

AEDECON 2001: PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS

Spring 2021 Syllabus

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COURSE DETAILS

Time: Asynchronous (i.e., whenever you want during the week)
Location: Carmen, Zoom, your house
Credits: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course is intended to provide you with an introduction to the basic tools of economics, with applications to food, agriculture, the environment and natural resources. Even if you never take another economics class, I hope this course will help you interpret things you observe or read about, recognize economic phenomena in the world and in your life, and make more informed decisions. By the end of this course, I expect you will be able to:

- Describe the behavior of consumers and producers using economic terminology, math, and graphs
- Describe the motivations and impacts of government policies using economic terminology, math, and graphs
- Recognize, differentiate, and define key economic concepts
- Create and interpret graphs describing key economic relationships
- Recognize and analyze economic principles and thinking in the world around you

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT

AEDECON 2001 is a Social Sciences GE course (Human, Natural, and Economic Resources category).

Goals for GE Courses in Social Sciences:

Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

Expected Learning Outcomes for GE Courses in the Human, Natural and Economic Resources Category:

- Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources.
- Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts.
- Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

This course will provide students with an introduction to the theories and methods of microeconomics, with an application to food and resource contexts. More specifically, students will learn about the basic economic models of consumer, producer and government decision-making; the trade-offs faced by society as the result of these decisions; and the implications of these decisions for various types of sustainability.

PREREQUISITES

This course has no prerequisites. It is not open to students with credit for AEDE 2001H or ECON 2001.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

The textbook for this course is called *The Economy*, and it was developed by the CORE Project. The textbook is open-source, free, and available online. It is designed and optimized for digital accessibility. To access the book, go to www.core-econ.org. There are several different textbooks available on this site, so make sure you are accessing the correct one. That said, our textbook (*The Economy*) is available on the CORE Econ website in Spanish, French, Italian, and Finnish, along with English, so if you speak any of those languages or are looking for a challenge, feel free to use any of those versions. You may also note that the English version that I suspect most of us will use is written in British English, and will include different spellings of some words (e.g., labor is spelled “labour” in British English). You can access the book in any of these languages without registering on the CORE Econ website, but registering as a student (still free) will give you access to additional resources. Hard copies of the text are available for purchase, and apps are available for offline reading on a smartphone, tablet, or e-reader. Learn more about these options at www.core-econ.org/faqs.

CARMEN

I make significant use of Carmen in this class, even more so now that we are entirely virtual! I will post the syllabus, lecture slides, and links to the lecture videos and supplementary materials on Carmen. In addition, problem sets, discussion board assignments and exams must be completed and submitted on Carmen. The TAs and I will also keep the grade book updated so you can see your progress in the class, and I will use Carmen to make important class announcements. Please make sure you are checking Carmen on a regular basis and set your Carmen notifications so you will be alerted when an announcement is posted. If you have any problem accessing Carmen, please let me know!

ASSIGNMENTS + ASSESSMENTS

The graded assignments and assessments for this course will consist of a getting to know you assignment, problem sets, discussion board questions and responses, and exams. Extra credit can also be earned through submission of an original video on an economic concept. Here are more details of each type of assignment or assessment:

- **Problem sets:** There will be nine problem sets throughout the term. Problem sets are an important opportunity for you to practice the material. You are welcome and encouraged to work together on problem sets (safely) but you must always submit your own work written in your own words. These problem sets will be due at 11:59 PM on Wednesdays and must be completed using the Quiz feature in Carmen. Late problem sets will receive a zero, but your lowest problem set grade will be dropped, so you can miss one assignment (no need to alert me; you will get a zero and it will get dropped automatically at the end of the semester). That said, skipping an assignment early in the term can backfire down the road if things happen in your life that weren't expecting (as they often do, especially in these crazy times). If you're not quite finished with an assignment, or you're struggling with a problem, it's a good idea to submit what you have by the deadline so that you can receive partial credit!
- **Discussion board questions and answers:** Even when my class was in person, I found online discussion boards to be a useful tool for allowing discussion in such a large class (there are more than 150 of you!). We'll be using the Discussion Board feature in Carmen. My goals for using the Discussion Board are for us to have an opportunity to discuss the topics and issues that are of most interest to *you*, think about how course material relates to the world outside of the lectures, and share our diverse perspectives on the topics we're studying. In order to receive your credit, you must post 1 Question and 2 Answers in each of the weeks listed on the syllabus. Discussion board assignments (there are six scattered throughout the semester) are also due Wednesdays at 11:59 PM. The question you pose can be on *anything* related to recent class material (something you heard on the news, something that sparked your interest in the book or videos that you want to talk about, something you've observed in your life, etc.). However, there are some elements that make a good question. For example, closed ended questions (with a yes or no answer), questions that can be

answered by reviewing the slides (e.g., how do you calculate the slope of the demand curve?), and questions that are offensive are not acceptable. Your question must include a link to source material (e.g., a legitimate news source, a business website, an academic journal article, a related and appropriate YouTube clip). If your question doesn't meet these requirements, you'll get notified by the TAs and have one week to fix it for half credit. In addition, you'll have to respond to two questions written by your peers within the same timeframe. Your responses do not have to include links. Given the class size, I will not be able to respond to all your questions and chime in online, but I will post a short video on Carmen highlighting excellent posts and correcting any misconceptions that I saw posted. I'll share what makes a good post in the second week of class via video and develop a list of community guidelines for our Discussion Board with your help!

- **Exams:** We will have three exams to assess your progress this term—the last of which will be cumulative. Your lowest exam score will be dropped. If you miss one of the first two exams (for whatever reason), there will be no make-up exam, and Exam 3 (the final exam) will serve as your make-up exam. Make-up exams for Exam 3 will only be permitted in very rare situations on a case-by-case basis. Exams will be done on Carmen and will be open note/book but you must commit not to obtain help from any person within or outside our class. You will have a three day window to take each exam and it will be timed. Once you have started the exam you will have the normal exam period for in-class (80 minutes for Exams 1 and 2 and 120 minutes for Exam 3).
- **Extra credit:** You can receive up to 5% in extra credit (the same amount of points as a complete and fully correct problem set) by submitting one original video on any economic concept discussed in the videos and/or associated parts of the book. Full credit will be given to videos that show creativity, connection to at least one economic concept, and *correct* understanding of the featured concepts. Humor, puns, song, drawing, etc. are all welcome! The video must be approximately PG-13 or below in rating and 5 minutes or less in length. You must introduce your video at the beginning (even if it doesn't feature you) to attest that the video is your own work. You may enlist the help of others on the video (e.g., a cameraperson) but please (a) follow appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols, such as mask-wearing and social distancing outside your immediate household, and (b) submit your own work. Joint submissions made by multiple students are not permitted. The video does not need to be super high quality—something well conceived and recorded using a smartphone or tablet with no editing is just fine! Videos can be submitted at any point during the semester (if inspiration strikes or you are particularly excited about a certain concept) but are due by the last day of classes (Friday, April 23) at 11:59 PM at the latest via Carmen.

GRADING

The grading for this class will be broken down as follows:

Who are you?	2% total
Problem Sets (x9—lowest dropped)	40% total, or 5% per problem set
Exams (x3—lowest dropped)	40% total, or 20% per exam
Discussion Board 1Q/2A (x6)	18% total, or 3% per 1Q/2As

The grading scale will be:

A	93.0-100	C	73.0-76.9
A-	90.0-92.9	C-	70.0-72.9
B+	87.0-89.9	D+	67.0-69.9
B	83.0-86.9	D	60.0-66.9
B-	80.0-82.9	E	<60.0
C+	77.0-79.9		

OFFICE HOURS

The TAs and I will hold office hours by appointment via Zoom. This will allow us to have a conversation. You can sign-up for 30-minute one-on-one slots with me using Calendly: <https://www.calendly.com/zoeplakias>; to request to meet with one of the TAs, please use their e-mail address above. Please make sure you have reviewed the relevant sections of the lecture notes, videos and book *before* you come to office hours and try to come prepared with specific questions to make the most of your time with us. That said, don't be scared of office hours! We are here to facilitate your learning and want to help you get the most out of this class; there are no wrong questions.

E-MAIL

The TAs and I will try to respond quickly to your e-mails. You can expect a response within a day during the week and within two days over the weekend. That said, we are human and sometimes miss e-mails or forget to reply. If you don't hear from us within the time frame given above, please e-mail again to remind us! A few tips for e-mailing... First, if you have a logistical question, the answer is very likely on the syllabus or in Carmen—please check these resources for answers before e-mailing! Second, if you have a question about homework or class material, please review the relevant slides and book chapter (listed in the syllabus and on Carmen) before e-mailing! Finally, please make sure your e-mail is professional! Professional e-mails start with greetings such as: Dear Dr. Plakias, Dear Yun, or Dear Sowon.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Specific expectations about academic integrity are discussed in relation to each of the assignment and assessment forms discussed above, so please review them carefully.

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

MENTAL HEALTH

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. These kinds of challenges affect college students, graduate students—and even professors!—in the course of the academic year. If you are experiencing any of these challenges, personal problems or situational crises during the semester, please don't hesitate to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Service (614-292-5766; www.ccs.osu.edu) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. I understand it can help for you to be seen sooner by the OSU Counseling and Consultation Service if you call them with a faculty member. If your mental health is affecting your ability to succeed in this class, you are welcome to set up an appointment with me outside of office hours and we can call together to set up an appointment for you.

LAUREN'S PROMISE-I WILL LISTEN AND BELIEVE YOU IF SOMEONE IS THREATENING YOU.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah Campus. We must all take actions to ensure this never happens again.

Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at The Ohio State University.

In cases of sexual harassment or violence, Ohio State will:

- Respond promptly and effectively to sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking,

- Provide interim measures as necessary
- Provide confidential and non-confidential support resources,
- Conduct a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation,
- Provide remedies as necessary.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, you can take the following actions:

- If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- Report it to me, and I will connect you to resources.
- Seek confidential sources of support and help:
 - Counseling and Consultation Service Available 24/7 through the Office of Student Life, ccs.osu.edu, 614-292-5766
 - Medical services through the Office of Student Life Wilce Student Health Center, shs.osu.edu, 614-292-4321
 - Legal services through Student Legal Services, Studentlegal.osu.edu, 614.292-5853

OSU’s Office of Institutional Equity has established procedures and resources for Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention. They are detailed here: https://womensplace.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2018/04/Reporting-Resources_Brochure_Columbus.pdf.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

If you feel that you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office of Student Life’s Disability Services at 614-292-3307 or in Room 98 of Baker Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

COURSE OUTLINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week starting...	Topic(s)	Unit(s)	Homework Due
January 11	<i>BIG economic and technological trends in human history</i>	1,2	
January 18	<i>Individual decision-making as workers and consumers</i>	3	Who are you?; Problem Set (PS) 1
January 25	<i>Strategic interactions and evaluating outcomes</i>	4,5	PS 2; Discussion Board (DB) 1: 1Q/2As
February 1	Exam review		PS 3
February 8	Exam 1	1-5	
February 15	<i>Firms, workers, and customers</i>	6,7	DB 2: 1Q/2As
February 22	<i>Firms, workers, and customers</i>	6,7	No work due - Instructional break
March 1	<i>Market supply and demand</i>	8	PS 4; DB 3: 1Q/2As
March 8	<i>Labor markets and credit markets</i>	9,10	PS 5
March 15	Exam Review		PS 6; DB 4: 1Q/2As
March 22	Exam 2	6-10	
March 29	<i>Markets over time and markets that don't work</i>	11,12	No work due - Instructional break
April 5	<i>International trade and globalization</i>	18	PS 7; DB 5: 1Q/2As
April 12	<i>Environmental issues</i>	20	PS 8
April 19	<i>Innovation + wrap up</i> ; Exam review	21	PS 9; DB 6: 1Q/2As; Extra Credit
April 26	Exam 3 (Cumulative)	1-12, 18, 20, 21	