

Economics 468
Urban Economics
Fall, 2004

Course Description

Instructor:

Professor Michael Ransom
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Office Hours:

I will be in my office 1:30-3:00 PM on Mondays and 9:30-11:00 AM on Wednesdays. I will be happy to meet with you at other times if you will make an appointment. Please **do not hesitate** to come see me about any aspect of the course, especially if you need help.

Subject Matter:

Most economic activities are concentrated in space. This concentration leads to urban areas, or cities. Urban economics as a field provides theories to explain this concentration and offers insights into some of the problems that are unique to urban areas. In this course we will examine such issues as the location of businesses and residences within cities and across cities; the market for land and housing; the transportation system; the spatial segregation of ethnic, racial and income groups; congestion and pollution; and the unique characteristics of local and metropolitan governments.

Prerequisites:

You must have completed Economics 380 (Intermediate Microeconomics) and Economics 378 (Statistics for Economists) before enrolling in this course. Students who have previously taken Economics 388 (Econometrics), or who are currently enrolled in that course will find this course more rewarding. I strongly recommend that you enroll now in Economics 388 if you have not taken it.

Text:

Urban Economics, 5th Edition, by Arthur O'Sullivan. (ISBN 0-07-248784-4) Additional readings will also be assigned.

Grades:

Grades will be based on writing assignments, examinations and a research project and report. There will be one midterm examination and a final comprehensive examination. The final grade will be a weighted average based on the following: Writing assignments: 20 per cent; midterm: 20 percent; research project: 30 per cent; and final exam: 30 per cent.

Writing Assignments

Most weeks you will receive a writing assignment. Sometimes this will involve analysis of data, other times it will involve reading and critiquing an article from a journal, newspaper or magazine.

Research Project:

The research project is an extremely important part of the work of this course. This project should be your original analysis, not just a review of published work on the topic. I encourage you to use econometric methods, but other types of economic analysis are also appropriate. Begin looking for a topic immediately, as this project will require a lot of work.

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Course Calendar

Dates	Topics	Readings
8/31 - 9/9	Spatial allocation of economic activity and regional/urban development	Text: Chapters 1 - 6
9/14 - 9/30	Economic models of land use. Economic analysis of land use controls	Text: Chapters 7 - 10
10/5 - 10/14	Urban transportation systems	Text: Chapters 11 - 12
10/19	Midterm Examination (IN CLASS. Bring a blue book)	
10/21 - 10/28	Pollution and recycling	
11/2 - 11/9	Housing and Housing Problems	Text: Chapters 17, 18 & 13
11/11	Education	Text: Chapter 15
11/16	Urban Poverty	Text: Chapter 14
11/18-12/2	Crime	
12/4-12/9	Local Government	Text: Chapters 19 & 20
12/11	The Grand Tour of Urban Economics	
12/15	Final Examination Wednesday 11:00 AM -1:00 PM (IN CLASS. Bring a blue book)	

Notes:

1. This schedule is tentative and there may be some slight adjustments. However, the dates of the exams are fixed. Plan to be in class on those days!
2. There will be additional outside readings associated with the writing assignments. I will make those assignments periodically during the course.
3. There will be no class held on 11/23 (Friday instruction) and 11/25 (Thanksgiving).