

USC Dornsife

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College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

ECON 500 (Microeconomic Analysis and Policy)

Instructor: Brijesh P. Pinto

Lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. to 1:20 p.m. in ZHS 163

This syllabus is 7 pages long. Read the entire syllabus carefully.

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Course Description

This course teaches students to apply microeconomic tools and methods to analyze business decisions, economic policies, and market performance. Following a rigorous overview of consumer behavior and producer theory, students analyze how structural demand and supply features influence market outcomes and firm conduct. The course also introduces students to foundational concepts in game theory and market design. Practical applications will be emphasized to highlight the course's relevance to public policy and business strategy. Importantly, the course will prepare students for subsequent graduate-level coursework and research projects in economics.

Learning Objectives

1. Apply standard microeconomic techniques commonly used in research and industry
2. Utilize microeconomic tools to design markets and institutions
3. Implement microeconomic methods to analyze policies and assess regulations
4. Assess the reasons behind market failures
5. Develop graduate-level skills in microeconomic analysis

Textbook

It is expected that we will use Nicholson and Snyder's *Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions* (12th Ed.), but **please do not purchase the textbook until I confirm our final choice.**

Course Outline

<i>Class No(s).</i>	<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Topic No.</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>Textbook Ch(s).</i>
1, 2, and 3	08/27, 08/29, and 09/03	--	Introduction and Math Review	[Instructor's notes]
4	09/05	--	Transactions, Markets, and Market Failure	[Instructor's notes]
5 and 6	09/10, and 09/12	I	Consumer Theory	3 and 4
7 and 8	09/17 and 09/19	II	Marshallian Demand	5 and 6
9 and 10	09/24 and 09/26	III	Producer Theory	9 and 10
11 and 12	10/01 and 10/03	IV	Profit Maximization	11
13 and 14	10/08 and 10/15	--	Midterm Exam Review	3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11
15	October 17 (Thursday)	--	Midterm Exam	3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11
16 and 17	10/22 and 10/24	V	Perfectly Competitive Markets	12
18 and 19	10/29 and 10/31	VI	Monopoly	14
20, 21, and 22	11/05, 11/07, and 11/12	VII	Game Theory	8
23 and 24	11/14 and 11/19	VIII	Oligopoly Profit Maximization	15
25 and 26	11/21 and 11/26	IX	Market Design: Stable Matching Theory	[Instructor's notes]
27 and 28	12/03 and 12/05	--	Final Exam Review	8, 12, 14, 15
--	December 17 (Tuesday)	--	Final Exam (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)	8, 12, 14, 15

Brightspace

Brightspace is the primary tool used for course administration, and you're responsible for keeping up-to-date on all the information posted there. Brightspace will house all course content: announcements, OSAS information, problem set submission deadlines, problem sets, math review materials, lecture slides, and much more.

Grading

Grade breakdown:

- Problem sets: 40%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final exam: 35%

The following answers further clarify our grading policies:

- (1) What is the USC registrar’s definition of an emergency?

USC registrar’s definition of an emergency is: “A situation or event which could not be foreseen and which is beyond the student’s control, and which prevents the student from taking the final examination or completing other work due during the final examination period.”¹

- (2) What happens if I miss the final exam for a reason that meets the USC registrar’s definition of emergency?

According to USC guidelines, “no student is permitted to omit the [final examination].”² Per the guidelines, in case of “a documented illness or other [event that meets the registrar’s definition of emergency] occurring after the withdrawal deadline for the course,” an incomplete grade will be assigned.³ Thus, if you miss the final exam for a reason that meets the USC registrar’s definition of emergency, you will be assigned an incomplete grade for the course.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

¹See [USC Grading and Correction of Grades Handbook](#), p. 12.

²See [USC Grading and Correction of Grades Handbook](#), p. 7.

³See [USC Grading and Correction of Grades Handbook](#), p. 12.

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at <https://osas.usc.edu>. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health — (213) 740-9355 — 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline — 988 for both calls and text messages — 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is

comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) — (213) 740-9355(WELL) — 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) — (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment — (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) — (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention — (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion — (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency — UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 — 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety — UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 — 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds — (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323) 442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice — (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Information provided in this syllabus is subject to change. If and when a change (however small) is made, an updated syllabus will be posted on Brightspace and the version (date) will be updated. Finally, ensure you're always looking at the most recent syllabus version.
