

ECP 3510: Economics of Education

Syllabus

Spring 2021

Instructor: Alan Secor

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Course Time: W 1:55-3:50pm; 4:05-6pm

Location: MAT 003; MAT 102

Office: Zoom Links on Canvas

Office Hours: M: 3-5pm or by appointment

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 & 2 (25% each)

There will be two exams taken during class time on March 10th and April 21st. The exams will be taken in the classroom unless UF policy on in-person classes changes. 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 lectures progress differently. 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 & Quizzes (20%)

There will be 10 short homework assignments and 10 quizzes all graded on completion. The typical schedule will be that you are assigned a reading, homework, and quiz on Monday, then the homework and quiz will be due the next Monday at 6pm. The questions for the homework and the quiz will be posted on Canvas, and each student must turn in a single PDF with typed out answers for the homework and complete the quiz. 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 or quiz 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 after the first exam and due around the end of the semester. There are tentative dates in the schedule. We will discuss details of the project as we get closer to finishing Module 3. It can range from writing a short essay to individual or group presentations depending on preference.

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

Any grade on the cusp of moving up a letter grade (an 86.5 for example) will be rounded up to the next highest whole number no matter if the decimal is above .5 or is just .00000001 or lower. Depending on the performance of the class, individual assignments or the entire course grade may be curved but only in a way that does no harm to anyone's grade.

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. For each date, the schedule lists the topic and whether the lecture is recorded and posted in that week's videos (asynchronous) or in class (synchronous). The assignments column lists chapters from the book you need to read. I reserve the right to add readings from other (free) sources. I will remove sections from later chapters that you will not be responsible to know for exams.

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 1 – INTRODUCTION AND EMPIRICAL TOOLS			
Jan 11	Asynchronous	Introduction to Economics of Education The Market for Education	Read Chapters 1 and 2 Watch Week's Videos HW1 & Q1 Assigned
Jan 13	Synchronous	Introduction to Economics of Education The Market for Education	Attend Live Meeting
Jan 18		NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY	
Jan 20	Asynchronous	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	<i>HW1 & Quiz1 Due</i>
Jan 25	Asynchronous	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	Read Chapter 3 Watch Week's Videos HW2 & Q2 Assigned
Jan 27	Synchronous	Empirical Tools of Education Economics	Attend Live Meeting
MODULE 2 – THEORIES FOR EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT			
Feb 1	Asynchronous	The Human Capital Model	<i>HW2 & Q2 Due</i> Read Chapter 4 Watch Week's Videos HW3 & Q3 Assigned
Feb 3	Synchronous	The Human Capital Model	Attend Live Meeting
Feb 8	Asynchronous	The Signaling Model	<i>HW3 & Q3 Due</i> Read Chapter 5 Watch Week's Videos HW4 & Q4 Assigned
Feb 10	Synchronous	The Signaling Model	Attend Live Meeting
Feb 15	Asynchronous	Returns to Education Investment	<i>HW4 & Q4 Due</i> Read Chapter 6 Watch Week's Videos HW5 & Q5 Assigned
Feb 17	Synchronous	Returns to Education Investment	Attend Live Meeting

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 3 – EDUCATION PRODUCTION AND POLICIES			
Feb 22	Asynchronous	Education Production Function	<i>HW5 & Q5 Due</i> Read Chapter 7 Watch Week’s Videos HW6 & Q6 Assigned
Feb 24	Synchronous	Education Production Function	Attend Live Meeting
Mar 1	Asynchronous	Input, Output, and Total Resource Policies	<i>HW6 & Q6 Due</i> Read Chapters 9 and 11 Watch Week’s Videos HW7 & Q7 Assigned
Mar 3	Synchronous	Input, Output, and Total Resource Policies	Attend Live Meeting Practice Exam Available
Mar 8	Synchronous	Review for EXAM 1	<i>HW7 & Q7 Due</i>
Mar 10	Synchronous	EXAM 1 – DURING CLASS TIME	
MODULE 4 – FINANCING AND REGULATION FOR K-12 SCHOOLS			
Mar 15	Asynchronous	The Financing of Local Public Schools	Read Chapter 8 Watch Week’s Videos HW8 & Q8 Assigned Project Assigned
Mar 17	Synchronous	The Financing of Local Public Schools	Attend Live Meeting
Mar 22		NO CLASS: TIEBOUT DAY	
Mar 24		NO CLASS: RECHARGE DAY	
Mar 29	Asynchronous	School Choice	<i>HW8 & Q8 Due</i> Read Chapter 10 Watch Week’s Videos HW9 & Q9 Assigned
Mar 31	Synchronous	School Choice	<i>HW9 Due</i>

Date	Format	Topics	Assignments
MODULE 5 – TEACHERS, UNIVERSITIES, AND CURRENT EVENTS			
Apr 5	Asynchronous	Teacher Labor Markets	<i>HW9 & Q9 Due</i> Read Chapter 12 Watch Week’s Videos HW10 & Q10 Assigned
Apr 7	Synchronous	Teacher Labor Markets	Attend Live Meeting
Apr 12	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
Apr 14	Synchronous	The Higher Education Market in the U.S.	Practice Exam Available
Apr 19	Synchronous	Review for EXAM 2	
Apr 21	Synchronous	EXAM 2 – DURING CLASS TIME	

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.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/>