Economics 451/551
TOPICS IN LABOR ECONOMICS
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30-9:50am
Chapman 207

CONTACT INFORMATION
Office: 538 PLC
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Telephone: 346-4664
Office Hours: 2:00-3:00pm Tuesdays and Thursdays (and by appointment)
Course Website: On Blackboard

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will focus on two broad areas of empirical research in labor economics. The first part of the course will focus on the poverty; we will learn how poverty is measured and how various anti-poverty policies in the United States have performed. The second part of the course will focus on the determinants of economic success.

While developing a solid understanding of the aforementioned topics is an important objective for the course, it is equally important to me that you learn to critically assess empirical research. As such, we will often focus on the methodological approaches that economists have used in these research areas.

COURSE PREREQUISITES
Economics 311, Intermediate Microeconomic Theory, is a prerequisite for this course.

READINGS
The very strongly recommended text for the course is Poverty and Discrimination by Kevin Lang. We will follow this text fairly closely during some parts of the course but we will often shift gears to delve more deeply into particular studies.

GRADING
Distribution of Points:
60% In-Class Exams (3 at 20% each)
40% Final

Makeup Exams:
If you know in advance that you must miss an exam (e.g., due to illness), you must let me know before the exam is administered and we will work something out if the excuse is valid.

Re-grade Policy:
Re-grade requests must be:
1. In the form of a written request, listing the questions deserving special attention and why such questions deserve special attention.
2. Stapled to the original exam.
3. Submitted within one week of the exam being returned.
4. Submitted with the acknowledgment that your entire exam will be reviewed a second time and, as such, you may end up losing points.

There is no need to follow the above procedure if an administrative error has been made in calculating your grade (such as an arithmetic error in adding up your score). In such a case, just bring it to my attention.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

Academic dishonesty (from plagiarizing work to cheating on exams) will not be tolerated. Please acquaint yourself with the Student Conduct Code, which is published online at www.uoregon.edu/~stl/programs/student_judi_affairs/academicdishonesty.htm. If I have reason to believe that a student is violating the Student Conduct Code, I will involve the Student Judicial Affairs Office.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements with me during the first week of the term. Please request that the counselor for students with disabilities (164 Oregon Hall) send me a letter verifying your disability.

REQUIREMENTS FOR 551 STUDENTS

Students taking the course for graduate-level credit are required to write a paper on a topic related to poverty or the determinants of economic success. The paper should provide an in depth and critical review of the existing economics literature on the chosen topic and propose directions for future research. Please see me by the 3rd week of class to agree on a paper topic. This paper will comprise 25% of your grade, exams 45%, and the final 30%.

IMPORTANT DATES

| Exam #1: | Thursday, January 21 |
| Exam #2: | Tuesday, February 9  |
| Exam #3: | Thursday, February 25|
| Final:   | Friday, March 18, 8:00am |
COURSE OUTLINE

PART 0: Background
A. Introduction to the Course
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 1
B. Towards Statistical Literacy
   Reading: Lang, pp 19-27

PART I: Poverty
A. Poverty Measurement
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 2
B. Trends in Poverty
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 4
C. Anti-poverty Policy Overview
   Reading: Lang, Chapters 3
D. Welfare
   Reading: Lang, Chapters 3 and 9
E. Earned Income Tax Credit
   Reading: Lang, Chapters 3
F. Labor Market Policies
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 5

PART II: Determinants of Economic Success
A. Intergenerational Mobility
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 6
B. Neighborhoods
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 7
C. Education
   Reading: Lang, Chapter 8
D. Discrimination
   Reading: Lang, Chapters 11 and 14