

**Economics 130: Public Policy**  
**UCSD Spring 2020**  
**Monday 5-7:50pm**  
**Meeting links posted at Canvas → Zoom Pro LTI**

Brief Course Description

This course applies the tools of economics to study issues of public policy. You will develop a basic set of tools for policy analysis, and gain a better understanding of several contemporary public policy issues.

Readings

*Required Textbook: The Economics of Public Issues 20<sup>th</sup> ed., Miller Benjamin North (MBN)*

*Required Supplemental Readings: linked from Canvas → Files → Readings*

Course Website

I will post announcements, meeting links, grades, brief notes, problem sets (which will not be collected but will be essential in your preparation for quizzes), practice exams, and brief answer keys on our course website at Canvas. There is also a discussion board available that I strongly encourage you to use. <http://canvas.ucsd.edu>

Office Hours/Contact Information

The TAs and I will be available for office hours at the scheduled times below. Please contact me by email to schedule an appointment outside of the scheduled hours.

Please **use the course email** account for course-related questions: [econ130.ucsd@gmail.com](mailto:econ130.ucsd@gmail.com)

Yuan Emily Tang, Ph.D.	<a href="mailto:yetang@ucsd.edu">yetang@ucsd.edu</a>	Sat 9-11am	<a href="https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/yetang">https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/yetang</a>
TAs: Malte Lammert	<a href="mailto:mlammert@ucsd.edu">mlammert@ucsd.edu</a>	Wed 5-7pm	Zoom ID: 642-758-2277
Carlos Góes	<a href="mailto:cgoes@ucsd.edu">cgoes@ucsd.edu</a>	Wed 2-3pm	Zoom ID: 761-378-204
Reader: Ali Uppal	<a href="mailto:asuppal@ucsd.edu">asuppal@ucsd.edu</a>		

Evaluation

My prediction for how I will evaluate your performance is that your grade will be primarily based on your scores on quizzes. While I will do what I can to adhere to the plans for this course, the evolving situation may make it necessary for me to make a change. There will be four quizzes and one mini-quiz, each taken online. Unlike a typical quarter, we will *not* have a cumulative final exam, though we will have a quiz during our scheduled final block. In Week 2, we will also have a mini-quiz to confirm that all of our systems are compatible with the testing format prior to the first quiz. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. Each of the three remaining quiz scores will be worth 33% of your grade. The mini-quiz is worth 1% of your grade. Please ensure that you have a stable internet connection and the ability to take an online quiz at the following times:

Mini-Quiz (Week 2): Monday April 6, 7:10 - 7:20 pm

Quiz 1 (Week 4): Monday April 20, 5:10 - 6 pm

Quiz 2 (Week 6): Monday May 4, 5:10 - 6 pm

Quiz 3 (Week 8): Monday May 18, 5:10 - 6 pm

Quiz 4 (Finals Week): Friday June 12, 7:10 - 8 pm

The final weighted points earned will be curved in the assignment of letter grades; the following apply as the *minimum* of the letter grade you can expect to earn based on the total weighted % of points you earn in the course: 98-100%= A+, 93-97=A, 90-92=A-, 88-89=B+, 83-87=B, 80-82=B-, 78-79=C+, 73-77=C, 70-72=C-, 50-69=D, <50% = F. To earn a P if your grade option is P/NP, your letter grade must correspond to a C-.

## Policies

1. Lectures will meet at the scheduled time at Zoom. Meeting links will be available through Canvas → Zoom Pro LTI. Lectures will be recorded, and the recordings will be available through Canvas → MediaGallery. Attending lectures is not mandatory. Lectures will occasionally offer live activities with your classmates in small group “breakout rooms”, and these activities will not be recorded in the Zoom recording.
2. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. In a class of this size, we are not able to accommodate individual requests for rescheduled or makeup quizzes. If you anticipate being unavailable at the quiz times noted above, please consider enrolling in another class. We understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise. The dropping of one quiz score in the calculation of your final grade is intended to account for these surprises.
3. Enrollment is managed through automated waitlists. Economics instructors do not have the authority to prioritize enrollment for individual students. Please contact the undergraduate advisors for questions related to enrollment at [econugadvisor@ucsd.edu](mailto:econugadvisor@ucsd.edu). Wait-listed students have access to the course Canvas and lectures. Late enrollment is NOT an excuse to miss or drop an early assessment.
4. If you have a documented disability, please send an email to Gabriela Ray ([gray@ucsd.edu](mailto:gray@ucsd.edu)) with your documentation, so she can verify and arrange for your accommodations.
5. We will likely use Zoom/Loom/LockDown Browser for proctoring this quarter. These programs use video and audio recording or other personal information capture 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. Recordings will be deleted when no longer necessary. However, if cheating is suspected, the recording may become part of the student’s administrative disciplinary record.
6. I reserve the right to give an oral quiz if I feel it is necessary to uphold academic integrity. Any student found guilty of academic misconduct will earn a failing grade for the course. In addition to this academic sanction, the Council of Deans of Student Affairs will impose a disciplinary penalty.
7. If you believe that a quiz has not been properly graded, you must discuss this with the grader of the question within one week of when the quiz results were posted. To submit a regrade request, please email to the grader a screenshot the question you have a concern about, and include a written justification of why you think your answer was not awarded sufficient credit.
8. Finally, this is the first time any of us have ever lived through a pandemic, or a fully remote college quarter! I hope we can all support each other with understanding, patience, and kindness. In particular, please be courteous and respectful in lecture and the online discussion boards. Please do your best to keep your comments constructive, and motivated by pursuit of common understanding.

## Preliminary Course Outline (Subject to Change)

1. Introduction: Normative Goals, Tradeoffs, Incentives, and Unintended Consequences
2. Competitive Markets: Efficiency, Taxes and Subsidies, Price Controls
3. Market Power, Natural Monopoly
4. Externalities: Coase Theorem, Pigouvian Taxes, and Tradeable Permits
5. Public Goods and Common Property Resources
6. Imperfect Information and Uncertainty: Insurance
7. Interpreting Statistics
8. Income Distribution