

Economics 131: Undergraduate Public Economics

Section Syllabus, Fall 2020

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Section Link: [link]
Office Hours Link: [link]

Introduction

Welcome to Economics 131! I look forward to teaching each of you this semester. Note that this section is a *supplement* to Professor Yagan's lectures and the assigned readings. Please come to section prepared, having finished the readings and required lecture viewings in advance. Section time will be mostly focused on reviewing difficult theoretical concepts from lecture and solving related exercises: it will be most beneficial if you have viewed lecture first. Section is intended as an opportunity for you to ask conceptual questions, deepen your understanding of the key points from lecture, and prepare for problem sets and exams.

Sections

In accordance with university requirements, section this semester will be held virtually on Zoom. Attendance is optional, and section **will be recorded** and posted to bCourses. You are welcome to attend any of my sections that work best for your schedule. Questions received through the chat will be anonymous, as the chat will not be uploaded to bCourses. If you are able to do so, I highly recommend attending section as a "commitment device" to revise/master the material at the regular pace of the course. The section times are as follows:

Section Number	Section Time	Links
DIS 103	Wednesdays, 4-5pm	Link
DIS 105	Thursdays, 9-10am	Link
DIS 106	Thursdays, 4-5pm	Link

I recognize that many of us will have to adapt to unusual learning circumstances this fall. To maintain a quasi-normal classroom environment while we are online, however, I have set out the following expectations for our Zoom sections:

- Participation and communication:
 - Strive to learn from one another and build on one another's contributions.
 - Use the chat feature to pose a question or comment to the entire class. If you want to address a single participant, use the chat feature to address that specific person.
 - Be respectful and inclusive of one another both verbally and in chat.
 - Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points.
 - Do not post or share (even privately) inappropriate material.
 - Once class begins, please use group chat for class content only.
 - Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking. Unmuted microphones can cause disruptions to the lecture or the discussion.

- Professionalism
 - Please log-in to the session on time (we will begin promptly at Berkeley time).
 - Refrain from eating while participating in a breakout room or engaging in a Q&A session. If you need to excuse yourself for a snack, disable your video.
 - Dress as if you are out in public. If you are attending from home, please maintain the same level of presentation as you would in the workplace or at the university.
 - Most importantly, remember that this is a professional environment, and presenting yourself professionally is a sign of respect to your instructor and fellow students.

Unforeseen section cancellations: I am located in the Bay Area, and may be impacted by unforeseen weather events or power outages. If I do not show up to section within 15 minutes of the official start time – that is, by 4:25pm – then section is cancelled. If this is the case, I will endeavor to schedule a makeup section time that best fits student availability.

Office hours

I understand that not all students will be able to attend the synchronous section. My office hours are thus an optimal place to ask any additional questions about the material covered in class, problems discussed in section, problem set questions, or any other questions related to the course. I have coordinated with Carl McPherson, the other GSI, so that you can attend any office hours time you like. Our office hours are:

Office Hour	GSI	Link
Tuesdays, 2-3pm	Carl	Link
Wednesdays, 9-10am	Sree	Link
Wednesdays, 5-6pm	Sree	Link
Thursdays, 7-8pm	Carl	Link

A note about participation: I highly encourage questions and comments about the material during section. Due to limited section time, however, I may save a question for office hours if I think it strays too far from the material or if it will only benefit a few students.

Enrollment issues

I do not have the authority to handle enrollment. For **ALL** enrollment questions, please contact the department's Head GSI at headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu.

Email policy

Please include [Econ 131-Fall 2020] in the subject line of any emails you send me – this will help me identify that it's from discussion sections and not spam. I will try to reply within a reasonable timeframe: if I have not replied by two working days, feel free to email again (I may have missed your email!). Please use email correspondence for simple and short questions that could reasonably be answered by email. If you have more complicated or longer questions, please come to office hours to discuss them with me. Typing the answers for these kinds of questions, particularly equations and graphs, takes a lot of time and is relatively inefficient. On the day before the exams, I will only be answering emails until 8 pm.

Please note that Professor Yagan and I will use the email address for you that we get from CalCentral. Be sure your email address registered with the university at CalNet Directory is correct.

Problem sets and exams

There will be 3 problem sets each due at 4pm on September 28, November 2, and December 7. You are encouraged to work in (small) groups, but everyone has to turn in an individual problem set. Direct copying from someone else's work is not acceptable, nor is looking at previous solutions that may be available. I will bring cases of suspected copying to Professor Yagan's attention. All problem sets must be submitted online through Gradescope by the designated time. Late homework **will not** be accepted (with no exceptions, since solutions will be posted shortly after the deadline). If you are unable to submit your homework on time yourself, try to ask your classmates to do it or send it **on time** to me by e-mail explaining your situation.

The *tentative* exam periods are Monday, October 19th (midterm) and Thursday, December 17th. To accommodate students across multiple time zones, we plan to offer two (fairly close) exam periods. More information on scheduling will be available closer to the exam date.

Grading and regrading

Your answers are graded solely on their content and not on their intent. This means that we do not grade what you "meant to say" but what you actually write, even if you "knew the answer but just could not say it right." This also means that illegible, rambling, or poorly organized answers will not be scored. Please make your papers easier to grade by clearly marking your answers (e.g., by boxing or circling them).

It is a class policy that re-grade requests for problem sets must 1) concern an issue worth at least 3 points; 2) be accompanied by a one-page explanation for the re-grade; and 3) be received within one week of the assignment/exam being returned to you. Note that any re-grade request will result in the entire assignment or test being re-graded, with the possibility of an upward or downward adjustment to your assigned grade.

Special accommodations

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with us, or if you need special arrangements, please inform me and/or Professor Yagan as soon as possible. Please contact any of us privately after class or during office hours. For disability-related accommodations, you also need to obtain an accommodations letter from DSP (<http://dsp.berkeley.edu>), which will be sent directly to the professor.

Academic honesty

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." I fully expect that all of you will adhere to this code. I encourage students to discuss problems collaboratively, but final solutions must be produced independently. Remember that plagiarism includes appropriation of whole passages with or without credit, appropriation of words and phrases without credit, appropriation of both main and supporting ideas without credit, and paraphrasing without credit. Plagiarism also includes submitting a paper, problem set, or test completed by someone else.

Limits to confidentiality

As UC employees, all course instructors and tutors are "Responsible Employees". We are therefore required to report incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment or other conduct prohibited by university policy to the Title IX officer. We cannot keep reports of sexual harassment or sexual violence confidential, but the Title IX officer will consider requests for confidentiality. There are confidential resources available to you, including the CARE Advocate Office (<http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate>), which serves survivors of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Feedback

Your feedback will be very beneficial to my development as a GSI. If at any time you have suggestions on how I can be more effective as your instructor, please let me know.

Campus resources

Please approach me about anything that is affecting your learning or academic success. Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of resources to help you in ECON 131 and in your other courses at UC Berkeley:

Department of Economics - Undergraduate Information and Advising

- Economics Tutoring:
<https://www.econ.berkeley.edu/undergrad/home/economics-tutoring>
- Peer Advisors:
<https://www.econ.berkeley.edu/undergrad/home/advising>

Other Campus Resources:

- Student Learning Center (tutoring and other academic support):
<http://slc.berkeley.edu>
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP):
<http://eop.berkeley.edu>
- Disabled Students' Program (DSP):
<http://dsp.berkeley.edu>
- Transfer, Re-entry, and Student Parent Center:
<http://trsp.berkeley.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), Tang Center:
<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/>
<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/academic.shtml> (academic concerns)
- UC Berkeley Library - Information for Undergraduate Students:
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/information/undergraduate-students>
- Resource: Everything You Need to Know about Berkeley (index of campus resources): <http://resource.berkeley.edu>