

Brooklyn College Economics Department
Elementary Microeconomics (Econ 2200) - Spring 2016
Saturday, 12:45pm to 3:45pm
Classroom: IH-2143 (Ingersol Hall)

Instructor: Markus Gehrsitz (mgehrsitz@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Ernesto Garcia

Course Description: This course is intended for first year students in economics or business administration. It lays the foundations for a thorough understanding of how markets work on a micro level, that is on the level of an individual consumer or firm. Broadly speaking, economics is the study of who makes and gets what when people are able to trade with each other and ownership rights are clear and secure. The first couple of lectures introduce general economic principles such as the interaction of supply and demand, the role of prices and the concept of opportunity costs. This first part of the class is concerned with market efficiency. We will discuss assumptions under which markets yield optimal outcomes, the effects of trade and the consequences of government intervention. In the second part of this class, we will discuss situations in which government intervention can improve welfare and an emphasis is put on the two main actors in a market: firms and consumers.

Learning Objectives: The objectives of this class are...

... on a practical level:

- to sensitize you for the presence of economic principles in daily life.
- to build your economic intuition and logical thinking
- to enable you to read, write and solve graphs and mathematical equations

... on an academic level:

- to introduce you to the vocabulary used by economists
- to teach you basic algebraic concepts commonly used in economics
- to prepare you for intermediate microeconomics classes

Required Textbook and Mindtap: There is a paperback text book, but this class will also make use of online technology. It is built on the textbook *Principles of Microeconomics* by Gregory N. Mankiw. Cengage Learning. 2014, 7th edition. **You must also sign up for an account with Cengage's MindTap, a platform that houses the ebook (Principles of Microeconomics, Seventh Edition by N. Gregory Mankiw), course videos, your Aplia online homework, and your practice quizzes with video answers.** The cost is \$85.00 and will include a paperback text sent to your address. Instructions on how to sign up for MindTap are below.

Instructions for MindTap:

What is MindTap? MindTap empowers you to produce your best work – consistently. MindTap is designed to help you master the material. Interactive videos, animations, and activities create a learning path designed by your instructor to guide you through the course and focus on what's important. Get started today!

Registration and Payment:

Register and purchase access from <http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/1081383>

Note: In order to get the \$85 dollar rate that I negotiated with the publisher for this course, you can use the above link ONLY! Any student who does not use the link provided will incur a different cost at their own expense.

Follow the prompts to register your MindTap course. You will have to enter the **course key for this class which is MTPN-MH5P-3THZ**

If you are unable to make a payment, you have the following options:

Free Trial: If you are unable to pay at the start of the semester you may choose to access MindTap until 11:59 PM on 02/19/2016 during your free trial. After the free trial ends you will be required to pay for access. Please note: At the end of the free trial period, your course access will be suspended until your payment has been made. All your scores and course activity will be saved and will be available to you after you pay for access.

Bookstore: You may be able to purchase access to MindTap at your bookstore. Check with the bookstore to find out what they offer for your course. There is no guarantee that they will offer access at the same reduced rate as through the above weblink!

If you already registered an access code or bought MindTap online, **the course key to register for this course is: MTPN-MH5P-3THZ**

System Check

To check whether your computer meets the requirements for using MindTap, go to <http://ng.cengage.com/static/browsercheck/index.html>

Please Note: the System Check is also accessible in the drop down box next to your name located in the upper right corner of your MindTap page.

Customer Service

If you have trouble registering for this class or submitting your payment, please contact customer service at 1-866-994-2427 or orders@cengage.com

Course schedule: The schedule of topics below is approximate and may change

Date	Topic	Chapter
<i>Part I: Supply and Demand, and Market Efficiency</i>		
Sat, Jan 30	Introduction to MindTap (by Ernesto Garcia)	1
Sat, Feb 6	Market Sources of Supply and Demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand Curve • Supply Curves • Equilibrium: Supply and Demand Together 	4
Sat, Feb 13	Elasticity and Its Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price Elasticity of Supply • Price Elasticity of Demand 	5
Sat, Feb 20	Supply, Demand, and Government Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price Controls • Taxes • Consumer and Producer Surplus • Market Efficiency 	6,7
Sat, Feb 27	Market Efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pareto-efficiency • Market Failure • Cost of Taxation 	7,8
Sat, Mar 5	Interdependence and Gains from Trade (Part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Experiment • Absolute Advantage • Comparative Advantage 	3,9
Sat, Mar 12	Interdependence and Gains from Trade (Part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winners and Losers from Trade • Arguments against Free Trade 	3,9
Sat, Mar 19	Review of Topics for Midterm	
Sat, Mar 19	<i>Midterm (2 hours)</i>	
Sat, Mar 26	<i>No class (Easter Holidays)</i>	
<i>Part II: Firm and Consumer Behavior, and Market Failure</i>		
Sat, Apr 2	Externalities and Public Goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalities and Market Inefficiencies • Regulation vs. Market-Based Solutions • Free Riding and the Tragedy of the Commons 	10,11
Sat, Apr 9	Costs of Production and the Competitive Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed vs. Variable Costs • Average vs. Marginal Costs • Long-run vs. Short Run Costs • Profits and Supply in a Competitive Market 	13, 14

Sat, Apr 16	Non-Competitive Markets Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopoly • Oligopoly • Monopolistic Competition (time permitting) 	15,16,17
Sat, Apr 23	<i>No class (Spring Break)</i>	
Sat, Apr 30	<i>No class (Spring Break)</i>	
Sat, May 7*	Non-Competitive Markets Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopoly • Oligopoly • Monopolistic Competition (time permitting) 	15,16,17
Sat, May 14	Consumer Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Constraint • Indifference Curves • Optimal Choice 	21
Sat, May 21	Review Session, Student Presentations	
Sat, May 28	<i>Final Exam (2 hours) during the normal class period</i>	

***Note: The session on May 7th will be an online class!**

Grading policy: Students will be graded on a curve.

Course grades will be determined by:

Item	Percent
Homework & Class Participation	20%
Midterm	40%
Final Exam	40%

Midterm / Final Exam policy: Each exam will cover the material presented in the classes prior to the exam. In other words, the final exam is not cumulative, except to the degree that the topics naturally build on one another. Note that **the final exam takes place on Saturday, May 28th at 12:45pm**. This is the last day of the semester, make sure that you do not make any flight plans, etc.. All exams must be attended at their scheduled times. No make-up exam will be provided for the midterm or the final, except in the case of an emergency, documented with either a doctor's note or a letter from Brooklyn College. There will be no exceptions! I also expect you to alert me via e-mail *before* the exam in case you cannot attend. Please note, traffic jams or subway breakdowns are not valid excuses. On the day of the exam, I expect you to leave in plenty of time to compensate for these relatively common occurrences. Also, it is your responsibility to bring pencils and erasers to the exams, I will not supply spares. You may use a calculator in the exam, but not your phone!

Attendance policy: I will take attendance, you will need to check off your name. From time to time, I will be calling on students from the class roster list. If you are checked off, get called on, but are not present, you will lose points off the Homework & Class Participation portion that adds to your final grade (see above).

Homework policy: There will be two types of homework assignments: pre-lecture quizzes which will have to be taken before we start a new section, and post-lecture quizzes which have to be taken after we have finished a chapter. Please check MindTap periodically to find out when an assignment is due. Usually assignments will be due Saturdays at noon on the day that we start a new chapter.

Pre-lecture quizzes are graded on a pass-or-fail basis, you will need 50 percent correct answers in order to pass. You have only one try at each answer. The goal here, is to make sure that you have looked at the material before you come to class.

Post-lecture quizzes will be graded on a percentage basis and you will have three attempts at each answer. Please note, questions in the post-lecture quiz are algorithmic, meaning each student receives a slightly different version of the same question. The questions also changes slightly with each attempt. Your grade for the post-lecture quiz is an average of your attempts, i.e. the more attempts you need, the lower your score!

After a quiz deadline passes, submissions will no longer be accepted (not even 10 seconds after the deadline). You will receive no credit for late assignments, no exceptions.

Additional Materials: Only the pre-lecture quizzes and post-lecture quizzes constitute mandatory homework and will directly enter your grade. Nonetheless, there is a wealth of material in MindTap available for practice. I have uploaded videos that go over class content. Look for them in the folder “Video Lectures”. More importantly, there are many additional practice problems. For each chapter I have uploaded an “Ungraded Quiz with Video Answers” that contains practice questions very similar to those you will see in the exams. Even better, I have provided video answers that walk you through these practice problems step-by-step. These video solutions are courtesy of Baruch College and they are great practice. If you are having difficulty with the post-quiz questions, I strongly recommend practicing and watching these videos before you take the graded quizzes. What is more, the questions on the quizzes (both graded and ungraded) are very similar to questions that you will see on the exams. To give you an additional incentive to do these extra problems, I will pick at least five of these questions and put them on the exam.

If you want to do well in this class, go over as many problems as possible – practice makes perfect. There is also “Direct-from-Text Homework” which is voluntary and will not enter your grade. I recommend doing these problems only if you have spare time after doing the graded problems and the ungraded quizzes with video answers.

Prerequisites: None, this is an introductory class.

How to Do Well in this Class: Economics is generally perceived to be a “hard” subject. Here are some recommendations on how you might want to structure your preparation:

Step 1: Read the chapter we will cover in class *prior* to attending the session.

Step 2: Do the corresponding pre-lecture quiz to see if you understand the basics, you only need to get 50% to get full credit!

Step 3: Attend the class, participate and don’t hesitate to ask questions if you have trouble understanding a concept.

Step 4: If you are still not comfortable with some of the concepts, watch some of the video lectures provided on MindTap.

Step 5: Do some of the practice questions that are provided on MindTap. Watch the video walk-throughs if you are not sure how to find the right answer.

Step 6: Do the post-lecture quiz, this is the main component of the homework portion of your grade!

Step 7: If you feel that you need more practice, do more practice problems. If the video solutions are not fully satisfying, ask your professor to go over a problem in the next class.

Office hours and communication: Office hours are held after class and by appointment in room WH-101. Outside of class, e-mail is my preferred way of communication. My email-address is mgehrsitz@gradcenter.cuny.edu. Please insert the course code (“Brooklyn College ECON2200”) into the subject; I teach multiple classes and this will help prevent any misunderstandings. Any questions related to the class may be asked; if your question is relevant to other students in the class, I will 'cc' all students.

Blackboard: Your main venue for homework assignments, video solutions, and class slides will not be Blackboard but MindTap! It is your responsibility to get MindTap access and check for updates on a regular basis. I will announce it if there a supplemental materials that can only be posted on Blackboard.

CUNY’s policy on Academic Integrity: The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

Students with Disabilities: In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me.