

Economics for Public Administration
Fall 2025
School of Public Affairs and Administration
Rutgers University- Newark

Professor: Tiana Marrese, PhD

Course Hours: Asynchronous, videos posted by Wednesday, 6pm

Course Deadlines: Weekly assignments due following Wednesday, 6pm

Office Hours: Recurring office hours every Monday 4-4:45pm

Additional office hours requested through **email**. I am happy to accommodate your schedule, please provide at least a 24-hour window for us to find a time.

Course Description

This course deals with the application of basic economic analysis to public policy problems. The primary goal of the course is to learn the basic principles of economic reasoning so that you can use those principles to help untangle the complex policy problems you will confront as policy makers, policy analysts, and administrators. The course differs from more traditional economic courses in its emphasis on public policy applications. It will give MPA students tools to analyze, synthesize, think critically, and problem solve in a complex and dynamic environment.

Prerequisites

The course is designed for students with little or no background in economics. It is taught with minimum mathematics, namely graphs and simple algebra. The basic principles of economics are not difficult, but it takes practice to learn how to use them. Consequently, you must prepare ten problem sets plus two exams. If you are having trouble mastering the material, please seek help from the instructor immediately. Anyone who is willing to work at it can master the basic concepts and principles of economics, but the topics at the end of the course draw on the material at the beginning of the course. No one can afford to fall behind in the beginning.

Lecture Notes, Textbooks & Readings

A set of lecture slides and videos will be provided for each class. Class sessions will roughly follow the material in these slides. Students should watch the videos, take notes and review the slides, and read the assigned chapters for the week. You will be responsible for the content across this material. There may be additional resources provided for discussions and supplemental reading.

We will utilize a textbook to support and reinforce lecture notes. Students are required to obtain copies of the following text:

N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, Seventh Edition. Cengage Learning.

In addition, previous course lecture notes and a few supplementary readings may be assigned. These articles are mostly taken from popular sources of news and analysis such as the *New York Times* and *The Economist*. Their purpose is to illustrate how the principles we discuss in class can help us understand common social problems and policy issues. These readings will be available on Canvas. Students may find it helpful to read the following textbook for further insights

Jeffrey M. Perloff, *Microeconomics*, Seventh Edition (or more updated versions).
Pearson Education, Inc.

Grading & Assignments

Your grade for the course will be based on class participation (10%), problem sets (40%), and two exams (50%).

Class Participation (10%). Critical thinking and thoughtful dialogue are more important than ever. Each week, students will be given the opportunity to develop these skills. A discussion board question will be posted along with lecture videos and the problem set. Students are expected to perform two tasks on this discussion board:

- 1) Record and post a 1-2 minute video response to this discussion question
 - 2) Leave a 50-100 word response on another student's video
- Participation points (pass/fail) will be given for the completion of these two tasks

Problem Sets (40%). Problem sets are a crucial part of the course. All students must complete 10 problem sets on time. These problems sets will be due at the time listed on the respective Canvas module, and students will be required to submit all written assignments through Canvas. Unless otherwise stated, problem sets should be written by hand with the student's hand appearing in at least one photo. Example submissions can be found on Module 1. Students are required to **take photos of their work and upload these photos to a single word document** before submitting to Canvas. Assignment questions that ask for explanations should be written in well-formulated, complete sentences in legible handwriting.

You are encouraged to consult other students and/or general AI platforms for help with the problem sets, with two caveats. First, the work that you turn in must be your own. If you work with someone or utilize AI, you should hand in solutions in your own words and cite when AI usage has occurred. Second, attempt the problem yourself before consulting other sources. This is for your own benefit, since you won't be able to consult others during exams. You will be held responsible for all submitted answers. You should be able to reproduce these answers on your own. See the clause on AI usage below for further information.

Each assignment is worth 10 points, and both your effort and performance will be evaluated. First, if you make adequate effort to solve all problems and you present your answers in a well-organized manner, you will receive 5 points for the assignment, regardless of performance.

Second, on top of the effort score, you will earn up to 5 points as a performance score, depending on the correctness of your answers. 0-performance score indicates that your assignment shows big misunderstandings, while 5-performance score shows that your answers to most questions are satisfying. If you receive a total of 5 points on an assignment, you should see the instructor or TA as soon as possible.

Exams (50%). Students will take a midterm and a final exam, and both will be released on the date listed in the respective modules. Students will be given 48 hours to complete the exam. Each exam counts for 25% of the final grade. Make up dates for either exam will not be allowed except in the case of an illness, family emergency, or religious holiday. If you must miss one of the exams due to illness, you must first present me with a letter from your doctor. General AI usage allowance for these exams will be discussed in class.

Late Submissions, Make-up Assignments, Attendance

For each 24 hours after an assignment's submission deadline, 25% will be deducted from the final grade. Pass/fail components will be marked as fail if they are late.

Disputes about Grades

If a student believes that an assignment or final grade was received in error due to fault or oversight of the instructor, the work will be reviewed to determine if a change is warranted. This request for review for a grade change must be made via email within 10 calendar days of the graded assignment being returned to the student but must occur before the final day of the semester.

- The MPA Handbook outlines the processes of a formal grade appeal of the final course grade. A copy of the Handbook is available on the SPAA website.

Academic Integrity

As explained in the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, "scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts".

- The Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>.

AI Usage

General artificial intelligence (GAI) is a rapidly changing tool. It is recognized that such applications can now mimic and outperform humans in many traditional academic assignments. This course will not police or ban the use of such platforms for assignments, rather students are expected to coproduce with AI when appropriate and cite their usage. The only unacceptable

implementation of AI is direct copying of content produced by AI without refinement, citation, or verification. If direct copying is caught or a student fails to note their usage of AI, the respective assignment will automatically receive a 0. Further guidance on AI usage will be provided in class.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction and Overview
Week 2: Supply and Demand
Week 3: Consumer and Producer Surplus
Week 4: Application of Supply and Demand, Elasticity
Week 5: Consumer Choice
Week 6: Application of Consumer Choice
Week 7&8: Review and Exam
Week 9: Production Theory
Week 10: Production Theory II
Week 11: Markets in the Long Run
Week 12: Market Failure
Week 13: Externalities
Week 14&15: Review and Exam

Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals Experiencing Disability: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible. More information can be found at the [RU-N ODS website \(ods.newark.rutgers.edu\)](https://ods.newark.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-5063 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Short-term Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#). Students requesting a letter of verification should submit information using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/Verification>.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm>.

For support related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does **not** have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm> or emailing careteam@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Psychological Support (Stress, Mood, Family Issues, Substance Use concerns and other personal challenges): The Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center provides individual therapy and support groups for students dealing with psychological issues. To schedule an appointment, email counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or call (973) 353-5805. Additional support is available through Uwill services:

- Uhelp: Crisis support at 833-646-1526 (available 24/7/365).
- Urise: Wellness-based video collection with a free account.
- Umatch: Teletherapy with flexible scheduling, starting with a free account.

Access Uwill@RUN at <https://my.rutgers.edu> using your netid. Services are confidential and free.

For emergencies, call 911 or Rutgers University Police Department at (973) 353-5111.

¹Thank you to Dr. Pengju Zhang for providing significant portions of the syllabus and course material.