Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
College of Business
Course Syllabus - Spring 2015
(1/22-5/6)

Course Number: ECON 5311
Course Name: Foundations in Economics
Class Time: TR 5:30-6:45 p.m.
Classroom: OCNR 132

Instructor: Jim Lee
Office: OCNR 345
Phone: (361) 825-5831
Office Hours: TR 9:30-11:00 AM; 2:00-3:30 PM
Or by appointment

Internet: Course site http://faculty.tamucc.edu/jlee/5311
Blackboard http://bb9.tamucc.edu
E-mail jim.lee@tamucc.edu


Course Description:
An intensive study for graduate students with limited or no academic experience in economics. Provides an introduction to economic principles, analysis and procedures used in graduate level study. This is a foundation course.

Relationship to Other Coursework:
The student will have an opportunity to apply quantitative skills introduced in other courses to solve economic problems in this course. In addition, this course will emphasize the following specific skills: mathematical competency, critical thinking, writing, reading, listening and speaking. The emphasis on the development of these specific skills in this course should benefit the student in other courses to be undertaken.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this course, the students will able to:
1. understand the subject matter of economics and its relevance to the contemporary world
2. apply core economic principles and reasoning to real-world economic issues
3. discuss and analyze government policy measures and their impacts on economic welfare
4. assess the performance of the U.S. and other economies
5. demonstrate awareness of the world economy and the business environment
6. further study in economics at the graduate level
**Instructional Methodology:**
The class will be interactive. A variety of learning methodologies will be used, such as: class discussions, team activities, class presentations, supplementary reading and writing assignments, and video presentations.

**Performance Evaluation and Grading:**
Student performance will be evaluated on the basis of two major examinations, class participation, and online assignments during the semester. The material covered on examinations may include scheduled material from the text, class lecture and activities, including assignments and class discussions. The student’s performance, not the instructor, determines the course grade. All out-of-class assignments are to be completed *individually* and are subject to the Student Code of Ethics described below.

The course grade will be determined by weighted scores. The following is the weight distribution of coursework for determining the overall course average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assignments – Media Articles (bb9)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assignments – Discussion Forum (bb9)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total weighted percentage points will determine the overall course grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Weighted % Points</th>
<th>Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 or above</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89.99</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79.99</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69.99</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oral and Written Communication Content:**
Student discussions, written assignments, as well as examinations will provide opportunities for evaluating students’ performance in oral and written communications.

**Attendance Policy:**
Students are held responsible for class attendance. Class attendance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for active class participation and satisfactory course performance. Students absent from classes are responsible for making arrangements to submit assignments due, material discussed, and announcements made in class. Assignments and exams missed due to absences cannot be made up except for illness or other emergencies, in which case a doctor’s note or other official documentation is required to accompany the assignment/exam.

**Classroom Etiquette:**
Examples of classroom misconduct that may affect student evaluation include: *habitually* entering or leaving the classroom during class time without the consent of the instructor, using any telecommunication device, talking or chit-chatting with other students, and any other activities that are disruptive to the learning environment. Students caught engaging in such activities should expect class or course dismissal along with a letter of reprimand placed in their academic files. According to the University policy, no cell phones or other mobile devices are allowed in a room when a test/exam is taken.
Academic Honesty:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct includes all forms of cheating, including illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism, which is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own. Students caught engaging in such activities should expect course dismissal along with a letter of reprimand placed in their academic files.

Turning in another student’s work (assignments, exams etc) without the knowledge of the instructor constitutes forgery of both the student turning in another one’s work and the student who completes the work.

A student caught cheating in an exam will be expelled from the examination room and given a zero grade for the first time for the exam in question along with a report to the Office of Academic Affairs. Repeated offenses result in an F for the whole course. Students caught indulging in behavior suggestive of cheating (e.g., whispering or passing notes) will be warned for the first time and will be expelled from the exam room in the case of continued misbehavior.

Student Code of Ethics:
This course, and all other courses offered by the College of Business (COB), requires all of its students to abide by the COB Student Code of Ethics (available online at www.cob.tamucc.edu). Provisions and stipulations in the code are applicable to all students taking College of Business courses regardless of whether or not they are pursuing a degree awarded by the COB.

Last Day of Withdrawal:
Only students who complete the course withdrawal form before the deadline (equivalent of the 10th week of classes in regular semesters) will receive an automatic grade of “W”.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COURSE

Ethical Perspectives:
In this course, the approach to macroeconomic issues is positive (i.e., what is) rather than normative (i.e., what ought to be). As a result, there is minimal discussion of ethical issues.

Global Perspectives:
Global economic trends, the economic performance and trade policy impact macroeconomic analysis and policy decisions. As a result, the global and intergenerational perspectives are critical to macroeconomic study.

Demographic Diversity Perspectives:
Macroeconomic policy impacts various demographic groups differently, while these groups are also able to influence macroeconomic policy differently. Hence, the distributional effects of macroeconomic policy will be examined and discussed.

Political, Social, Legal, Regulatory, and Environmental Perspectives:
In discussing the role of the government in an economy, various political, social, legal, regulatory, and environment issues and questions arise. These questions and issues are examined in the macroeconomic context, and sometimes, from the microeconomic viewpoint.

Grade Appeals:
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to
first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Disabilities Accommodations:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH-116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

In this course, you are required to complete the following graded assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Where and How to Submit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Media Assignments</td>
<td>Submit 2 media assignments via bb9 (see instructions below)</td>
<td>In Blackboard (bb9), click the “Assessments” link in the left-hand menu. Click the corresponding &quot;Assignment&quot; link to begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Forum</td>
<td>In this Discussion Forum, you will participate in a bi-weekly discussion by making at least one post or one response to other posts with at least 100 words.</td>
<td>In Blackboard (bb9), click the “Discussion Forum” link in the left-hand menu under the category of &quot;Collaboration Tools.&quot; In the Discussion Forum, click the corresponding week number to enter. Respond to the first thread that posts the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>Complete Exam 1 and Exam 2.</td>
<td>In-class exams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ECON 5311 TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Textbook Chapter</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics: Foundations and Models</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade-offs, Comparative Advantage, &amp; Market System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Interaction of Demand and Supply</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elasticity: The Responsiveness of Demand and Supply</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms, the Stock Market, and Corporate Governance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP: Measuring Total Production and Income</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment and Inflation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth and Business Cycles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Run Economic Growth: Sources &amp; Policies</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>Week 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money, Banks, and the Federal Reserve</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4/15</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Policy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4/22</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macroeconomics in an Open Economy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4/29</td>
<td>Week 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>Week 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Log on to bb9 for all assignments due dates.
## Discussion Form in bb9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Week 3: Why Am I Here? (due 2/8)](image) | **Instruction:** Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words by Feb. 8.  
If you haven't done so, please first introduce yourself with your brief background, such as your major, year in college, where you live, and current job if any. Tell us your nickname or what you'd like to be called, if not your registered name. Also tell us anything interesting about yourself.  
**Task:** Respond to the following question and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your post: It is a major decision to pursue a college degree. Why have you decided to enroll in this program and this university? What do you hope to “gain” from this program? Other than the tuition and fees, what would you “lose” by staying in college? What would you suppose this online course can affect the “costs” of going to college? | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ![Week 5: Gas Goes Up or Down? (due 2/22)](image) | **Instruction:** Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words by Feb. 22.  
**Task:** Respond to the following question and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your answer: Have gasoline prices in your area been going up or down in the past month? If you don’t drive, you can find out current local gas prices in your area at gasbuddy.com. What do you think about why gas prices have gone up or down—supply or demand, or both? Explain. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ![Week 8: Who Makes the iPad? (due 3/22)](image) | **Instruction:** Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words due Mar. 22.  
**Task:** Respond to the following question and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your answer: Most mobile devices or tablets are not made in the United States. Apple, an American company, has never made its products in this country. So would you suppose when you buy an iPad or iPhone that is made in China, you are not contributing to GDP in the United States? In other words, when you pay $500 for an iPad, does China get most of what you pay? Explain. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ![Week 10: Are You Better Off Now? (due 4/5)](image) | **Instruction:** Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words by Apr. 5.  
**Task:** Respond to the following questions and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your answer: Are you better off now than you were about four years ago, when President Obama took office? Do you see any tradeoffs in your financial condition between then and now? Do you see any drawbacks in a fast growing economy? Explain. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
Instruction: Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words by Apr. 19.

**Task:** Respond to the following questions and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your answer: The Fed, the U.S. central bank, has reportedly injected trillions of dollars into the economy since 2009. Can you tell where those dollars are? If not, why not? How can you use what you’ve learned from this course to explain the impact of the Fed’s actions?

---

Instruction: Create a thread or reply to an existing thread with >100 words by May 3.

**Task:** Respond to the following questions and, if appropriate, include your personal experience or observations as part of your answer: We all survived the global Great Recession of 2007-2009. What do you think how the government and the central bank have affected you since late 2007? Has the government done more good than harm to your life and the economy as a whole? If you are from another country, you may talk about the government of that country.
MEDIA ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS
GENERAL GUIDELINES

Objective
To understand daily economic/business news and to apply one or more economic concepts to an event reported in the news article. Keep in mind that this assignment focuses on how you apply (or relate) textbook concepts to real world events, and not on how you critique a news article or summarize a commenter/researcher/reporter’s opinions.

Recommended News Sources
- New York Times (nytimes.com)
- Wall Street Journal (wsj.com)
- Financial Times (ft.com)
- Economist (economist.com)
- Washington Post (washingtonpost.com)

Media articles should be at least one page in length when printed and do not include short summaries by, e.g., AP, CNNMoney, or Newsweek.

The format of the written assignment (checklist):
☐ use Word or save the file in Word format only; other formats do not convert properly.
☐ between 400 and 700 words; write in your own words (no quotations in the main text)
☐ at least two paragraphs: one paragraph summarizes the content of the media article, and another paragraph discusses how you apply the pre-assigned economic topic/concept to the news event
☐ insert the main heading (not subheading) of the news article between quotation marks (“xxx”) at the top of your assignment
☐ insert the hyperlink (if online) or source (if in print) of the article between quotation marks (“xxx”) at the end of the assignment. DO NOT INSERT THE WHOLE ARTICLE.
☐ follow the specific instructions for each particular assignment (see below).

Common Point Deductions:
1. At least 10% deduction applies to each violation of the above format requirements.
2. Missing discussion of the specific topic assigned (30%+)
3. Wrong topic – non-economics (90%); wrong topic but economics (50%+)
4. Inappropriate materials – news older than a year (20%); methodological or conceptual articles from academic journals and publications instead of news (50%+); blogs or opinions (50%+)
5. Quotations are not allowed (not necessary) and they will be included in the Similarity Report: You are required to write a “summary” IN YOUR OWN WORDS.
6. Writing length too short (10% each 50 words below requirement)
7. News article shorter than one regular page in print without margins (30%+)
8. Missing a hyperlink or source (10%+ depending on your contents)
9. Late submissions receive deduction at 20% per day (the first second after the deadline at 11:59)
10. Two or more grammatical, typos or other writing errors, or illogical sentences (10%+). You are recommended to check with Turnitin before submitting your assignment.

Submit assignments via bb9. FAQs and answers are available at http://faculty.tamucc.edu/jlee/2301/media.htm.

First Article due: 3/15 Saturday, 11:59 PM Topic: Supply and Demand Application
Second Article due: 5/3 Saturday, 11:59 PM Topic: Macroeconomic Policy Application
Specific Guidelines for Media Assignments

Helpful Hints:
Writing in economics is commonly considered as technical writing, meaning that you have to be accurate about the meaning of your writing in addition to grammar and contents.

Steps:
1. Find the article that interests you and is suitable for the assignment: 2-5 hours
2. Read and analyze the article: 1-3 hours
3. Summarize the article (first part of the assignment): 30 minutes to 1 hour
4. Analyze the article and apply the assigned economic concept to the news event: 1-2 hours
5. Optional: Verify originality of your writing from Turnitin.com: 1-4 hours processing time
6. Submit your assignment at bb9:10-30 minutes

Media Article Assignment No. 1, due March 15, Saturday, 11:59 PM
 ✓ Before you begin this assignment, you should read the textbook material on Supply and Demand.
 ✓ Find a news article that deals with a market. (10%)
 ✓ Summarize the key point of the article. (20%)
 ✓ Use a supply and demand diagram to illustrate any change in the market as reported in the article (30%).
 ✓ Explain the change in market price through a shift of either the supply curve or the demand curve, or both (30-50%).
 ✓ How does the supply and demand analysis help you understand the event reported in the article? (10%)

Media Article Assignment No. 2, due May 3 Saturday, 11:59 PM
 ✓ Before you start this assignment, you should read the textbook material on the macroeconomy.
 ✓ Find a news article about how the government or the central bank attempted to affect the macroeconomy. (40%)
 ✓ Summarize the key point of the article. (20-30%)
 ✓ Identify the particular macroeconomic policy (fiscal or monetary) action (20%), and discuss the rationale for the policy and how it is meant to affect the economy (20-40%).
 ✓ This assignment does NOT require a graph.
 ✓ Warning: DO NOT use a webpage from the Federal Reserve or White House etc. (not media)
Because of the rising fuel costs, including gasoline prices, the supply of feed mix of corn reduced as farmers use corn to produce ethanol, which is an additive in gasoline. As a result, the price of feed mix has risen, adding to the cost of cattle farming, which in turn raises the price of milk.......[complete a summary of the media article here]

This article shows how substitutable goods in production eventually affect the price of a product, which is milk in this case. Because farmers can either produce ethanol or corn feed from their corn, they produce more ethanol and less corn feed as the market price of ethanol increases. The reduced supply of corn feed drives up its price and thus the cost of raising cattle. The graph above shows the supply and demand model for the milk market. The increase in oil prices ultimately raises the cost of milk production. This is represented by a shift of the supply curve to the left from $S_1$ to $S_2$. As a result, the equilibrium price of milk goes up from $P_1$ to $P_2$, and the equilibrium quantity of milk goes down from $Q_1$ to $Q_2$. The news article indicates that the market price has reached $3.72 in April and can be as high as $4 by the summer. This real-world event clearly shows how changes in the price of one product can have an effect on the prices of other related products. Even though gasoline and milk are not related in market consumption, they are related in some other ways....[complete analysis here]