

Course Syllabus

Spring, 2023

Course Information

Course Number: ECON 323
Course Title: Microeconomic Theory
Section: 505
Time: MW 11:30 am-12.45 pm
Location: ALLN 1002
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Guoqiang Tian
Office: LASB 256
Phone: 845-7393
E-Mail: gtian@tamu.edu
Office Hours: MW 10:20-11:20 am (online) or by appointment (face to face or online)
Link: <https://tamu.zoom.us/j/362-397-3071>
Password: 123456

Teaching Assistant: Tongtong Hu
Office: LASB 241
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Office Hours: W 1:00-3:00 pm (LASB241) or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the foundations of microeconomic theory, focusing on the behavior of individuals and firms, and the interaction of these agents in various types of markets. How to think about economic problems and how it can be used as a practical tool for decision making in consumption, management and public policy are the emphasis of the course. A central topic in this course is the price determination. Of affordable “baskets” of goods, consumers choose the one which maximizes their utility or well being, from which we derive the demand curve. Firms choose the combination of inputs and outputs that maximizes their profits, subject to the constraints imposed by their technology, from which we derive the supply curve or pricing. Students enrolled in this course should be comfortable with algebra, including quadratic and simultaneous equation; differential calculus is useful

to the problem solving and concepts of marginal rate of changes. Upon completion of the course, students should know how to analyze economic issues using theories or models learnt from the course.

Course Prerequisites

ECON 202 and MATH 142 or get permission from me.

Course Learning Outcomes

Through learning about the contents introduced in this course, students are expected to have a mastery of the fundamentals indispensable for a proper understanding of microeconomics and grasp the basic theories needed in many economics and business-related fields.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

The textbook: *Microeconomics* (Ninth Edition) by Robert Pindyck and Daniel Rubinfeld. The lectures, however, will be mainly based on my lectures notes *Microeconomic Theory*, which can be downloaded from Canvas and my website at: http://people.tamu.edu/~gtian/teaching_and_class_materials.html

Study Guide: *Study Guide to Accompany Microeconomics* (Ninth Edition) by Jonathan Hamilton and Valerie Suslow

Grading Policy

You will be evaluated on the basis of **three** homework assignments and **three** 75-minute tests. Homework will be handed out periodically. Learning by doing is essential for studying well. Working on the questions in these problem sets can help you understand the Text materials significantly. You are encouraged to form study groups to work on these homework assignments. Each study group is up to three students and hands in only **one copy** for each assignment. You are also strongly suggested to study the questions in Exercises in the textbook for preparing your tests.

Your grade will be calculated using the method listed below:

Homework:	20%
Exam:	80%

That is given by the formula:

$$(\text{HW 1} + \text{HW 2} + \text{HW3}) \times 20\% + (\text{Test 1} + \text{Test 2} + \text{Test 3}) \times 80\%$$

The maximum total points you can earn from homework assignments and tests are thus 300 points. The grade distribution is as follows. A student with points between 270-300, 240-269, 210-239,

180-209, or 0-179 will receive a grade A, B, C, D, or F, respectively, which may yield approximately 15% A's, 30% B's, 30% C's, 20% D's, and 5% F's.

Attendance Bonus Points

You are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence. Attendance will be regularly checked. To implement this policy effectively, 15 bonus points are given to students with perfect attendance. Every two points will be deducted for each missing class without my prior approval till all of 15 bonus points are taken off. Extra bonus points may be also given for class quizzes.

Exam Schedule:

I have set up tentative dates of the exams, which may be changed depending on the progress of lectures.

Test # 1: Monday, February 27, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Test # 2: Monday, April 3, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Test # 3: Wednesday, April 26, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Late Work Policy

Late work and missed exams will be governed by university rules on university-excused absences (*See Student Rule 7*: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>).

Tentative Schedule

Part I. Markets and Demand Side of Market

1. Math Review and Economics Review (Chapter 1): Week 1-2
2. The Basics of Supply and Demand (Chapter 2): Week 2-3
3. Consumer Behavior (Chapter 3): Week 3-4
4. Individual and Market Demand (Chapter 4): Week 4-5

Homework 1 due: Monday, February 20

Test 1: Monday, February 27, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Part II. Supply Side of Market

5. Production (Chapter 6): Week 5-6
6. The Cost of Production (Chapter 7): Week 7
7. Profit Maximization and Competitive Supply (Chapter 8): Week 8
8. The Analysis of Competitive Markets (Chapter 9): Week 10

Homework 2 due: Monday, March 27

Test 2: Monday, April 3, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Part III. Market Structure and Competitive Strategy

9. Market Power: Monopoly and Monopsony (Chapter 10): Week 10-11
10. Pricing with Market Power (Chapter 11): Week 12-13
11. Monopolistic Competition and Oligopoly (Chapter 12): Week 13-14
12. Markets for Factor Inputs (Chapter 14): Week 14-15

Homework 3 due: Wednesday, April 19

Test 3: Wednesday, April 27, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

University Policies

Attendance Policy

All students in the course are **required** to attend class, take all homework assignments and exams. Class attendance will be checked regularly and you can earn bonus points from attendance (see the explanation on attendance bonus points above).

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Make-up exams are allowed only for the reasons and following the rules stated in Section 7.1-7.4 of the University Students' Rule. To have my permission to make-up exams, you should especially follow the rules stated in Section 7.3: "Except in the case of the observance of a religious holiday, to be excused **the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence.** This notification should include an explanation why notice could not be sent prior to the class. Accommodations sought for absences due to the observance of a religious holiday can be sought either prior or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence."

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

“The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Agreement in Writing

All agreements should be in writing. If you inquire for the possibility to obtain an excuse, or any other circumstance that requires any special accommodation in class, we need to communicate in writing the scope of any arrangement. If a conversation with me makes you think that you are entitled to any special accommodation, you need to send me an email and inquire for a confirmation of this. Unless there is a written communication from me, you are not entitled to any special accommodation.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

You should not talk or send any message to any other students in your class during the exams. If you have any questions, you can ask the proctors.

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to

attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the Texas A&M Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends.

Emergency help is also available 24 hours through the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline 988.