

**Econ 4290/Econ 5050: Labor Economics**  
**University of North Texas**  
FALL 2019  
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY 11:00-12:20PM  
SAGE 356

## **1 Instructor**

Dr. Xi Yang

Email: Xi.Yang@unt.edu (respond within one business day)

Phone: (940)-565-2270

Office: Wooten Hall 347

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9-11 am or by appointment

Visit Canvas often for important class and grade information.

TA: Dennis Lyons

Email: Dennis.Lyons@unt.edu

## **2 Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the analysis of labor markets with primary reference to the United States economy. Topics include labor supply and demand, labor productivity, education return and decision, migration and immigration, discrimination, unemployment, and income inequality. We will also discuss government policy with regard to the labor market, like the minimum wage and payroll taxes.

It is designed to provide students with a better understanding of the complexities of the labor market. By the end of the course, students should have the ability to:

- Understand the theoretical and empirical tools used to analyze labor market and public policy issues.
- Interpret labor market statistics and understand recent trends in the economy.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of government policies in terms of their effects on labor markets.

## **3 Prerequisite**

This course is an application of standard microeconomics, which is why a strong foundation in microeconomic theory is required. Students in this course should have completed Intermediate Microeconomics (ECON 3550) with a grade of C or better. Some basic algebra and graphing will also be used in this course.

## 4 Course Materials

**Required Textbook:** *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy* (11th or 12th edition) by Ronald Ehrenberg and Robert Smith.

Course materials (syllabus, chapter lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, discussion questions, quizzes, and practice exams) are available on the **Canvas**. You should print and bring the lecture notes to class.

## 5 Course Requirements and Grading

The composition of the final grades is as follows:

Requirements	% of Final Grade
Problem Sets	20%
Presentation	20%
Midterm Exam 1	15%
Midterm Exam 2	15%
Final Exam	30%

### Problem Sets

There will be 5 problem sets. Each problem set accounts for 4% of the final grade. So the 5 problem sets account for 20% of the final grade. Each problem set will be posted in Blackboard on a Monday and usually, it is due in two weeks. Submit your homework in class. No late problem sets will be accepted.

### Presentation

Students are required to work as small groups on a 10 mins presentation with given topics. A list of possible topics and guidelines will be released during the semester.

### Exams

Three exams will be given during the semester: two midterm exams and a comprehensive Final Exam. The exam dates and material covered on each exam are as follows:

**Midterm I: Thursday, September 24th, 11:00-12:20 am (chapters 1-5)**

**Midterm II: Thursday, October 29st, 11:00-12:20 am (chapters 6-10)**

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 10th, 10:30-12:30 am (chapters 1-16)**

All exams are closed-book and closed-notes. However, you will be able to prepare a hand written cheat sheet on a letter size page (both sides), and use it during tests. No cell phones are allowed during exams and will result in a zero.

## 6 Course Policies

### 6.1 Readings

You should read the assigned chapter in the text by the first day that it is to be covered in class. The order of chapters is presented at the end of the syllabus. Some additional readings may be assigned as the semester progresses. Unless you are specifically told otherwise, appendix material is not covered.

### 6.2 Office Visits

You are encouraged to visit me during office hours for clarification of lecture notes, assigned readings, homework problems, grading policies, presentation, or advice on study habits. If you cannot see me during my regular office hours, make an appointment with me at the end of class. If you visit, please come prepared. For example, if there is a question on lecture notes, be sure that you have read the relevant part of the text.

### 6.3 Grade Appeals

If you think that an exam has been incorrectly graded, submit a written explanation of the problem no later than 1 week after the exams have been returned. This deadline applies regardless of whether you are present in class at the time the exams are returned. I will respond to you in writing as soon as possible. If there is still a disagreement, schedule an office visit so that we may further discuss the problem.

### 6.4 Make-up Policy

No make-up exams (quizzes) will be given unless you notify me of the situation **as soon as possible** and can provide documented evidence of a valid excuse. The instructor is the judge of what constitutes a valid excuse.

### 6.5 Withdrawals

University policy relative to withdrawals will be followed. Please consult with your academic advisor or UNT academic calendar for the last date you can:

- Drop with an automatic grade of W
- Drop with a W if you are passing the course
- Last day you can drop a course at all

It is vital that you consult with your academic advisor prior to dropping any course. It can have dire effects on your financial aid and/or academic record.

### 6.6 Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties include a grade of *F* in the

course. You will find the policy and procedures at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>.

## **6.7 Student with Disabilities**

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at <http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html>. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call them at (940)565-4323. If you need an accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible but at the latest by the second week of class.

## 7 Tentative Course Schedule

	Date	Topic
Week 1	27-Aug 29-Aug	Introduction to course Ch 2 Overview of the Labor Market
Week 2	3-Sep 5-Sep	Ch 3 The demand for Labor
Week 3	10-Sep 12-Sep	Ch 4 Labor Demand Elasticity
Week 4	17-Sep 19-Sep	Ch 5 Frictions in the Labor Market
Week 5	24-Sep 26-Sep	<b>Midterm I</b> Ch 6 Supply of Labor to the Economy
Week 6	1-Oct 3-Oct	Ch 7 Labor Supply: Household Production, the Family and the, Life Cycle
Week 9	8-Oct 10-Oct	Ch 8 Compensating Wage Differential s and Labor Markets
Week 8	15-Oct 17-Oct	Ch 9 Investments in Human Capital
Week 9	22-Oct 24-Oct	Ch 10 Worker Mobility: Migration, Immigration, and Turnover
Week 10	29-Oct 31-Oct	<b>Midterm II</b> Ch 11 Pay and Productivity: Wage determination within the Firm
Week 11	5-Nov 7-Nov	Ch 12 Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Labor Market
Week 12	12-Nov 14-Nov	Ch 13 Unions and the Labor Market Ch 14 Unemployment
Week 13	19-Nov 21-Nov	Ch 15 Inequality in Earnings Ch 16 International Trade
Week 14	26-Nov 28-Nov	Thanksgiving Break (no class)
Week 15	3-Dec 5-Dec	Presentation Review Session
Week 16	10-Dec	<b>Final Exam (1:30-3:30pm)</b>