

Wesleyan University

ECON 110-04: Introduction to Economic Theory

Professor: David J. Kuenzel
dkuenzel@wesleyan.edu
Office: FRANK 416

Fall 2025, TR 10:20-11:40, FRANK 001
Office Hours: T 12-1, R 9-10,
or by appointment

This course is a one-semester introduction to the principles of economic theory and is intended for prospective majors and students wishing to prepare themselves for a broad range of upper-level elective courses in economics. The first part of the class will focus on microeconomics, which is concerned with the behavior of consumers and producers as well as markets for particular goods and services. The second part of the course considers macroeconomics, which is the study of aggregate economic activity. This class assumes proficiency with basic calculus.

Prerequisites

There is a calculus prerequisite for this course. The calculus prerequisite can be fulfilled by completing ECON 102, MATH 120, or MATH 121. It can also be fulfilled by receiving a score of 4 or 5 in AP Calculus AB or BC, by receiving a 5, 6, or 7 on the IB Higher Math test, or by placing into MATH 122 or higher according to the Wesleyan Math Placement test. Students who are interested in a less mathematical introduction to economics are advised to consider Econ 101, which covers many of the same topics, but does not require calculus. No prior background in economics is assumed.

Course Materials

Textbook: Paul Krugman and Robin Wells, *Economics*, 7th edition (ISBN: 9781319415907). The ebook version of the textbook is provided to you via the Inclusive Access (IA) option. Through the link provided on top of the Moodle course page you can toggle between being opted-in or opted-out for the IA option until the end of add/drop. If you are opted-in by the end of drop/add, your Student Account will be charged from the Wesleyan R.J. Julia Bookstore.

Moodle: I will post additional readings and other course materials (problems sets, practice exams, etc.) on our Moodle course site during the semester.

In addition to completing the readings for the class, I also recommend that you follow current economic events. Good sources of economic news are *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* or the *Financial Times (FT)*. This is a good way to experience economics ‘in action’ and to apply the concepts you learn in class to the real world. You can find links to current subscription

offers on the Moodle course site. The full online content of the WSJ, FT and The Economist can also be accessed free of charge through the [library](#).

Course Requirements

There will be two in-class non-comprehensive midterms and a comprehensive final exam, plus regular problem sets. The weights of the different elements for the final course grade are:

- Problem sets (10%): There will be eight problem sets over the semester. Each of them will be assigned one week before the due date. Problem sets are due in class. If you cannot make it to class, you need to contact me and leave your problem set in the collection box next to my office door before class. Late problem sets will not be accepted, and no extensions will be granted. You are encouraged to work together on the problem sets. However, I require an individual write-up by each student.
- Midterm 1 (25%): tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 14.
- Midterm 2 (25%): tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 18.
- Final exam (35%): Friday, December 19, 10am-noon.
- Class participation (5%): I highly value class participation and encourage you to raise questions and to comment on level, pace and the content of the course during the semester. In addition, I will frequently open up topics for discussion. General guidelines for your class participation grade: frequent absences (or tardiness): *C*, demonstration of good understanding of material through occasional participation in class discussion: *B*, frequent participation in class discussion and raising insightful questions: *A*.

Class Organization

You are responsible for completing all assigned readings before coming to class. This course covers a lot of ground, and it will be impossible to discuss every important point during class. Reading the textbook and other assigned materials is therefore critical to developing a good understanding of the course material. In the lectures, we will also frequently extend the material beyond what you find in the textbook, which requires prior familiarity with the assigned readings.

In order to not divert my or the attention of your classmates, the use of cell phones and laptop computers is not permitted during class time. You are allowed to use a tablet to take notes. However, any other usage is not permitted to minimize distractions for others in the classroom. Violations of this policy will lower your class participation grade.

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss

your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 024/218, or can be reached by email at accessibility@wesleyan.edu.

Grading and Exams

Midterm exams will not be given at any other times during the term. In case you miss a midterm exam due to illness or another serious emergency, the weight for your final exam will be increased accordingly. If you are not able to make it to an exam due to a serious reason, you have to contact me on the same day and explain what happened. In any case you will have to show proper valid documentation as soon as possible after the missed exam, such as a doctor's note.

In case you believe a grading mistake has been made on a problem set or exam, you may submit a written request for a re-grade within one week after the assignment was returned. As a result of a re-grade, your grade can go up, down, or stay the same.

In line with [FERPA](#) regulations, no grading information will be shared via email. In case of grading questions, students are encouraged to attend office hours.

Honor Code

I expect you to adhere to the [Wesleyan University Honor Code](#). All submitted work, whether it is an exam or problem set, must be your own. The usage of artificial intelligence generators or software is prohibited in this class and is considered cheating. Although I encourage you to work together on problem sets, I require an individual write-up by each student and I will not tolerate if you copy others' work. Any academic dishonesty will be reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Student Honor Board.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Class	Date	Chapter	Topic	Notes
1	09/09	1/2	I. Introduction	
2	09/11	3	II. Supply and Demand	
3	09/16	4		
4	09/18	5		Problem Set 1 due
5	09/23	6		
No class	09/25			
6	09/30	7		Problem Set 2 due
7	10/02	8	III. Markets and Consumers	
8	10/07	8/13		Problem Set 3 due
9	10/09	13		
Midterm 1	10/14			
10	10/16	14	IV. Markets and Producers	
11	10/23	15		
12	10/28	16/17		Problem Set 4 due

13	10/30	17/18	V. Public Policy	
14	11/04	10/11		Problem Set 5 due
15	11/06	11/21		
16	11/11	22	VI. Macroeconomics: The Basics	Problem Set 6 due
17	11/13	23		
Midterm 2	11/18			
18	11/20	24		
19	11/25	25		
20	12/02	26	VII. Explaining Economic Fluctuations	
21	12/04	27		Problem Set 7 due
22	12/09	28		
23	12/11	29		Problem Set 8 due
Final Exam	12/19			10am-noon

*Check regularly for an updated version on Moodle.

Additional Readings (all available on Moodle): * indicates required reading

II. Supply and Demand

Chapter 3:

*Terlep, Sharon, “Car Sales Cooled in June as Trump Bump Fades,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 2025.

<https://www.wsj.com/business/autos/car-sales-cool-in-june-as-trump-bump-fades>

Thaler, Richard, “The Law of Supply and Demand Isn’t Fair,” *The New York Times*, May 20, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/business/supply-and-demand-isnt-fair.html>

Chapter 4:

**The Economist*, “Is Higher Inequality the Price America Pays for Faster Growth?” October 14, 2024.

<https://www.economist.com/is-higher-inequality-the-price-america-pays-for-faster-growth>

Chapter 5:

*Rana, Preetika, “Delivery Drivers Got Higher Wages. Now They’re Getting Fewer Orders,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 22, 2024.

<https://www.wsj.com/business/hospitality/delivery-drivers-got-higher-wages>

Dubé, Ryan and Silvina Frydlewsky, “Argentina Scrapped Its Rent Controls. Now the Market Is Thriving,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 24, 2024.

<https://www.wsj.com/world/americas/argentina-milei-rent-control-free-market>

Chapter 6:

The Economist, “How to Avoid Energy Rationing,” August 25, 2022.
<https://www.economist.com/how-to-avoid-energy-rationing>

Chapter 7:

**The Economist*, “Stuck in the Past: Overhaul Tax for the 21st Century,” August 9, 2018.
<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/08/09/overhaul-tax-for-the-21st-century>

Chapter 8:

The Economist, “America Cannot Dodge the Consequences of Rising Tariffs For Ever,” July 9, 2025.
<https://www.economist.com/america-cannot-dodge-the-consequences-of-rising-tariffs>

III. Markets and Consumers

Chapter 13:

**The Economist*, “An Economy Run to Benefit Producers?” September 23, 2015.
<https://www.economist.com/an-economy-run-to-benefit-producers>

Ip, Greg, “Why an Economist Plays Powerball,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 2016.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-REB-34825>

IV. Markets and Producers

Chapter 14:

*Jakab, Spencer, “The Startling Economics of the World’s Largest Cruise Ship,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 2023.
<https://www.wsj.com/lifestyle/travel/royal-caribbean-icon-seas-economy>

Chapter 15:

*Philippon, Thomas, “The Economics and Politics of Market Concentration,” *NBER Reporter*, No.4, 2019, p. 10-12.
<https://www.nber.org/reporter/2019number4/economics-and-politics-market-concentration>

Chapter 16:

**The Economist*, “The IMF Adds to a Chorus of Concern about Competition,” April 4, 2019.
<https://www.economist.com/the-imf-adds-to-a-chorus-of-concern-about-competition>

Chapter 17:

*Wu, Tim, “The Oligopoly Problem,” *The New Yorker*, April 15, 2013.

<https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-oligopoly-problem>

Smyth, Jamie and Judith Evans, “US Baby Formula Crisis Spurs Debate over Lack of Competition,” *Financial Times*, June 29, 2022.

<https://www.ft.com/content/68c69fad-85bb-4fa6-946d-f314a0c15119>

Chapter 18:

**The Economist*, “Bold Strokes,” October 16, 2008.

<https://www.economist.com/bold-strokes>

V. Public Policy

Chapter 10:

**The Economist*, “How Carbon Prices Are Taking Over the World,” October 1, 2023.

<https://www.economist.com/how-carbon-prices-are-taking-over-the-world>

Chapter 11:

McCarthy, John, “Crab Fight! Aboard Alaska’s Quest to Be America’s King of Crab,” *Forbes*, February 27, 2018.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/crab-fight-aboard-alaskas-quest-to-be-americas-king-of-crab>

VI. Macroeconomics: The Basics

Chapter 21:

*Stanley, Andrew, “Looking Beyond GDP,” *Finance & Development*, March 2024, p. 16-17.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/2024/03/Picture-this-looking-beyond-GDP>

Chapter 22:

**The Economist*, “How Countries Calculate Their GDP,” March 26, 2014.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21599744>

Ip, Greg, “Why Inflation Erupted: Two Top Economists Have the Answer,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2023.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-inflation-erupted>

Chapter 23:

Putzier, Konrad and Nick Timiraos, “Inflation Picks Up to 2.7% as Tariffs Start to Seep Into Prices,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2025.

<https://www.wsj.com/economy/inflation-hit-2-7-in-june-in-line-with-expectations>

Chapter 24:

Jones, Charles I., “The Outlook for Long-term Economic Growth,” *NBER Working Paper 31648*, 2023.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w31648>

Chapter 25:

**The Economist*, “The Origins of the Financial Crisis: Crash Course,” September 7, 2013.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21584534/>

VII. Explaining Economic Fluctuations

Chapter 27:

*Harding, Robin, “Recessions Have Become Rarer and More Scary,” *Financial Times*, September 3, 2019.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8a9d12a8-ce31-11e9-99a4-b5ded7a7fe3f>

Chapter 28:

*Ahmad, Sarah, Georgia Nabors and Louise Sheiner, “How Does Fiscal Policy Affect the Level of GDP?” *Brookings*, February 19, 2025.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-does-fiscal-policy-affect-the-level-of-gdp/>

Chapter 29:

**The Economist*, “Central Banks Should Make Clear What QE Is for, and Then Reverse It,” August 21, 2021.

<https://www.economist.com/central-banks-should-make-clear-what-qe-is>