

ECP 3510: Economics of Education

Syllabus

Fall 2020

Instructor: Alan Secor

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Course Time: M/W 1:55-3:50pm (per. 7-8)

Course Location: Zoom

Office: Zoom

Office Hours: M: 4-5pm, W: 12:30-1:30pm

Prerequisite: Principles in Microeconomics (ECO 2023 or equivalent)

Required Text: "Economics of Education" by Michael Lovenheim and Sarah Turner

Course Description

In this course, we analyze the education system using theoretical and empirical results developed by economists as well as some history of education policy. We study education policy by asking the type of education we want to produce, how we can produce it, and for whom it should be produced. We learn a few econometric tools needed to test theory and find the effectiveness of any given policy. Relevant theory includes public goods, imperfect competition, human capital vs. signaling, and Tiebout sorting. Other topics include the returns to education, financing, charter schools, the teacher labor market, and higher education.

Textbook/Readings

Most of the required reading will come from the required text:

Michael Lovenheim & Sarah Turner. "Economics of Education", Worth Publishers, 2018.

The book divides into Parts I-IV. Part I (Chapters 1-3) is an overview of the structure of the education market and the empirical tools we use to analyze it. Part II (Chapters 4-7) gives the theoretical framework for education production and investment. Parts III (Chapters 8-12) and IV (Chapters 13-15) go into various topics in Elementary/Secondary and Higher education policy. The book summarizes many empirical papers that test theories or provide evidence about the effectiveness of certain policies. The course will mostly follow the order of the book, but will be divided into 5 modules which you can see in the Schedule section.

Grading

Exams 1 and 2 (25% each)

There will be two exams taken during class time on October 21st and December 9th. The exams will be taken through Canvas and be proctored through Honor Lock. The first exam will cover Modules 1-3. The second exam will cover Modules 4 and 5 (so non-cumulative). In preference of keeping the dates for these exams set, I will edit the topics covered on the exams if our progress in lectures differs from the schedule. If you know that you will not be able to take one or both exams on those dates during class hours, inform me early so that we can set a different time or date.

Homework (20%)

There will be 10 short homework assignments. The typical schedule will be that you are assigned a reading and homework on Monday, then the homework will be due the next Monday. The questions for the homework will be posted on Canvas, and each student must turn in a single PDF with typed out answers. You may collaborate with other students when working on your homework, but you need to list with whom you worked on the PDF. No late homework will be accepted without an excused absence¹ granted by the instructor. An absence is best cleared with me before class through email, but I will take circumstances into account.

Project (30%)

There will be a project assigned sometime after the first exam and due before Thanksgiving break. There are tentative dates in the schedule. We will discuss details of the project as we get closer to finishing Module 3. Given the online format of the class, the exact format (individual or group, grading, etc.) will depend on what works best.

Letter Grades

Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale²:

[92-∞): A	[89-92): A-	[86-89): B+	[82-86): B	[79-82): B-	[76-79): C+
[72-76): C	[69-72): C-	[66-69): D+	[62-66): D	[59-62): D-	[0-59): E

If you do not recognize set notation, the closed bracket on the left means that you include the number on the left in the set, and the open bracket on the right means that you include every number slightly below the number on the right but not the number itself. For example, a 92.0 is an A since it is included in [92-∞) but not in [89-92) whereas a 91.999999 is an A- since it is above 89 but below 92. This scale may change depending on the performance of the class but not in a way that would lower your letter grade.

¹ UF attendance policies can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencetext>

² UF policies for assigning grade points can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Schedule

Below is the schedule for the course which may be adjusted based on our progress. For each date, the schedule lists the topic and whether the lecture is recorded and posted in that week's videos (asynchronous) or is on a live Zoom meeting (synchronous). The assignments column lists chapters from the book you will need to read. I reserve the right to add readings from other (free) sources if needed. I will probably remove sections from some chapters that you will not be responsible to know for exams or homework and will announce which those are.

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 1 – INTRODUCTION AND EMPIRICAL TOOLS			
Aug 31	Asynchronous	Introduction to Economics of Education The Market for Education	Read Chapters 1 and 2 Watch Week's Videos HW1 Assigned
Sep 2	Synchronous	Introduction to Economics of Education The Market for Education	Attend Live Meeting
Sep 7		NO CLASS: LABOR DAY	
Sep 9	Synchronous	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	HW1 Due Read Chapter 3 Attend Live Meeting HW2 Assigned
MODULE 2 – THEORIES FOR EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT			
Sep 14	Asynchronous	The Human Capital Model	HW2 Due Read Chapter 4 Watch Week's Videos HW3 Assigned
Sep 16	Synchronous	The Human Capital Model	Attend Live Meeting
Sep 21	Asynchronous	The Signaling Model	HW3 Due Read Chapter 5 Watch Week's Videos HW4 Assigned
Sep 23	Synchronous	The Signaling Model	Attend Live Meeting
Sep 28	Asynchronous	Returns to Education Investment	HW4 Due Read Chapter 6 Watch Week's Videos HW5 Assigned
Sep 30	Synchronous	Returns to Education Investment	Attend Live Meeting

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 3 – EDUCATION PRODUCTION AND POLICIES			
Oct 5	Asynchronous	Education Production Function	<i>HW5 Due</i> Read Chapter 7 Watch Week’s Videos HW6 Assigned
Oct 7	Synchronous	Education Production Function	Attend Live Meeting
Oct 12	Asynchronous	Input, Output, and Total Resource Policies	<i>HW6 Due</i> Read Chapters 9 and 11 Watch Week’s Videos HW7 Assigned
Oct 14	Synchronous	Input, Output, and Total Resource Policies	Attend Live Meeting Practice Exam Available
Oct 19	Synchronous	Review for EXAM 1	<i>HW7 Due</i> Attend Live Meeting
Oct 21		EXAM 1 – 1:55-3:50pm	
MODULE 4 – FINANCING AND REGULATION FOR K-12 SCHOOLS			
Oct 26	Asynchronous	The Financing of Local Public Schools	Read Chapter 8 Watch Week’s Videos HW8 Assigned
Oct 28	Synchronous	The Financing of Local Public Schools	Attend Live Meeting
Nov 2	Asynchronous	School Choice	<i>HW8 Due</i> Read Chapter 10 Watch Week’s Videos HW9 Assigned
Nov 4	Synchronous	School Choice	Attend Live Meeting Project Assigned
Nov 9	Asynchronous	School Choice	<i>HW9 Due</i> Watch Week’s Videos
Nov 11		NO CLASS: Veterans Day	

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 5 – TEACHERS, UNIVERSITIES, AND CURRENT EVENTS			
Nov 16	Asynchronous	Teacher Labor Markets	Read Chapter 12 Watch Week's Videos HW10 Assigned
Nov 18	Synchronous	Teacher Labor Markets	Attend Live Meeting
Nov 23	Asynchronous	The Higher Education Market in the U.S.	<i>HW10 Due</i> <i>Project Due</i> Read Chapters 13-15 Watch Week's Videos
Nov 25		NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Nov 30	Asynchronous	Pandemic Education	Watch Week's Videos
Dec 2	Synchronous	Pandemic Education	Attend Live Meeting Practice Exam Available
Dec 7	Synchronous	Review for EXAM 2	Attend Live Meeting
Dec 9		EXAM 2 – 1:55-3:50pm	

Student Expectations and Resources

Attendance and Expectations

Students are expected to come to all synchronous class sessions on time and to remain for the duration of the session, unless an urgent need comes up or prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. An attendance tally will not be taken, though students will be responsible for all information presented in all class sessions. Students are expected to arrive prepared to meet classroom obligations, having completed the required readings, videos, and homework, and ready to devote full attention and any needed participation.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Student Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161

University Police Department: 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>