

Economics 4317/7317 Urban Economics - Spring 2020

Course Description: This class covers cities as economic units. Topics covered include the formation of cities, the process of urbanization, land and real estate markets in cities and local public sector economics. Both theoretical models and empirical evidence are discussed.

Both empirical evidence and theoretical models are presented. Prerequisite: Econ 3251 or Econ 4351.

Time and Place: Tuesdays and Thursdays 8am-9:15am, Middlebush 212

Instructor:

Saku Aura

Office: Professional Building 222

Office Hours: Mondays 11am-12noon

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This course uses Canvas

Textbook: Arthur O'Sullivan: Urban Economic, 9th edition, McGraw-Hill. The textbook will be available via Canvas, through AutoAccess program.

The lectures will cover some material beyond the material covered in the textbook. Note that this additional material is required for the exams.

Grading: The grading on this course is based on the exams (midterm and a final), writing assignments and problem sets.

Assignment	Weight
Final exam	20%
Midterm	20%
Term Paper draft	10%
Term Paper final version	20%
Short Writing Assignment 1	10%
Short Writing Assignment 2	10%
Problem sets	10%

Note that + and – modifiers will be used for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Graduate Credit: The expectations for the quality of the required writing assignments are higher for Graduate Students.

Exams:

Midterm Exam: Tuesday 3/10, regular class time.

Final Exam: Tuesday 5/13, 10am-12noon. The final exam is **not** comprehensive.

Problem Sets:

I will occasionally assign problem sets based on the material we have learned (most likely 4 or 5 problem sets).

Please return an original (handwritten or typed up) problem set solution on the due date. You may cooperate with your classmates on the problem sets (work in groups, discuss the solutions), but each student should return their own individual answers to problems (do individual write-ups).

Statement regarding extra credit

There will be no extra credit assignments in this class.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance in class is purely voluntary but strongly recommended. I believe University students should be treated as adults. Past experience tells me that getting a passing grade without a stellar attendance record is very unlikely. If you miss a class for a non-emergency reason, it will be solely your responsibility to find out what was covered during that class. Please do not contact me for notes or assignments if you missed a class for a non-emergency reason. For the purpose of this policy participation in a university-sanctioned event such as an inter-collegiate athletic event will be treated as an excused emergency.

Preliminary Lecture Plan:

Reading relevant chapters from the textbook before the lecture will make the classroom discussion more interesting. The following is a rough guide on how the course will proceed.

All the dates are still subject to change.

Date	Topic	Chapters	Noteworthy
01/21/20	Introduction	1	
01/23/20	Micro review	2,24	
01/28/20	Micro review	2,24	
01/30/20	Why Cities?	3,4	
02/04/20	Why Cities?	3,4	
02/06/20	City locations	5	
02/11/20	Consumer Cities	6	Writing Assignment 1 Due
02/13/20	Cities in a Regional Economy	7	
02/18/20	The Urban Labor Market	8	
02/20/20	The First Cities	9	
02/25/20	Land Rent and Manufacturing	10	
02/27/20	Office Space & Tall Buildings	11	
03/03/20	Housing Prices	12	Short Writing Assignment 2 due
03/05/20	Review		
03/10/20	Midterm		
03/12/20	Spatial distribution	13	
03/17/20	Monocentric City Model	14	
03/19/20	Monocentric City Model	14	
03/31/20	Neighborhoods	15	Term Paper Topics Due
04/02/20	Land Use Policy	16	
04/07/20	Urban Housing and Public Policy	17	
04/09/20	Urban Housing and Public Policy	17	
04/14/20	Cars and Roads	18	Term Paper First Drafts Due
04/16/20	Urban Public Transit	19	
04/21/20	Local Government	20	
04/23/20	Local Government	20	
04/28/20	Local Government Revenue	21	
04/30/20	Education	22	
05/05/20	Crime and Public Policy	23	
05/07/20	Review		Term Papers Due
05/13/20	Final Exam: 10:00am-12noon		

Writing Intensive Requirements

There will be three major writing assignments in this class:

1. Two short reaction papers
2. Term paper

Please refer to the preliminary lecture plan above for deadlines for these assignments. All written assignments must be double-spaced 12-point font format, and with 1-inch margins

and they must be submitted electronically. They must be in PDF or Word format and submitted via Canvas. The final versions of papers must use a consistent and formal style for acknowledging all sources. Late work will be penalized in grading.

1. Short Reaction Paper (3 pages): You will be asked to write a short essay discussing the economics of a potentially controversial topic assigned by the instructor.
2. Term Paper/Background Memo/Case Study (9-11 pages): This paper can take one of a two approaches.
 - (a) An informative background memo on a policy topic or a theoretical topic. You are free to choose your topic as long as it falls broadly into the field of urban economics as construed in this class.
 - (b) A case study of an metropolitan area. Your goal is to use the tool learned in the class to clarify to analyze the present structure (spatial, jurisdictional, socioeconomic) and the development that lead to the present structure of a metropolitan area.

We will discuss potential topics in class. Your paper will be graded for the clarity exposition, argumentation and the use of sources. The goal of this paper is not necessarily to argue a point, but to provide a balanced presentation of a debate. You will be required to submit your topic for approval, as well as submit a (approximately 50% finished) first draft in addition to the final paper. Note that the first draft is worth 5% of the course grade.

NOTE: If you are planning to write a paper on a topic that you have already written a paper for another class or are concurrently writing for another class, please talk to me about it before starting. Sometimes a situation like this could be accommodated if the papers are independent enough, however, as a general rule this is not recommended. Writing paper on a same topic for two classes concurrently or reusing an old paper without these arrangements will be treated as academic dishonesty.

You are welcome to use as sources academic journals, working papers, newspapers, magazines, policy papers by think tanks/governmental agencies/international agencies and other sources (such as books). Most sources are available online. Do not rely solely on newspaper/magazine commentary as sources; the goal is to write about the economics of the question, so it is important to relate to some of the economic analysis underlying the question. When citing information from a source, please try to keep in mind the underlying policy stand taken by the author/the publishing entity and try to present a balanced view on the topic. This does not mean that you are not allowed to take a particular point-of-view on the topic, but your paper should not present only one side of the argument.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

ADA

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the [Office of Disability Services](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Intellectual Pluralism

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#); the [MU Equity Office](#), or equity@missouri.edu.

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

Intellectual Property Notice

All course materials including but not limited to the syllabus, course assignments, study guides, learning guides, online lecture videos and content, and lab book (i.e. course pack) are property of the instructor and University and may not be shared online or distributed in any man-

ner to others. Students are prohibited from posting course materials or notes online and from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. Doing so will constitute both an academic integrity violation and a copyright violation. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to civil penalties and criminal liability. Violations of academic integrity may subject you to disciplinary action under University policies.

Statement on Recording Classroom Interactions

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.