Introduction to Economics
ECON 100-05/06; Spring 2016
MW 8:50-10:20 AM (Section 5)
MW 10:30 AM-Noon (Section 6)
Atwood 3

Professor Alex Gill
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Office: Hepburn 10
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-5 PM
Phone: (315)-229-1865

**Course Description:** This is an introductory (“survey”) course in economics, the study of the human endeavor to deal with scarcity. Broadly, economics is concerned with determining the optimal decisions individuals, firms, and groups can make regarding the resources at their disposal. The course is divided in two: the first half will deal with microeconomics, the study of the decisions of individuals and firms attempting to maximize happiness and profit, respectively. The second half of the course will cover macroeconomics, the study of the decisions of policymakers. This will include studying the oldest topic in macroeconomics, business cycles.

**Textbook:** N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics, 7th edition*

You purchase the text at the bookstore, online, or you may purchase or rent an e-book at vitalsource.com. The e-book is identical to the print version. The cheapest options are to find a used book or to rent the e-book from www.vitalsource.com for 180 days.

**Sakai:** You can find the syllabus, homework assignments, and announcements on the course Sakai page throughout the semester.

**Prerequisites:** None.
Helpful resources: The University provides free and useful help with writing skills, with English as a second language, and with quantitative skills. Writing and basic math skills are crucial to do well in this course. If you need assistance with these skills, please let me know and I will direct you to the appropriate resources.

Academic Honor Policy: All students are expected to adhere to the Academic Honor Council Constitution (which you signed prior to registration) at all times. Failure to do so will result in a zero grade on the relevant assignment and notification of the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Attendance: Attendance is not mandatory and will not be formally checked or recorded. If you want to do well in this course, though, plan on attending all classes, completing all assigned readings and assignments on time, and asking lots of questions.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability, you will need to register with the Disability and Accessibility Services Office as well as inform me so that I can make appropriate accommodations for you.

Grading: Your grade is comprised of:

25%: Exam on Microeconomics (Monday, March 14th, in class)

25%: Exam on Macroeconomics (this is the final exam, administered Wednesday, May 11, 6-9 PM)

Notes on exams: All exams are written (You will never be given a multiple choice question in this class.) and will consist of 4-5 short answer (one paragraph) questions and one essay question. One week prior to each exam, you will receive a study guide that includes 12 potential short answer questions and 3 potential essay questions. The test questions will be drawn from the study guide. You will have an opportunity in the class prior to each test to ask questions about the study guide. YOU MAY STUDY IN GROUPS BUT MUST GIVE YOUR OWN ANSWERS ON THE TEST.

25%: Term paper (Due at the beginning of the last class, Wednesday, May 4)

Notes on the term paper: This is a 5 page research paper on a topic of your choice, subject to my approval. You must submit a topic for approval by Monday, March 28. I will distribute more information on this assignment mid-semester.

25%: Participation (12% homework; 13% in-class participation as subjectively evaluated by me)
Notes on homework: There will be 12 homework assignments posted on Sakai throughout the semester. They are always due on a Monday (and are all noted in the course schedule below). You can receive the following grades on homework: a “check plus” indicates a completely correct answer (100%), a “check” indicates a mostly correct answer that demonstrates a genuine effort (90%), a “check minus” indicates insufficient effort (50%), and a “0” indicates either a failure to turn in the assignment on time or a failure to demonstrate a genuine effort to complete the assignment. YOU MAY WORK ON HOMEWORK IN GROUPS. IF YOU DO SO, TURN IN ONE ASSIGNMENT LISTING EACH GROUP MEMBER’S NAME. ALL MEMBERS OF EACH GROUP RECEIVE THE SAME GRADE.

General notes on grading: There are no extra credit opportunities, and if you miss an exam or deadline without a valid excuse (meaning verifiable illnesses or other emergencies), you will receive a zero grade on that assignment.

Grading Scale:

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Course Schedule (subject to change):

Wednesday, January 20: Syllabus, definition of economics, microeconomics/macroeconomics, money

   Reading (all readings are in the Mankiw text): pp. 3-5 and 610-611

Monday, January 25: Rationality, Trade

   Reading: pp. 5-7 and Chapter 3

Wednesday, January 27: More on Trade

   Reading: Chapter 9

Monday, February 1: Supply and Demand
Reading: Chapter 4
Homework #1 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, February 3: More supply and demand
Reading: Chapter 6 (through p. 126)
Monday, February 8: Costs of Production
Reading: Chapter 13
Homework #2 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, February 10: “Perfect” Competition
Reading: Chapter 14
Monday, February 15: Monopoly
Reading: Chapter 15
Homework #3 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, February 17: Everything in between: monopolistic competition and oligopoly
Reading: Chapter 16
Monday, February 22: Game Theory
Reading: Chapter 17
Homework #4 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, February 24: Asymmetric Information
Reading: pp. 462-467
Monday, February 29: Externalities and Public Goods
Reading: Chapters 10 and 11
Homework #5 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, March 2: Factor Markets
Reading: Chapter 18
Monday, March 7: Summary of microeconomics; test study guides distributed.
Reading: None
Homework #6 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, March 9: Review for midterm exam
Monday, March 14: Exam on microeconomics
Wednesday, March 16: Basic measures of the macroeconomy (GDP, Price Level)
   Reading: Chapters 23 and 24
Monday, March 28: Cont’d (Unemployment)
   Reading: Chapter 28
   Homework #7 due at the beginning of class
*Paper topics due
Wednesday, March 30: Business Cycles
   Reading: Chapter 33 (through p. 714)
Monday, April 4: Keynes
   Reading: Chapter 33 (pp. 714-740)
   Homework #8 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, April 6: Keynes cont’d
   Reading: Chapter 34
Monday, April 11: Monetary Policy in the United States; Money Supply
   Reading: Chapter 29
   Homework #9 due at the beginning of class
Wednesday, April 13: The Quantity Theory of Money
   Reading: Chapter 30
Monday, April 18: Non-Keynesian Theories of the Business Cycle
   Homework #10 due at the beginning of class
   Reading: None
Wednesday, April 20: The Great Depression
   Reading: Bastiat, “What is Seen and What is Not Seen,” first 36 paragraphs, available here.
Monday, April 25: The Great Recession
   Reading: None (we will watch portions of Inside Job in class)
   Homework #11 due at the beginning of class

Wednesday, April 27: Summary of Debates in Macroeconomics
   Reading: Chapter 36

Monday, May 2: Summary of Macroeconomics; final exam study guide distributed.
   Homework #12 due at the beginning of class

Wednesday, May 4: Review for final
   ***Papers due.

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 11, 6-9 PM