

“Economics deals with society's fundamental problems; it concerns everyone and belongs to all. It is the main and proper study of every citizen.” *Ludwig von Mises*

ECONOMICS 1B--PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS

SECTION 03

San Jose State University

Fall 2025

DMH 165

Mondays/Wednesdays 10:30AM—11:45AM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. NINOS P. MALEK

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OFFICE HOURS: After class
Tue/Thu 8:00AM—9:00AM (online)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Economics can be defined as *the study of exchange given certain institutional arrangements* or it can be defined as *the study of human action—people making choices*. This course will teach you about economic reasoning and how the social science of economics applies to the real world and to your daily life. ***This is NOT a course in business, personal finance, or investing.***

My goal is to teach you how economic analysis can be used to evaluate actions taken by individuals and the government. Topics that will be covered include fundamental concepts of economics such as scarcity and opportunity cost; trade and government barriers to trade; the role of prices in allocating goods and services; applications of supply and demand to public policy issues including the minimum wage, rent control, “price gouging” laws, drug prohibition, and human organ shortages; institutional differences between market and command economies; market structures and antitrust; Public Choice analysis, public goods theory and externalities; property rights and environmental economics.

My method is to teach this class from a philosophical and practical point of view. I will not focus on mathematics or the technical aspects of economics. I want you to have an intuitive understanding rather than a mechanical understanding. However, you will be expected to learn and apply the basic supply and demand model (graph). ***The goal by the end of the semester is to get you to analyze personal situations, listen to the news, discuss politics and public policy, and have conversations with your friends and family using the “economic way of thinking.”***

I understand that students have different learning styles. Some learn by reading (verbal), others by listening (auditory), and still others primarily by doing. I do my best to address all styles of learning by incorporating lectures, class discussion, group problem-solving exercises, simulations, and videos throughout the semester.

I will assign numerous essays to read and I will also show videos and video clips in class on various policy topics. In addition to my lectures, there will be a lot to read and watch.

The goal of these essays and videos/video clips is to make you think critically and to look at issues from a perspective you probably have not considered before this class. Of course, **there will also be reading from your THREE required books.**

COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

My primary goal in a principles class is to teach you to think like an economist. This skill can take you far in the business, government, and nonprofit sectors alike as well as in your personal life.

Specific SLOs that the Economics Department emphasizes in this class include:

- **Incentives Matter** (law of demand; law of supply; rational decision makers weigh marginal costs versus marginal benefits; the power of self-interest)
- **Opportunity Cost** (sunk costs; production possibilities; the free-lunch fallacy; tradeoffs in consumption and production; gains from interpersonal and international trade; comparative advantage.)
- **Supply and Demand** (understanding the S&D model as a representation of individual choices in exchange based on individual preferences, knowledge and circumstances; ability to examine current events using S&D tools; movement along a curve versus shift; welfare analysis.)

Economics 1B is a general education course that meets the requirement for area D1 in the social science area. Students will learn to apply microeconomic theory, to evaluate social information, draw on different points of view, and formulate policy implications. Issues of diversity will receive special attention in the analysis of price controls, labor markets, income distribution, and environmental issues. Finally, students will be able to place social events in an appropriate context. ***The GE writing requirement will be satisfied by writing a 1,500-word written assignment.*** The assignment will be due on **Friday, December 5.**

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

Students are expected to be familiar with the SJSU Policy on Academic Dishonesty which can be found in the University Schedule of Classes and the University Catalog. The Department of Economics Academic Fairness Standards states: “An individual instructor who discovers, or is presented with, conclusive evidence of cheating shall assign a course grade of ‘F,’ and inform the Chairman of the Department the reasons for the grade and for further disciplinary action.”

Plagiarism is defined as the act of representing the work of another as one’s own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to: **1.** The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another’s work,

without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work, knowingly or unknowingly or 2. Representing another person's scholarly or artistic works as one's own.

Plagiarism is unacceptable. The instructor will discuss any instances of suspected plagiarism with the student involved and apply appropriate sanctions. Evidence of plagiarism will result in course failure and may also result in expulsion from San Jose State University. To avoid plagiarism, a good rule of thumb is to use quotes and citations if you use five words from someone else.

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please talk to me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> to establish a record of their disability.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

I expect all students to behave professionally during class. This means that I will not tolerate **cell phone/Apple watch** text messaging, catching up on **social media** during class or looking at **irrelevant websites** on your laptop, **reading** the school newspaper or other materials, or **talking** while another student is asking a question, during a video, or when I am lecturing.

Talking is very disruptive to students who want to learn and to me as the instructor. I will not tolerate any **sleeping** or **heads down** during class. If you get tired, **go outside** and walk around until you wake up. If you get **bored**, please do not let me know that by putting your head down on your desk. I would rather you **leave** the classroom.

NO CELL PHONES WILL BE ALLOWED TO BE OUT DURING CLASS. IF YOU NEED TO TEXT OR CALL, GO OUTSIDE PLEASE.

IF YOU NEED TO USE A LAPTOP/TABLET (ANYTHING ELECTRONIC), YOU MUST SIT IN THE FIRST ROW (ACROSS) AND LAPTOPS/TABLETS CAN ONLY BE OPEN/USED AT CERTAIN TIMES*. For example, when I am **playing videos/video clips**, laptops/tablets are to be **CLOSED**.

THE POINT IS THAT MY CLASS IS NOT A TIME TO CATCH UP ON OTHER THINGS. THEREFORE, IF YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICE IS A TEMPTATION, IT'S BETTER TO NOT USE IT DURING MY CLASS AND INSTEAD TAKE NOTES WITH PEN/PENCIL AND A NOTEBOOK.

If this policy is too difficult to follow, then you should drop—this is a class for students who are serious about learning—those who will regularly attend class and come to class ready to learn and pay attention.

Please note that I will **ask you to leave my class** if you are regularly not following my class expectations and policies (frequently putting head down and sleeping in class, trying to use your phone or Apple watch, using your laptop/tablet in violation of my policy, reading irrelevant material, doing homework for other classes, etc.).

Also be **realistic** about your **personal discipline** and **commitment** to this class. If you know that you will not be disciplined this semester, if you know that you will not be focused in class or if your job/extracurricular activity/other commitments will make it difficult for you to attend class, pay attention, or to stay the entire time, **you should drop and take this class at another time.**

REQUIRED BOOKS

1. *Economics Today: The Micro View*, 20th edition by Miller + MyEconLab
2. *The Economics of Public Issues*, 20th edition by Miller, Benjamin, and North
3. *Economics in One Lesson*, Hazlitt

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND CALENDAR

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc.

Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Academic Calendar: <https://www.sjsu.edu/classes/calendar/2025-2026.php>

Important Deadlines: <https://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/fall-2025.php>

Add/Drop: <https://www.sjsu.edu/ue/student-petitions/drops/index.php>

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising>.

GRADES AND MAKEUP POLICY

- ✓ Five Tests: the **highest three** will count—even if you get an “A” on the first three tests, I highly recommend that you do not slack off. The Final will cover material from all the tests and you are required to take the Final) **100 points each**
- ✓ Written Assignment: **100 points**
- ✓ Final (**comprehensive**) **600 points**

FINAL EXAM: NO BOOKS, NOTES OR “CHEAT SHEET,” OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ANY KIND—DICTIONARIES, CALCULATORS, TRANSLATORS, ETC.

THEREFORE, IF YOU DID NOT ATTEND CLASS REGULARY AND DID NOT DO THE READING AT HOME, YOU WILL NOT KNOW THE INFORMATION “IN YOUR HEAD” AND YOU WILL MOST LIKELY FAIL THE FINAL EXAM.

Grades will be based on the highest three tests (300 points maximum), your written assignment (100 points maximum), and the Final (600 points maximum). There will be a total of **1,000 points**. *Whatever percentage you earn out of 1,000 points will determine your semester grade.*

GRADING SCALE

A+: 96.5—100	D: 59.5—69.4
A: 92.5—96.4	F: 59.4—BELOW
A-: 89.5—92.4	
B+: 86.5—89.4	
B: 82.5—86.4	
B-: 79.5—82.4	
C+: 76.5—79.4	
C: 72.5—76.4	
C-: 69.5—72.4	

WARNING!!!!

***You will not be allowed to take a test/Final early or later. NO EXCEPTIONS**

I will not drop you after the official drop date because of poor performance or missing scores.

ATTENDANCE

It is up to you to measure the costs and benefits of your class attendance. However, I highly recommend regular attendance because the tests can cover more than just the reading in the three books. Remember, you will **NOT** have any access to resources during the in-person Final exam. So, there is a cost to missing class.

If I were you, I would exchange phone numbers/email addresses with other members of the class. It is **your responsibility** to find out what you missed if you are absent or late or if you leave early. However, if you want to be in this class then **be sure that you can come to class, stay the entire time, and are paying attention to my teaching and anything else I do or show in class.**

Do not assume anything regarding the schedule. I reserve the right to change my schedule and the topics that I will cover. I will always give you notice if there are any changes, but if you are absent from the next class meeting or if you come in late or leave early, there could be another change to the schedule while you are gone.

Bottom line: if you come in late and I am already talking, assume I made an important announcement and ask me during the break or after class if indeed I did make any announcements. If you must leave early, send an email to me or someone you trust to make sure that I did not change my mind about the schedule or make any further announcements. It is always a good idea to send an email to me or someone you trust to confirm what we covered if you are absent from the entire class.

Finally, if you know you that you will only come to class occasionally or “when you feel like it,” you should expect to get a D or an F for the semester and you will have to repeat the class.

SCHEDULE AND AGENDA

See my Canvas site for the **Topics** file which lists the **book chapters and notes** that will be covered for each of the five tests. I will give you a tentative date for the first test and then I will give you updates for the remaining four test dates.

**The timed Final exam will be on MONDAY,
DECEMBER 15 at 10:45AM in the same classroom.**

<https://www.sjsu.edu/classes/final-exam-schedule/>

NO EXCEPTIONS OR CHANGES!

**Do not plan any trips or other events as you must all
take this Final with the entire class on this day and
time.**