

ECONOMICS 306-001

**Intermediate Microeconomic Theory**

Meeting Time: MWF 10:30-11:20, Enterprise Hall, room 274

Course Prerequisites: Econ 103, Econ 104 and Math 108 or 113

**Instructor:** Abigail R. Hall

**Email address:** ahall15@gmu.edu

**Website:** [www.abigailrhall.com](http://www.abigailrhall.com)

**Office Location:** Enterprise Hall

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Required Materials:** *Microeconomics* by Goolsbee, Levitt, and Syverson

**Course Description:** Microeconomics focuses on the behavior and actions of individual economic units (primarily individuals and firms) and examines how decisions between these actors are coordinated in markets. Microeconomic theory is the main foundation for all other economic theory and offers insight into the actions of individuals and firms in a market context. This course will work to develop a set of tools for analyzing a variety of economic problems and examining the implications of policy decisions. This course focuses of developing these skills to prepare students for advanced economics courses.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will understand and analyze a variety of situations using the model of rational self-interest.
2. Students will be able to use indifference curve analysis to explain individual behavior.
3. Students will be able to analyze the role of private property, prices, profit and loss in allocating scarce resources.
4. Students will be able to understand and analyze various market structures, including perfect competition, monopoly, oligopoly, and monopolistic competition.
5. Students will be able to apply the concepts and models learned in class to a variety of issues, including current events.

**Course Methodology:** Economics is the study of exchange. Through economic analysis we come to understand how individuals with different goals work to coordinate their activities in order to be made better off. In this course we will work to meet the above objectives through a variety of means. Every person learns differently. Some individuals learn best by visual demonstration. Others are auditory learners and do best by verbal explanation. Still, other students are “tactile” learners and retain knowledge through physically interacting with the material (e.g drawing, graphing, etc.). This course will engage these three types of learning through a number of ways. These include:

A. Lecture/Discussion: The discussion and sharing of knowledge works to sharpen analytical and other skills. Through lecture and in-class discussion students will work to analyze material, formulate ideas and articulate these concepts to others.

B. Individual exams and assignments: Exams, homework, and other assignments work to hone students' writing skills and ability to express complex concepts and ideas in a clear, concise, and comprehensive manner. These assignments serve as a metric through which students may receive feedback on their progress.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities who require accommodations for this course are to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Information for students is available here: <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or by phone at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**Academic Honesty:** I take academic honesty *very* seriously and will follow the policies as published by George Mason University. These policies are online and available at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>. It is the responsibility of the student to read and understand what constitutes a violation of the honor code. Claims of ignorance cannot be used to justify dishonest behaviors. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported through the appropriate channels. In this course, ***any student caught engaging in activities which violate the honor code as written by the University will receive a semester grade of "F" for this course.***

**Severe Weather Policy:** If severe weather is expected in the area, please refer to the University website to check the status of classes. Changes will be made to meet course objectives in the event class is cancelled.

#### **INSTRUCTOR SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

**Expectations for the course:** I expect all students to have successfully completed the prerequisites for the course before taking the class. Class will consist of lecture and discussion. I expect students to have read all assigned materials before coming to class.

**Attendance Policy:** Each student is responsible for what he or she learns. Attendance is a key to meeting course objectives and for students to adequately learn the presented material. As such, I expect students to attend all classes. If a student needs to miss a class, it is the responsibility of that student to obtain all class notes and assignments.

**Communication, and Class Updates:** Occasionally, I may need to update students on class activities and assignments. I will be emailing students at their GMU email address. Students are responsible for checking this email regularly.

I will also post links and other information to class assignments on my website, [www.abigailrhall.com](http://www.abigailrhall.com). Click on the “Econ 306” button under the “teaching” tab. Relevant information for the course will be on this page. Here you can also access copies of the syllabus, assignment instructions, and problem sets and answer keys.

### **Other Classroom Notes:**

1. Cell phones are to be turned off and put out of sight.
2. Cell phone calculators may not be used on exams and no calculators may be shared.
3. There is to be no off-task conversation as these can be very disruptive to other students.
4. Students will show respect at all times for others.
5. Class will begin on time and end on time. As such, students are expected to be on time. Announcements will be made and all assignments are due at the beginning of class.

**Schedule of Assignments, Exams and Other Important Dates** (Please note we will try to stick to this schedule):

First day of classes	Tuesday, January 21
<b>Problem Set 1 Due</b>	<b>Monday, February 3</b>
<b>Midterm Exam 1</b>	<b>Wednesday, February 12</b>
<b>Problem Set 2 Due</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 5</b>
Spring Break	March 10-March 16
<b>Midterm Exam 2</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 26</b>
Spring Break	March 10-March 16
Last day of classes	Monday, May 5
<b>Problem Set 3 Due</b>	<b>Wednesday, April 23</b>
Reading Days, <b>no class</b>	Tuesday, May 6
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Wednesday, May 7</b> <b>10:30-1:15</b>

### **Course Topics and Outline**

- Chapter Two: Supply and Demand*
- Chapter Three: Market Analysis*
- Chapter Four: Consumer Behavior*
- Chapter Five: Individual and Market Demand*
- Chapter Six: Producer Behavior*
- Chapter Seven: Costs*
- Chapter Eight: Supply and Demand in Competitive Markets*
- Chapter Nine: Market Power and Monopoly*
- Chapter Ten: Pricing Strategies*
- Chapter Twelve: Game Theory (Time Permitting)*
- Chapter Sixteen: Externalities and Public Goods*

## **Course Requirements, Evaluation, and Grading**

Course Specific Grading: Final grades will be based on two (2) midterms during the semester, a comprehensive final, participation, three (3) problem sets, and two (2) "current event cards." Specific requirements for these assignments will be discussed in class. Exams will cover material presented in lecture as well as material in the textbook. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essays.

**Note:** Students are required to bring all necessary materials (e.g. pencil, scantron, calculator, GMU student ID, etc.) to exams. These materials will not be provided.

The final grade is calculated as followed:

Midterm exams, 40% (20% each)	40%
Homework sets 30% (10% each)	20%
Current Event Assignments, 10% (5% each)	10%
Comprehensive Final 20%	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Participation and Professionalism tax or subsidy, +/- 5%

**There will be no make-up exams.** If a student must miss an exam, this should be discussed with me prior to the exam. In the event of an emergency, students should email me immediately. Please note that if a student misses an exam and I have not accepted a student's excuse, a grade of "0" will be given. Note that ignorance of an exam, forgetting, oversleeping, etc. are neither emergencies nor acceptable reasons for missing an exam. If the absence is excused, one may replace the exam grade of zero with the grade received on the final—hence the final will be worth 40% of the final grade.

**There will be no make-up assignments.** Please note that homework assignments may be done in advance of due date so students should be able to complete work in the event a student must miss class. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. I require a hard copy of all assignments. Homework may not be submitted over email.

## **Grading Scale**

A: 93-100	A-:90-92	B+:88-89	B: 82-87	B-:80-81
C+: 78-79	C: 72-77	C-: 70-71	D:60-69	F: <60

Week	Topic Covered
January 22-24	Introduction, What is Economics? Chapter 2, Review of Supply and Demand
January 27-31 <b>Homework set 1 distributed Jan 27</b>	Chapters 2 and 3, Supply, Demand, and Price Controls
February 3-7 <b>Homework set 1 due February 3</b>	Chapter 4, Consumer Behavior
February 10-14 <b>Midterm Exam 1, February 12</b>	Chapter 5, Income and Substitution Effects;
February 17-21	Chapter 6, Producer Behavior, Industrial Organization
February 24-28 <b>Homework set 2 Distributed February 24</b>	Chapter 7, Costs
March 3-7 <b>Homework set 2 Due March 5</b>	
March 10-15	Spring Break—NO CLASS
March 17-21	Chapter 8, Perfect Competition
March 24-28 <b>Midterm Exam 2, March 26</b>	Chapter 9, Monopoly
March 31- April 4	Chapter 10, Pricing Strategies
April 7-11	Chapter 12, Game Theory
April 14-18	Chapter 16, Externalities and Public Goods
April 21-25 <b>Homework Set 3 Due April 23</b>	Special Topics in Micro (TBD)
April 28-May 1	Special Topics in Micro (TBD)
May 5	Review Day
May 7	Final Exam 10:30 a.m.