Instructor: Prof. Meryl Motika
Office: Hepburn 108 (Phone: X5716)
Email: mmotika@stlawu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 1pm-4pm
Recitations: Sundays at 5pm
Class Schedule: TTh 10:10-11:40 and 12:40-2:20 in Hepburn 113

Goal: Develop your ability to understand and apply microeconomic theory both intuitively and using algebra.

Have you ever wondered why a café stays open all day even though most of their custom is at specific times, or whether high wages really make people want to work more rather than less? Are you torn about the money you spent when you’ve just bought lunch and now your friends are all going somewhere else?

Nearly every individual or business decision balancing costs and benefits, including the issues above, can be analyzed using tools we will cover in this class. You will practice using these tools in analysis of personal decisions, firm decisions, and to understand interactions between firms and individuals. By December, you will understand what it means to think like an economist. DISCLAIMER: your lunch-buying habits may never be the same…

Course Outline: We will cover the following chapters, with supplemental readings as deemed appropriate.
Section 1: Chapters 1-9, skipping 3 and 8
Section 2: Chapters 11-14, 10
Section 3: Chapters 24, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27

Survival Strategies:
Allow plenty of time to work on reading and homework: Our goal as a department is that by the time you have completed this class, you will be able to think like an economist. Changing the way you think takes work, and makes this a challenging and work-intensive class. Effective reading also takes a lot of time. I have structured this class to reward those of you who do put in the work. The reading, in-class problems and homework give you lots of opportunity for practice before the writing assignments and exams. Use them well!
Form a study group: Working in groups on the homework and to study for tests will really help you learn the material. Your fellow students will sometimes understand things you miss. When you understand things they miss, you will learn from teaching them. Don’t neglect this resource!

Go to recitations and my office hours: The TAs for this class will hold weekly recitations in which they will answer your questions and help you think about the homework (NB: they will not show you exactly how to solve a homework problem. They will help with specific types of problems or examples from class, and guide you as you figure out the homework). I have office hours the afternoon before homework is due, and I’m happy to make appointments to work with you in more detail. If you aren’t understanding something, get help!

Use the Quantitative Resource Center: Located in Peterson, the center has times dedicated to economics. In addition, if you struggle with the math for this class you can ask for someone to help you practice algebra.

Get a tutor: Whitman Annex has tutors available for this class. If (when) you find yourself confused, don’t hesitate to ask for one!

Exams:
Exam 1: Thursday, February 25th in class
Exam 2: Thursday, April 7th in class
Exam 3: Wednesday, May 11th at 6pm

The exams will be given a weight of 100 points each in the final grade. Exams are comprised of multiple choice, essays and problems. Missing an exam will result in a grade of zero for the exam. The format of any make-up exam is at the discretion of the instructor, and will only be given if permission is obtained in advance. Students traveling for athletics other classes need to make arrangements with me ahead of time. Exams are always and everywhere your own individual work.

i>clicker questions: (25 total points) These questions may test your understanding of the reading for the day, what we did in the previous class, or material I just presented. These questions are also my way of taking attendance- they cannot be made up if you are absent. I will add the number of times you participated + the number of times you were correct to score this portion, so half the credit is for just trying.

Homework: (100 points) You will be given weekly homework assignments due every Tuesday at the beginning of class. Your homework grade will be based on the percentage of available points that you earn. (If there are 8 available points and you earn 6 of these, your score for that homework is 75%). Most questions are scored 1-3 where 1 means you tried, 2 means it’s mostly correct, and 3 means it’s exactly right.

Each assignment receives the same weight. You are free to work them out together however the final product must be your own work. I recommend that you sit on your own when completing the final draft of your homework to ensure it is not too much like someone else’s.

The homework assignments are CHALLENGING. You will not be able to begin them the evening before they are due and complete the assignments for class. Homework assignments will have components that require you to address some question using the graphical tools developed in class and the text as a way to understand and present economic theory. Additionally, you will be asked to analyze the model you have presented, answering some questions in words. These answers should be complete sentences or paragraphs. “Yes,” even if correct, will not be evaluated as an acceptable answer.

Homework assignments and solutions will be posted on Sakai. All assignments will be due at the beginning of the class, and NO late work will be accepted since the solutions will be posted shortly after the deadline. If you arrive late, I may not accept your homework. Homework assignments may not be handed in to my box on the day of the assignment. If you have to miss class or might arrive late, give it to me in person or put it in my box on the day before it’s due.

Chapter Outlines: (50 points) For each chapter assigned from the textbook, you will turn in a 1-2 page outline. This assignment is intended to incentivize you to do the reading as well as give you a way to structure your reading. Complete outlines get full credit, anything less gets no credit. After they have been graded, you can pick up your chapter responses from the box in my office as there are sometimes too many to return during class. I recommend keeping a copy to study for the exams. As with homework, no late work will be
Writing Assignments: (100 total points, 50 points each). An important part of your experience in this course will be two short writing assignments intended to develop your skill in presenting a well reasoned economic argument. You will be presented with an economic question and asked to, in a coherent essay of 500 words or less, make appropriate use of the tools from this class to answer the question. There is no need for outside sources on these essays. If you do use any outside source, I will expect this to be referenced appropriately. I will not read drafts, but I am happy to meet with you to discuss your thoughts.

The writing assignments are your own individual work. Do not discuss the problems with your friends, as it is far too easy to end up using someone else’s ideas. Essays that appear in any way to be group work will be reported to the dean.

The essays will be due February 4th and April 22nd. They are due as both a hard copy turned in to my box in Hepburn 102 and an electronic copy to the Sakai dropbox by 5pm on the due date (I return the hard copy and keep the electronic one to help me write recommendation letters as well as to check word counts). No late papers or emails will be accepted.

Grading: The final grade is based on your scores from three exams (300 pts), in-class questions (25 pts), your homework average (100 pts), the chapter outlines (50 pts) and the short papers (100 pts). There are a total of 575 points available. Your grade is based on the percent of the 575 points you scored. The grading scale will be no stricter than

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Attendance and electronic devices: Attendance is expected. In addition to the in-class questions, I make announcements in class about assignments that you will not want to miss. While you are in class, keep phones and other distracting devices turned off except for use during in-class experiments or during a scheduled break. If you use a laptop for notes, shut down your other windows. I recommend taking paper notes anyway since it makes sketching graphs easier. If you read this sentence, come to my office before Tuesday to claim an extra credit point!

Honor code: copying and cheating: Cheating will not be tolerated, anyone caught cheating will be punished to the full extent outlined in the student handbook. I will recommend that you receive a zero grade in this course if you are deemed guilty of academic dishonesty on exams or the papers and a zero grade on the homework portion of your grade if found guilty on homework assignments.

Students with disabilities: If you have a disability and may need accommodations please be sure to contact the Disability and Accessibility Services Office right away so they can help you get the accommodations you require: http://www.stlawu.edu/special-needs. Please bring me your accommodations letter and discuss it with me early so you can have the best possible experience this semester. Although not required, I would like to know of any accommodations that are needed at least 10 days before a test, so please see me soon.

Resources for victims of harassment or assault
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: http://www.stlawu.edu/associate-dean-student-life/sexual-assault-resources or call the confidential 24-hour Sexual Violence Hotline at 315-244-5466.