II 2020
SYLLABUS

Professor:

Michael Noel: Office: Office hours held via Zoom
Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:00pm – 8:50pm
or by appointment if conflict
Email: mdnoel@ucsd.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Evgenii Baranov: Office: Office hours/discussion section held via Zoom:
<https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/6322461561>
Office Hours: Wednesdays 5:00pm-6:50pm
Email: evbarano@ucsd.edu

The Course

This is the second course in the upper division microeconomics sequence. In the sequence, we revisit the supply and demand model from the micro principles course but do so in a more rigorous and mathematical way. The second course in the sequence, 100B, analyzes the supply side. We work through the problem of cost minimization by firms using optimization techniques from multivariate calculus and ultimately derive cost curves and learn how to set quantities, prices, and other variables to maximize profits for firms engaged in competition under the assumption of perfectly competitive markets.

Course Modifications due to COVID-19

An unusual time indeed...we are in the middle of a global COVID-19 pandemic, which has required dramatic changes to how we teach and learn. To keep us all safe, all instruction will be conducted remotely using the Zoom app and Canvas. Although nothing quite replicates the experience of face-to-face interaction in the classroom, my goal is to provide as high quality and interactive an experience for all of you as if it were any other quarter. There will be some trial and error as we go, and no doubt a few unexpected IT issues, and I appreciate your understanding as we work out any bugs. Here is the current plan, subject to modification as best practices start to emerge.

Lectures

All lectures will take place at the regular scheduled time for the class using Zoom. Lectures will generally be recorded. **By attending classes, you both acknowledge and accept that your image and voice may be recorded.** To protect the privacy of students, as well as the t.a. and the instructor, **it is strictly prohibited to redistribute these videos, in any form, on the internet or in any other way.** The videos are for your personal educational use, as registered students in the course, and may not be used for any other purpose nor distributed to any other person in any way. It is a copyright and privacy violation to redistribute course materials, including the videos and anything derived from them.

As we begin the course, students will not be muted and may, at appropriate pauses, speak up and ask questions without raising hands, etc. I will encourage open class discussion, which may or may not work well in an online environment, so we will see how it goes and make adjustments as needed.

Office Hours

Office hours will also be held on Zoom. It is important that, when you attend office hours, you “arrive” at the beginning, or advise the professor if you will be late (by email).

Exams

I will likely use Zoom/LockDown Browser for proctoring this quarter. Among other things, you will be required to record yourself (video and audio) as you take the exams (via Zoom) to prevent academic integrity issues. Detailed instructions will be given and posted to Canvas. Video and audio recording and other personal information are captured for the purpose of facilitating the course and/or test environment. UC San Diego does not allow vendors to use this information for other purposes.

The recordings will be thoroughly reviewed by the instructor and t.a. for signs of academic dishonesty. **Please do not even consider running afoul of academic dishonesty policies, it is not worth it.** If cheating is suspected, the recording may become part of the student’s administrative disciplinary record. Recordings will be deleted when no longer necessary. If academic integrity problems are suspected, I reserve the right to give an oral test instead.

All students will be required to sign (and date) the Excel in Academic Integrity pledge and upload it via Canvas assignment by the end of the first week of class.

Grading

There will be one minor term test (5%) held on August 13th, one major term test (45% of the total grade) held on August 20th, and one final exam (50%) held on September 5th. The minor term test is very short, consisting of only a few questions, and is largely a means to ensure that

each student's computer is properly set up for more significant tests and exams to follow. Both term tests are held during class time, and the final exam at the time posted on the schedule of exams.

The only allowable reasons for missing a test or exam is a medically documented and unexpected illness on test day, a death in the family immediately preceding test day, or as permitted under the university policy on religious observances, disabilities, and UCSD athletics conflicts. There are no other exceptions. For religious observances, disabilities, and UCSD athletic conflicts, notice must be given in the first week of class and alternate arrangements will be made. For illness, you must provide within one week of the test date a note from a physician stating that he/she evaluated you the same day as the test and that your illness reasonably prevented you from taking the test. For a death in the immediate family, provide documentation within two weeks.

If you do miss a term test with a valid excuse, there will be no makeup and your grade will be based on remaining work. If you miss the final exam, you will be given a grade of incomplete if your major term test is of passing quality and an F if not (as required under university grading policies). You cannot be assigned a passing grade on the basis of the minor term test only.

The test and exam are open book. Calculators are allowed. No phones, no iPods, no headphones, etc., no electronics of any kind and no communication of any kind (except to the professor or t.a.) is allowed. The final exam is cumulative.

Problem Sets

Problem sets will be distributed on Canvas weekly but are not graded because of the tight summer schedule. Therefore there is no due date, but we strongly suggest you attempt every problem before you access the solutions and to see us in office hours to work through ones you are having trouble with. Experience has shown that simply reading the solutions without working through the problems first leads to a false sense of understanding and is a set up for disaster. Exams draw very heavily from these problem sets but to do well, memorizing answers is useless, you need to really understand what's going on.

Academic Dishonesty

There is a zero tolerance policy in this class for academic dishonesty. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will receive an F in the course. If you are unsure what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask or consult with your college dean. In all cases, the student's name and test or exam will be immediately forwarded to the Academic Integrity Office, who will impose an additional penalty, up to and including expulsion from the university. Please do not even *consider* doing this. It is not worth it.

Some Advice

Begin studying for the test and exam starting on the first day of class. Do all the problem set questions and keep up with them. Summer moves very, very (very) fast. We cover a full week of

material each class. That means if you take a Wednesday off, by Thursday night you may find yourself two weeks behind! Office hours are available, and experience shows that it is in your best interest to use them early and use them often! We are here to help.

Required Textbook

Perloff, J. Microeconomics: Theory & Applications with Calculus, 5rd edition. Pearson, 2020.

Topics

All readings from the Perloff text. Not all topics may be covered depending on time.

1. Firms and Production

Production Functions

Variable and Fixed Inputs

Law of Diminishing Marginal Returns

Isoquants

Marginal Products and Marginal Rate of Technical Substitution

Returns to Scale

(Chapter 6)

2. Costs

Economic vs Accounting Costs

Short Run vs Long Run Costs

(Chapter 7)

3. Competitive Firms and Markets

Competition in the Short Run and Long Run

Profit Maximization

The Supply Curve!

(Chapter 8 and 15)

4. Properties of the Competitive Model

Zero Profits

Producer Surplus

Efficiency of Competition

Policies that Shift Supply Curves

(Chapter 9)

5. General Equilibrium and Welfare

Partial vs General Equilibrium

Production and Trade

Efficiency and Equity

Role of Government

(Chapter 9)