

**ECON 407/507: Labor Market Economics
Spring 2009**

**TR 5:45 – 7:00 pm
BAL 2060**

Professor:	Berna Demiralp
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Course Description

This is a survey course in labor economics. It provides an introduction to the main topics in contemporary labor economics along with the economics models that are used to analyze these topics. We will discuss a broad range of topics, including theories of labor supply and labor demand, human capital, compensating wage differentials and income distribution. We will complement discussions of economic models with their applications to public policy issues.

Prerequisites

ECON 202S (or ECON 200S and permission of instructor) and junior standing or permission of the chief department advisor.

Required Text

Ehrenberg, Ronald G. and Robert S. Smith. *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*. 10th Edition, 2009.

Attendance

Although attendance is not required, it is strongly recommended. Primary teaching method in this course is lectures and class discussion, and the textbook is NOT a perfect substitute for the in-class lectures. Should you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes, *including any announcements made in class*, from a classmate.

Blackboard

Assignments, answer keys, and other course documents will be posted on blackboard. The following link takes you to the blackboard login page: www.blackboard.odu.edu.

ODU E-mail Accounts

The best way to reach me is via e-mail. You should send your e-mails to me from your ODU e-mail accounts, and you should have ECON 407/507 as part of your subject line.

Also please note that any e-mail correspondence from me will go to your ODU e-mail accounts. Therefore, please make sure that your ODU e-mail accounts are activated and working at all times.

Course Requirements

ECON 407 Students

1. **Two Midterm Exams - 23% each.** Each midterm exam will cover a subset of chapters as indicated in class and will not be cumulative. If you miss an exam due to reasons beyond your control (such as serious illness, death in the family), you will either take a make-up exam or the weights of the other exams will be adjusted. If you have a valid reason for not being able to take an exam on the scheduled date, you must get permission from me prior to the scheduled exam. Dates for the midterm and final exams are given below; however, the midterm exam dates are subject to change.
Midterm I: Thursday, February 19th
Midterm II: Thursday, April 9th
2. **Final Exam – 34%.** The final exam will be cumulative. It will be given on Thursday, May 5th between 3:45 – 6:45.
3. **Assignments – 20%.** There will be several assignments throughout the semester. The assignments will vary in nature across chapters. In some chapters, the assignments may take the form of problem sets; in others, they may consist of questions regarding an assigned reading. Assignments sets will be collected in the **beginning of class** (i.e. 5:45) on their indicated due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted.

ECON 507 Students

1. **Two Midterm Exams - 20% each.** Each midterm exam will cover a subset of chapters as indicated in class and will not be cumulative. If you miss an exam due to reasons beyond your control (such as serious illness, death in the family), you will either take a make-up exam or the weights of the other exams will be adjusted. If you have a valid reason for not being able to take an exam on the scheduled date, you must get permission from me prior to the scheduled exam. Dates for the midterm and final exams are given below; however, the midterm exam dates are subject to change.
Midterm I: Thursday, February 19th
Midterm II: Thursday, April 9th
2. **Final Exam – 20%.** The final exam will cover a limited set of chapters. It will have an emphasis on topics that are covered after the second midterm exam. The final exam will be given on Thursday, May 5th between 3:45 – 6:45.
3. **Assignments – 15%.** There will be several assignments throughout the semester. The assignments will vary in nature across chapters. In some chapters, the assignments may take the form of problem sets; in others, they may consist of questions regarding an assigned reading. Assignments sets will be collected in the **beginning of class** (i.e. 5:45) on their indicated due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted.
4. **Paper – 25%.** The paper should be a literature review of a topic in labor economics. You may choose a topic that will be discussed in class or any other topic related to labor economics. You should review a *minimum* of 8 academic articles from the economics

literature and synthesize the information presented in the articles. Your synthesis should reflect how you interpret, combine and organize the published research on your topic. Your paper should be 14-16 pages long and double-spaced. Minimum font should be 11pt.

Choosing a topic is an important part of this assignment. You are free to choose any topic that interests you in labor economics, but it should be clear, concise and focused. Its focus should be suitable to be addressed in a 14-16 page paper. You will need to get approval from me regarding the topic, so please make an appointment in the beginning of the semester to discuss your topic.

The paper assignment will consist of several components. The due dates for each component and the distribution of the overall 25 *points* given to the paper are listed below.

Important Dates for the Paper

- Jan. 12 – Feb. 6: Make an appointment with me to discuss your topic.
- February 12: Proposal and working list of references due. The proposal should be a one or two-paragraph description of your topic. The list of references that you will turn in on this date need not be the complete and final list. [2 pts]
- March 17: Detailed outline and an updated list of references due. This is the last day to turn in a detailed outline of your literature review and an updated list of references. [2 pts]
- April 21: Draft of the paper due. [3 pts]
- May 4, 5 pm: Final paper due. [18 pts]

Course Outline

1. Introduction and Overview (Chapters 1 and 2)
2. Labor Supply (Chapter 6)
3. Topics in Labor Supply (Chapter 7)
4. Labor Demand (Chapters 3 and 4)
5. Compensating Wage Differentials (Chapter 8)
6. Human Capital (Chapter 9)
7. Wage Determination Within the Firm (Chapter 11)
8. Labor Market Discrimination (Chapter 12)
9. Inequality in Earnings (Chapter 15)
10. Worker Mobility (Chapter 10)

Academic Honesty and Classroom Conduct

All students are expected to comply with the University Honor Code. Cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This syllabus includes a definition of plagiarism. Cases of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action in accordance with University Policies and Procedures.

Attendance in the class also implies acceptance of the university behavior codes. You will be expected to follow the classroom behavior codes summarized in the *College Classroom Conduct* document prepared by the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. For more information on university honor and behavior codes, refer to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs website:
<http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/osja>.