

ECP 3510: Economics of Education

Syllabus

Spring 2020

Instructor: Alan Secor

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

Course Location: MAT 107

Office: MAT 400

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, test-based accountability programs, the teacher labor market, charter schools, and the financing of 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. You may be assigned to read a couple of these papers or ones like them over the semester.

Grading

Midterms 1 and 2 (25% each) and Final (35%)

There will be two midterms taken during class time on Feb. 19th and April 1st (seriously) and a final exam on April 30th from 3-5:00pm. The first midterm will cover Parts I and II. The second midterm will cover Part III. The final will be given during finals week. It is a comprehensive final meaning it will cover Part IV and include topics from both midterms. In preference of keeping the dates set, I will edit the topics covered on the midterms if our progress in lectures differs from the schedule. If you know ahead of time that you will not be able to take one or both midterms on those dates, inform me early so that we can set a time for the make-up exam(s).

Homework (15%)

There will be 10 short homework assignments. The typical schedule will be that you are assigned a reading and homework at the end of Wednesday's class then the homework is due at the beginning of next Wednesday's class. Only one homework is due on a Monday, and there are a few weeks without homework including the ones with midterms. The reading and the homework are usually assigned (typically on Wednesday) before we start to cover them in class (typically the next Monday). This is done so that you can ask questions about the reading and homework while we are discussing the topics they cover.

You must work on and turn in your homework individually. Because homework assignments are often due before we finish the topic in class, they will not be graded for accuracy. A full attempt at answering each question is enough for full credit. Homework is intended to help you review what you have read as well as prepare you to ask questions in lecture. Completing the homework before the last lecture on the topic is to show your preparation for lectures. 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.

Letter Grades

Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale²:

93-100: A	90-92: A-	87-89: B+	83-86: B	80-82: B-	77-79: C+
73-76: C	70-72: C-	67-69: D+	63-66: D	60-62: D-	0-59: E

¹ UF attendance policies can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencestext>

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. The schedule lists the topics of each lecture, homework due at the start of lecture, and assignments given at the end of lecture. I reserve the right to add or remove readings. I will probably remove sections from some chapters that you will not be responsible to know for exams or homework.

	Date	Topics	Assignments
L1	January 6	Syllabus Introduction to Economics of Education	Read Chapters 1 and 2
L2	January 8	Structure and History of Education Markets in the United States	Read Chapter 3 HW1 Assigned
L3	January 13	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	
L4	January 15	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	<i>HW1 Due</i> Read Chapter 4 HW2 Assigned
	January 20	NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	
L5	January 22	The Human Capital Model	Read Chapter 5 HW3 Assigned
L6	January 27	The Signaling Model	<i>HW2 Due</i>
L7	January 29	The Signaling Model	<i>HW3 Due</i> Read Chapter 6 HW4 Assigned
L8	February 3	Returns to Education Investment	
L9	February 5	Returns to Education Investment	<i>HW4 Due</i> Read Chapter 7 HW5 Assigned
L10	February 10	Education Production Function	
L11	February 12	Education Production Function	<i>HW5 Due</i> Study for Midterm 1
L12	February 17	Review for Midterm 1	
	February 19	MIDTERM 1	Read Chapter 8 HW6 Assigned

L13	February 24	Financing of Local Public Schools	
L14	February 26	Financing of Local Public Schools	<i>HW6 Due</i>
	March 2	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
	March 4	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
L15	March 9	Education Inputs and Outputs	Read Chapter 9
L16	March 11	School Choice	Read Chapter 10 HW7 Assigned
L17	March 16	School Choice	Read Chapter 11
L18	March 18	Test-Based Accountability Programs	<i>HW7 Due</i> Read Chapter 12 HW8 Assigned
L19	March 23	Teacher Labor Markets	
L20	March 25	Teacher Labor Markets	<i>HW8 Due</i> Study for Midterm 2
L21	March 30	Review for Midterm 2	
	April 1	MIDTERM 2	Read Chapter 13 HW9 Assigned
L22	April 6	The Higher Education Market in the U.S.	
L23	April 8	The Higher Education Market in the U.S.	<i>HW9 Due</i> Read Chapter 14 HW10 Assigned
L24	April 13	Financial Aid and Enrollment	
L25	April 15	Financial Aid and Enrollment	<i>HW10 Due</i> Read Chapter 15
L26	April 20	Admissions, Peer Effects, and Graduation	Prepare for Review
L27	April 22	Review for Final Exam	Study for Final
	April 30	FINAL EXAM 3:00-5:00pm	

Student Expectations and Resources

Attendance and Expectations

Students are expected to come to all 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 and homework, and ready to devote full attention and any needed participation. Laptops and other electronic devices should not be turned on. If you take notes on your laptop, clear this with me first.

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.bluera.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/>