

SYLLABUS, ECP 5705

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Required Texts

We are using a book that was written by a colleague, Roger Blair, and me entitled *The Economics of Managerial Decision Making*, 1e by Blair and Rush. I think it is a reasonable question to ask “Why did we write a book?” Plus, I think the answer truly reflects my goal for our class. So, here is the (hopefully) reasonable answer: When I first taught this course, years ago, I looked at a bunch of advanced managerial economics books. Some I liked a little; most I did not. But, frankly, I was unhappy with the books. Years ago I was voicing my unhappiness to Roger and he suggested we write a book that would be more in line with what I (and he) wanted. He told me it would be easy. (He lied. ☺) What *was* easy was signing with Pearson to publish the book. But the book itself...nah, not so easy! However, I still think it’s better than any of the other books on the market. For what it’s worth, I used drafts of the chapters for the last seven classes and the students said nice things about them. Of course, it would be a foolish student who criticizes his or her instructor’s work! Anyway, now our book is finished, which means that there is a glossary, and the figures are in color—both things previous classes (futilely) asked me for. By the way, I will be *extremely* interested in your comments about the book, *both* positive and negative. To be brutally honest, the previous classes vastly improved the book with their comments, so I am hopeful that will get comments from you that I can add to the document I have created for second edition changes.

Class Goal

My over-riding objective for this class is to show you how you can use economic concepts to make better decisions as managers. Everything else in the class is secondary at best. You will see this objective in the note shells I have created. You will see this objective in the class lectures. You will see this objective in the reading. You will see this objective in the assignments. You will see this objective in the manuscript chapters I have written. And you will see this objective in the test.

Economics is incredibly useful for decision making. It is incredibly useful for telling you how to think about a decision. Unfortunately, it is not incredibly useful in telling you the precisely correct line of action. It gives guidance; for example, when determining whether to take an action to make it more difficult for a rival to enter the market, economics will tell you factors that can be important, but it will not give you a recipe that you should follow. You will need to combine what you learn in this class with your own judgment.

As I said above, my over-riding goal is to make this class useful by concentrating on decision making. I am highly interested in whether I succeeded in attaining this goal. After the class is over and the grades submitted, if you want to email me your thoughts and suggestions, I can tell you they will be gratefully received. By the way, note that I said “*After* the class is over.”

I do not want you to fear retribution for comments full of criticism comments and I do not want you to hope for a reward for comments full of praise.

Office Hours

I have been using Zoom to chat with students who have questions or issues. If you want to talk, please email me and we can set up a time. In case you wonder, evenings and weekends work as well for me as do normal business hours. Emails are also a highly effective way of getting in touch. If you do not hear back with 36 hours, please resend your email because the odds are high that I missed it the first time.

Class Web Page

Plan on becoming acquainted with the class web page. In fact, plan on not only becoming acquainted, plan on it becoming almost your best friend! To get to the class web page, go to <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> and login to Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password.

Class Web Page Problems

Will everything work out correctly so that you get to the class web page with no problems? Perhaps. Perhaps also I shall exercise and lose 10 pounds (or even 5 pounds) this semester (which I am trying to do!!), as well as eat a plethora of leafy green vegetables (which I am not trying to do). Now, you can't do anything about my exercising or dining habits. But if you encounter an error in trying to access either the class web page or the lectures, here is a valuable link for you: http://notes.cba.ufl.edu/cbahelp.nsf/request_grad?OpenForm

And here is another helpful link that talks about the TAC:

<http://warrington.ufl.edu/itsp/techservices/students.asp>

What is the TAC? Well, it's aka "Technology Assistance Center." I cannot help with any of the technical issues. But the computer technicians can help—and the feedback I get from the students is that they are a *lot* of help! So, if you have a problem, DO NOT email me. Every semester I have students email me about a problem. All they are doing is to 1) admit that they haven't bothered to read this syllabus, which surely does not endear them to me, and 2) delay resolution of their problem because I can do nothing. So, rather than email me, use the link I've given you to ask the people who know what to do for help. Indeed, I've bookmarked the link—I suggest you do likewise! In other words: SAVE THIS LINK. IT IS USEFUL!!

Material Covered in Class

We will study 12 chapters in the book. Some chapters are longer than others; some chapters are more difficult than others; and, some chapters are more important than others. I don't know if it's a good sign or not, but the first chapter we study is a bit longer, a bit more difficult, and a bit more important than the average. I have divided the chapters into 5 modules based on the material covered in the chapters. Look at the last page for the schedule. You'll notice that some of the modules are longer and some are shorter. That's simply the way the

material is related. The deadlines for completing each module are in the schedule. These are the same deadlines for the assignments from each chapter.

Three Types of Assignments

Your grade will be based on three factors: Very Short Module Assignments, Short Chapter Assignments, Group Projects, and a Final Exam. The very short modules assignments are...very short! Each of these assignments will be graded 0 or 1 or 2. The only way to receive a 0 is to not submit the assignment; the only way to get a 1 is to not take it seriously. The short chapter assignments are exactly what the name says: Short assignments, that ought to take no more than an hour to complete and often much less. There are 9 assignments (yes, there are 10 chapters but I combined the last two chapters into one assignment). Each assignment will be graded 0 (no assignment submitted), 1, 2, or 3. I expect that many of you will receive more than a few 3's. The assignments are due by the dates given in the schedule. I expect you may well talk with some of your classmates on the Short Assignments but the work you submit must be your work alone.

The group projects are somewhat more elaborate than the short chapter assignments. For each project I want you to assume that a supervisor assigned this project to your group. (In some real sense, for the last project a supervisor *did* assign the project. Of course, that supervisor is just me...) After your group has completed the analysis, your group is to submit a 2 to 5 page report responding to the supervisor. I expect that most of the effort ought to be devoted to the report because I think the analysis for each project is generally straightforward. And here I definitely expect the work submitted will be the work product of everyone in the group. There are 2 group projects. The grading scale for the assignments will be 1 to 10. But I really plan on grading most projects 10, 9, or 8. (If anyone gets anything lower than a 5, I grieve for the trees and/or electrons that were used to create the report.) I will base this grade on the answers and on the writing of the report. Speaking with business people, I have come to the conclusion that clear and grammatically correct writing is highly valued by them. Hence it shall be equally highly valued by me. The group projects are due by the dates given in the schedule. I will accept late projects but the score will be lowered by 2 points per day, down to a minimum of 0. (That is, I am not so cruel as to give any group a -4 as a grade....)

In addition to the 10 points available for each assignment, there will also be points for participation in your team. I am giving each of you 10 points that you must allocate amongst your *other* team members. (In other words, you cannot allocate all 10 points to yourself! 😊 Indeed, and now I am serious, the votes are to be given to everyone else—do NOT give yourself any points.) I want you to allocate them according to the value each other member has been. So, if you think that one of the other members has done virtually everything, you can give that member 10 points and 0 to the other members. Or if you think one member has done a lot less than everyone else, you can give that member 0 points and then divide the 10 points among the other members. *USE INTEGERS*—that is, do not give 2.5 give instead 2 or 3 and make sure your points add to 10. If you do not use integers, I will use (large) integers to subtract from *your* score! (smile—sort of—but please do use integers because I *will* subtract points from your score) This allocation is due by July 10. I will *not* share anyone's point allocation with anyone

else, so I expect/hope you will be honest in your assessments. I will add each person's points and then divide by 2. For example, if a team member gets a total of 10 points from the other members, I will divide this score by 2, so this student gets $10 \div 2 = 5$ points. Dividing by 2 gives an average score of 5.0.

The final exam will be available online between July 19 to July 22. It will use Honorlock as its proctoring tool (I have a discussion of Honorlock below) and will consist of short to longish answer questions. You will have 90 minutes for the exam. I will provide you with several sample exams. Your final exam will be different than the sample exams but if you use the sample exams carefully, I do not think you will be surprised by anything on the actual exam. The final exam will be worth 63 points. (And yes, I *do* realize that 63 is an odd number of points. But I made the final exam worth 63 points so that there is now a grand total of 130 points in the entire class. And *that* number is not so odd!!)

So, in summary here are the possible points:

Very short module assignments:	10 points
Short chapter assignments	27 points
Group projects	20 points
Member points	10 points
Final exam	<u>63 points</u>
Total	130 points

Grades

I wish I was completely unconstrained in my grading scale but the MBA program applies a crucial and important limitation: The average grade in the class can be no higher than a 3.50, which means the average grade must be between an A- and a B+. So, keeping that in mind, I plan to assign the top 25% of the class A's, the second 25% A-'s, the third 25 B+'s, and the bottom 25% B's. Of course, if someone does significantly poorer than the remainder of the class, I *will* give lower grades, such as a C, D, or even an F. Of course, in that case, I can boost other students' grades. So, let me ask: Does anyone want to volunteer to get a low grade so that some other well deserving students can have their grades boosted?

Assignments

You are probably wondering what precisely are the "short chapter assignments" and the "group projects." You might even be wondering what are the "very short module assignments!" I will give you some details about each below. The discussion of the group project is a short thumbnail sketch. I want you have this brief description of the group assignments so that when you first read the material and watch the lectures, you have an idea of what you *really* need to understand for the group projects. For each group assignment I have a more detailed handout.

Before I talk more about the assignments, I first need to emphasize that I grade not only the answers and the reasoning but also the writing. I have received submissions where it looks

as if the student merely threw a bunch of buzz words together against a wall, thereby creating the classic “word salad,” and submitted this as their answer. I like many salads but not salads made of word—they are simply unacceptable. Proofread your assignments before you hit submit and make certain that the answer is written in standard English. I don’t lower the grade for minor grammatical errors, but major flaws will cost points. By the way, I have adopted this policy because recruiters have told me that clear writing is a big plus and I want all my students to get as many big pluses as possible.

Very Short Module Assignments

For each module I want you to write briefly—look up the definition of the word “brief” to be certain you fully understand this assignment—about what topic you thought was best explained and what topic you thought was the most difficult to grasp. In other words, what was clear and what was muddy. Essentially, these assignments are chances for to raise your hand to ask me a question about some of the material! I want to see if there is a point or points that are confusing a lot of students. In that case, I will post comments on the class web page that—hopefully! —will explain the point and eliminate confusion. By the way, it would be very nice if you gave me a page reference for both the topic you think was well explained and especially the topic that was confusing. These assignments are due by the date given in the class schedule, though if you are done early, submit them early!

Short Chapter Assignments

The short chapter assignments are questions from the end of the chapters in the book. The information below shows you the different modules, what you should read for each module (PLEASE notice that sometimes you should skip sections; take notice of this and do not read more than is assigned because your time is valuable), and what questions to answer. For example, the first Short Assignment has you answering 3 questions from Chapter 2. So, answer the question labeled 2.1, the question labeled 5.1, and the question labeled 7.5. Make sure you answer the correct questions. It makes your life easier AND it makes my life easier. Who does not like an easy life??? Plus it makes your grade higher. And, who does not like a higher grade??? One last comment: Nothing in Mod 5 appears on the final exam. It’s my opinion you need more than 1 or 2 or even 3 days (☺) to digest material before it shows up on an exam.

Deadlines

I know that in addition to your classes you have serious jobs and many have families. I calculate that you are taking on about 2.5 times the normal amount of effort that goes into living! So, while I have deadlines for everything, I also know that sometimes situations and issues arise with your job and/or family. For these reasons, with three exceptions I am not strict about most of the deadlines. Here are the three strict deadlines:

- First is the class projects and team member evaluations. The deadlines for these are strict and missing them will cost you points. But I think these are easy to meet because, for the group projects you have other team members in case you need some slack, and for the

evaluations, all you need to do is to allocate your 10 points among the other team members.

- Second, except for the “absolute deadline” (point 3 below), for the very short and short assignments you have two weeks after the initial “deadline” to get it submitted. In other words, if a short assignment has a deadline of June 5, the ultimate deadline is June 19. Why do I have this deadline? I have it because for the past two semesters I have had several students attempt to start and finish the course by submitting everything the last week of the class. NONE of these students passed. I felt terrible about this. Consequently, to avoid feeling terrible (and to avoid students failing!) I now have this two-week limit on late assignments. And, do NOT ask—I will NOT extend this deadline for ANY reason.
- Third, I must impose an absolute deadline of midnight July 16 for all assignments. This deadline trumps the two-week deadline (in point 2, above) for short and very short assignments because I need to submit the grades in a timely fashion and to do so I must have enough time to ensure that everything is graded. So, after July 16 I will not look at, comment on, nor grade any late assignment. I know this sounds harsh, probably because it *is* harsh, but I absolutely need this time to make certain everything is completed by *my* deadline. And, just as with the two-week deadline above, I will NOT extend this deadline for ANY reason.

Module 1 Due May 29

Lesson 1: Chapter 1 (pp 1 to 6), Chapter 2 (skip Section 2.6)

Demand & Supply: Chapter 2, Problems 2.1, 5.1, 7.5 (For question 7.5, PLEASE note that casual dining restaurant chains, such as Brinkers, do *not* own and do *not* raise pigs. I fully realize that coming from out of the blue, this comment seems odd and perhaps even a little bizarre...but once you read the question, it makes sense!)

Lesson 2: Chapter 3

Regression and elasticity: Problems 5.1 and 5.5

Module 2 Due June 5

Lesson 3: Chapter 1 (pp 6 to 17 and the “Revisiting” material on pages 21 and 22), Chapter 4

Cost: Chapter 1, Problem 3.3; Chapter 4, Problem 2.3

Lesson 4: Chapter 1 (pp 18 to 21), Chapter 5

Competitive firms (and markets): Chapter 5, Problems 2.5, 3.5 (Be careful—think about the long run), and answer this question not in the book: “When the price of a firm’s product falls, the profit on each unit also falls. Accordingly, profit-maximizing managers increase their production in order to increase their total profit.” Is this assertion correct? Explain your answer.

Module 3 Due June 26

Lesson 5: Chapter 6

Monopoly & monopolistic competition: Problems: 2.5, 2.13, 5.1

Lesson 6: Chapter 10

Pricing decisions: 1.11 (note this is question one dot eleven, not question one dot one. For some reason a lot of students make this error), 4.1, 4.3

Module 4 Due July 10

Lesson 7: Chapter 7 (Sections 7.1 and 7.2; *skip the rest!!!*), Chapter 9

Oligopoly: Problems: Chapter 7, Problems 1.3, 2.3; Chapter 9, Problem 5.1

Lesson 8: Chapter 8

Game theory: Problems 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 3.3

Module 5 Due July 16

Lesson 9: Chapter 12 (Sections 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, and pp 526 to 527)

More on production decisions: Problems 2.5 (a tough problem) and 3.7

Lesson 10: Chapter 15: IP and Auctions (pp 635 to 640, 650 to 658, 667, and 669)

IP and Auctions: None

Group Projects

Unless otherwise instructed, for each of the projects your group will submit a 2 to 5 page report. These reports should be written as if you were submitting them to a supervisor. (This means you want to write in standard English and use spell check!) If you use Word to write these reports, make sure that you do not hand in a report that has a bunch of track changes boxes or comments. **I will subtract points for this error** because I want your report to be similar to what you might give a supervisor.

Module 1, Chapter 3

You will be given data about the demand for a good. Using these data your group will estimate a demand curve. Your group will report the estimated demand curve and discuss its fit. Your group will also use the estimated demand curve to calculate price elasticities of demand at different prices.

Module 3, Chapter 6

You have been given data about the demand for a good in the project for chapter 3. For this project your group will use these data as well as some cost data that you will be given to determine the firm's profit-maximizing price, profit-maximizing quantity, and economic profit.

Honorlock

Below is a discussion of Honorlock. If it seems more formal than the rest of this syllabus, you are correct: I did not write it. But I think it is excellent and so I have included it for your reading pleasure.

The University of Florida requires that any assessment equivalent to 15% or more of a student's final course grade must be proctored. This policy protects both the value of your academic degree and your own time and effort in becoming a successful Warrington student. Please expect all assessments to be proctored and all assignments to utilize plagiarism software, and prepare accordingly.

For online proctored exams, you are expected to have:

- a working webcam and computer (*restart your computer before your exam for the most effective testing environment*)
- Google Chrome
- a downloaded Honorlock extension to your Chrome browser
- a private workspace (*if this is unachievable contact your faculty*)
- incredible attention to exam instructions (*it's your responsibility not to get flagged for cheating*)
- diligence to notify your faculty of accommodations or extenuating circumstances that affect your exam time or exam environment at the beginning of the term (*at the very least, one week before your exam*)
- integrity to abide by all exam instructions and report any irresponsible peers

The Warrington College of Business is strongly committed to academic integrity and will rigorously enforce violations of the UF Honor Code and/or additional Warrington academic integrity policies. To be a successful student please read all instructions for any assignment carefully, do not collaborate on individual exams, assignments, or homework, and review the following best practices to be prepared.

Best Practices for Preparing for and Taking an Honorlock Exam

<https://warrington.ufl.edu/covid-19/for-students/honorlock-best-practices/>

There will (probably) be an Honorlock check “exam” on the class web page for you to use before you take the final exam.

Required Links from the University of Florida

UF has a bunch of links that are required on syllabi. For example, the link to UF’s academic honesty code is required. And I think academic honesty is incredibly important! So here is the link: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx> But beyond that I don’t know for sure what other required links might be. So let’s pretend that they are below. And let’s also pretend that you spent the time clicking on them.

Course Schedule

ECP5705

Modules	Readings/Chapters	Group Projects
Module 1 <i>Demand</i> Due: May 29	Chapter 1 (parts) Chapter 2 (parts) Chapter 3	Group Project Chapter 3
Module 2 <i>Cost and Competitive Firms</i> Due: June 5	Chapter 1 (parts) Chapter 4 Chapter 5	
Module 3 <i>Monopoly firms</i> Due: June 26	Chapter 6 Chapter 10	Group Project Chapter 6

<p>Module 4</p> <p><i>Oligopoly and Game Theory</i></p> <p>Due: July 10</p>	<p>Chapter 7 (parts)</p> <p>Chapter 8</p> <p>Chapter 9</p>	<p>Submit your team point allocation</p>
<p>Module 5</p> <p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>Due: July 16</p>	<p>Chapter 12 (parts)</p> <p>Chapter 15 (IP and Auctions)</p>	<p>In Lecture 12.6, there is an error: The profit-maximizing quantity of diesel is 4.25 gallons.</p>
<p>Final Exam</p> <p><i>Available July 19 to July 22</i></p>		

Remember: There is a “Very Short Module Assignment” for each module and a “Short Chapter Assignment” for each chapter (except for the auctions material) due by the date in the schedule above.