



ECON 295: Labor Economics

Lawrence University: Fall, 2013

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. M. Taylor Rhodes

CAMPUS ADDRESS: Briggs Hall Room 221 Economics

CAMPUS PHONE: 920-832-7446

EMAIL: m.taylor.rhodes@lawrence.edu (official)
m.taylor.rhodes@gmail.com (preferred)

I will do my best to respond to all emails within 48 hours except on the weekends. Please be sure to always start the subject line of your email as LU Labor, otherwise I will not read it. This also helps me save you from the demise of the spam folder.

OFFICE HOURS: My office hours will be at 11am-Noon on Mondays and Wednesdays. I am also available by appointment (Fridays only) if you have a conflict during the above times; simply email me and suggest a time. Note, I am not available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lastly, as a tip to getting the most out of an office hour visit, write out your questions beforehand. It will help to identify the specific areas of confusion.

MATERIALS: The following textbook is required for this course:

Labor Economics: Introduction to Classic and the New Labor Economics. 1st Edition by Derek Laing.

For more information on the textbook, see
<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail-formats.aspx?ID=16890>

PURPOSE: This course explores the foundations of labor economics, including the supply of and demand for labor, the decision to work, human capital investment, on-the-job training, employment relationships and the aggregate labor market. This course will also analyze the impact of various policies in labor economics, such as wage controls, executive pay, wage discrimination and trade unions.

PREREQUISITE: ECON 100 or ECON 120.

ASSIGNMENTS: There will be a number of short assignments including a presentation of an assigned paper; 3 referee reports; and 2 news assignments. Instructions for these assignments will be provided on Moodle.

There will be a midterm exam. Part of it will be completed in class; part of it will be take-home. It will cover chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. To prepare you should complete the required chapter readings, review all lecture materials, review all practice problems in the textbook (there are many and Laing refers to them as *Worked Problem*) and review all end of the chapter problems (answers to all odd numbered questions are available at the end of the textbook).

There will be a final paper. It should investigate the recent labor economic literature and will be on a specific topic or research question of your choosing. The goal is to answer the following questions: What and how are economists currently examining the chosen topic/research question; and reflecting on this recent literature, what are their conclusions. The final paper should be 3 to 8 pages (max.) with 8 to 15 references (min.) and most, if not all, should be after 2007. This assignment will be segmented into three parts. The first part is a two page proposal where the first page discusses the topic/question and explains its relevance and the second page lists a set of proposed references (NBER Working Papers is a great starting point; Journal of Economic Perspectives is another; regional Federal Reserve papers can also be a good starting point). The second part is a 15 minute (max.) presentation on the last day of class (last lecture meeting). The third part is turning in the final draft of the paper.

GRADING POLICY: Your average for the class will be determined as follows:

Short Assignments:	30%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Final Paper:	40%
<i>Proposal</i> (5%)	
<i>Presentation</i> (5%)	
<i>Final Draft</i> (30%)	

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

1. I do not take attendance; as such, in the event of an absence, it is your responsibility to learn the material presented in lecture and assigned from the textbook. I will not repeat lectures for the sake of students who missed class/classes. You are forewarned: if you do not attend class regularly, expect your grade to drop significantly.
2. I do not tolerate disruptive behavior (i.e. talking during lecture; being disrespectful to me and/or fellow students). I reserve the right to drop any student who exhibits such behavior.
3. I do not tolerate lateness. It is your responsibility to be seated and prepared **prior** to the start of lecture. I reserve the right to drop students who arrive late and/or leave early.
4. I do not tolerate the use of cell phones. Please turn all cell phones and pagers off **prior** to the start of lecture. Do not answer calls/pages/text messages during lecture. I reserve the right to drop students who use their cell phone and/or pagers during lecture.
5. I do not tolerate academic dishonesty. Such cases will be referred to and fully pursued in conjunction with the appropriate university office(s). To be clear, you may work together on the homeworks only. All remaining assignments must be completed individually.
6. The use of a laptop computer during lectures is permitted but only for note-taking purposes, which includes accessing the e-book. If I suspect otherwise, I reserve the right to require students using a laptop computer during lectures to sit in the front row or to ban the use of laptops during lectures.

MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Success in this class requires preparation, continual effort, discipline and a good attitude. For most students, this course will demand much more of your time than will most other University courses. You should think carefully about taking this class in any semester if your other courses, on-campus or off-campus responsibilities prevent you from devoting significant time to this course (minimum 6 to 8 hours outside of lecture).
2. You are responsible for all the material covered in lecture, the assigned textbook readings and the material on Moodle. All are fair game for the Midterm Exam and the Final Exam.
3. Many of the course's resources are provided on Moodle. Therefore, you must have access to a computer and to the internet to take this course. Please have multiple backup options (ex: a friend's computer, a computer at the library) **as technical problems are not a valid excuse for missing a deadline!**
4. Work ahead of schedule! **Late assignments will NOT be accepted and there are no make-ups of any kind.**
5. For a variety of reasons, it is imperative that you use Mozilla Firefox as your browser for this course (for Moodle).
6. It is your responsibility to check Moodle often (my suggestion is daily) for announcements and new postings. I typically do not send mass, class-wide emails.
7. Please note that the time zone for this class is Central Standard Time.
8. Any remaining issue not explicitly covered by this syllabus will be addressed and remedied by me on a case-by-case basis.

READING SCHEDULE:

Note: The following is tentative and subject to change.

# of Weeks	Readings	Topic(s)
1	Ch 1 & 2	Preliminaries.
3 to 4	Ch 3,4 & 7	Foundations of labor theory.
1	Ch 8	Minimum-wage.
2	Ch 5 & 6	Human Capital & On-job Training.
1	Ch 11	Discrimination.
1	TBD	Topics include but are not limited to: Income Inequality. Trade Unions. Immigration & Outsourcing. Working over the life cycle. Crime.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

1. Short Assignments

(a) News Assignments

- NA #1
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Sep. 20
 - Due Date: Sep. 27 at 3:10pm (in class only)
- NA #2
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Oct. 9
 - Due Date: Oct. 16 at 3:10pm (in class only)

(b) Presentations and Referee Reports

- PR #1
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Sep. 27
 - Due Date: Oct. 7 at 3:10pm (in class only)
- PR #2
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Oct. 11
 - Due Date: Oct. 18 at 3:10pm (in class only)
- PR #3
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Nov. 1
 - Due Date: Nov. 8 at 3:10pm (in class only)
- PR #4
 - Date Assigned (via Moodle): Nov. 8
 - Due Date: Nov. 15 at 3:10pm (in class only)

2. Midterm Exam:

- In Class Part: Oct. 21
- Out of Class Part Due Date: Oct. 28

3. Final Paper:

(a) Proposal Due Date: Nov. 1

(b) Presentation Due Date: Nov. 20

(c) Final Draft Due Date (Two options)

- Turn in on the last day of class: Nov. 20 (in class)
- Turn in during the final exam time: Nov. 26 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (my office)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 Course Materials and Basic Setup

QUESTION: What internet browser should I use?

For this course, you should use Mozilla Firefox as your browser (for Moodle).

QUESTION: How can I purchase the required materials for this course?

There are three options:

1. Try the LU Bookstore, they may have copies.
2. Purchase directly from the publisher by exploring the available options on the following website:
 - <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail-formats.aspx?ID=16890>
3. Purchase the textbook from some other vendor.

2 Grades

QUESTION: Do I curve any grades?

The only curve I typically apply is to your overall course-wide grade (Note, I reserve the right to apply a curve or not). I rarely to never curve individual assignments.

QUESTION: Is there any extra credit / bonus?

I have, in the past, offered bonus points if you complete a student evaluation. More information on this will be forthcoming. Beyond this, there are no remaining extra credit or bonus opportunities.

QUESTION: What is my course-wide grade currently?

You can calculate your grade using the following formula:

$$Grade = .30 * Short Assig. Avg. + .30 * Midterm + .05 * Proposal + .05 * Final Present. + .30 * Final Draft$$

QUESTION: When will course-wide grades be submitted?

Course-wide grades will be submitted shortly after the course ends. Please note, after I submit them I do not know when they will be available; I imagine it takes some time so be patient when checking for your course-wide grade.

QUESTION: I would like to challenge my course-wide grade?

I only change course-wide grades in the event of a mathematical error. Thus, if you wish to challenge your course-wide grade you must provide me with your calculations—your grade is calculated exactly as described in this syllabus. Once I have your calculations, I will review them and will gladly double-check my gradebook.

3 Tutoring

QUESTION: Help, I need a tutor?

Tutoring may be available through the Center for Teaching & Learning. For more information, see <http://www.lawrence.edu/s/ctl/students/tutoring>.