

Spring XXX

ECON 330

Urban and Regional Economics

CRN: XXX | TIME

LOCATION

Instructor:

Eric Wilken (He/Him/His)

Ph.D. Student

Department of Economics

ewilken@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: **M 3:30 – 4:30pm and W 10:30 – 11:30am in XXX**

Teaching Assistant:

XXX (He/Him/His)

Ph.D. Student

Department of Economics

XXX@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: **M 12:30 – 1:30pm in XXX**

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we'll dive into the fascinating world of cities and how they work from an economic perspective. The importance of location is not hard to argue but many traditional microeconomic models do not consider space. We'll explore why cities form, what drives their growth, and how factors like housing, transportation, and public policy shape the way they develop. Along the way, we'll look at the key challenges cities face, such as inequality, congestion, and housing affordability, and use economic theory to better understand these issues. By the end, you'll be equipped with tools to analyze urban problems and think critically about how policies can influence the future of our cities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives are expectations of what students should know or be able to do, how and under what conditions this knowledge or skill will be demonstrated and the criteria to determine success.

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand the historical and modern factors that drive city growth and land use, including the role of agglomeration economies.
2. Evaluate the winners and losers from local economic growth.
3. Predict the possible outcomes of urban policy aimed at promoting local economic growth.
4. Solve spatial equilibrium and discuss how space impacts land rents.
5. Explore how land use and planning influences economic outcomes.
6. Identify the unique characteristics of housing markets and analyze the proponents and opponents of government intervention.
7. Analyze the costs and benefits of automobile use, their implications on cities, and what policies are currently used to address any problems which arise from their use.
8. Examine the causes and impacts of racial and economic segregation in U.S. metropolitan areas and consider the role of government in addressing these issues.

9. Craft economic arguments/policies which aim to address challenges like suburban sprawl, urban poverty, and racial segregation.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students should have completed EC 201 (Introduction to Economic Analysis: Microeconomics), or its equivalent, prior to this course.

COURSE TEXT

Required: O'Sullivan, A. (2019). *Urban economics* (9th ed.). Irwin/McGraw Hill.

The 9th edition is listed as a required text for this course, but I do not have a preference in the modality in which you consume this text. Additionally, you may purchase an older version of this text with little impact on your success in this course. You can find many used copies of the 6th, 7th, and 8th editions of the book online. I would not recommend you go much further than the 6th edition.

You will be expected to read throughout the term, which will help you participate in class. I reserve the right to periodically assess if you are doing the reading through in-class or at-home quizzes.

INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM

The UO Economics Department welcomes and respects diverse experiences, perspectives, and approaches. Both nationwide and at the University of Oregon, disproportionately few women and members of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups graduate with degrees in economics. All class participants are expected to communicate with respect and to avoid behaviors or contributions that undermine, demean, or marginalize others based on race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or socioeconomic status.

Class rosters are provided to instructors with students' legal names. Please let me know if the name or pronouns I have for you are not accurate. It is important to me to address you properly. This course can offer unique challenges for international students. As such, there are some resources designed to help international students who are struggling. Please contact the International Student & Scholar Services office for more information (<https://international.uoregon.edu/iss>).

ASSIGNMENTS

Listed below you will find an outline of the categories of assignments you will complete for this course and what percentage of your final grade is associated with each type of assignment. For the sake of space, I will not include the instructions for each assignment type in the syllabus, but you can find objectives, instructions, and grading criteria for each assignment in canvas.

Assignment	Quantity	Total Weight [^]
Problem Sets	4	20%
Take-Home Quizzes	4	15%
Midterm Exam	1	15%
City Paper	1	20%
Mini Projects!	2	10%
Final Exam	1	20%
Total		100%

* You may do one extra mini project for up to 2.5% extra credit!

[^] All assignments within a category hold equal weight

ATTENDANCE

I have no requirement for you to attend class. I will post lecture slides on canvas two days after we cover it in class. These lecture slides are outlines of the material covered and should not be thought of as a substitute for class. Any writing I do on the overhead or board will not be posted to canvas.

An active learning approach is essential to doing well in this course. Consequently, you should expect to actively ask and answer questions during class. Your participation is likely to create a positive externality for your fellow students.

GRADING

Late Policy for Problem Sets and Quizzes

Deadlines are an important aspect of the class and ensure that we cover all material. Life has a way of being unpredictable and missing a deadline (or several) should not prevent success. For this reason, problem sets and quizzes may be turned in late at any time in the term **prior to the Thursday of the last week of class for a penalty.**

Assignments which are turned in late will **receive a 10-percentage point penalty for every 5 days that they are late** up to a maximum of penalty of 40-percentage points. I allow for a **two-day** late submission period where no penalty is assessed. *E.g., This means that if you turn an assignment 2 days late you will receive no points off, but on the third day your maximum grade on that assignment will now be a 90% (10% penalty).*

Very late assignments will not always receive feedback.

Please remember that looking at the answer keys prior to submitting an assignment late is an act of academic dishonesty and will be reported utilizing proper channels.

Late Policy for City Paper

You may submit any component of the paper late up to three weeks for a 10-percentage point penalty for each 5 days that the assignment is turned in late. *Papers submitted more than 1 week after the initial deadline will not receive feedback on their assignment.* Please note that incorporating feedback is a graded aspect of this assignment. This means that turning in components of the paper should be prioritized in order to have the ability to earn as many points as possible.

Late Policy for Exams

Exams must be taken on the scheduled date—no exceptions except for serious emergencies or university-sanctioned events—but if a serious conflict arises, you must email me before the day of the exam to discuss possible arrangements.

Final examinations must be given during the scheduled final examination period. Faculty legislation prohibits the early administration of final examinations. Final examination week is considered to be a part of the regular term, and to end the term prior to its scheduled date reduces instructional days to which students are entitled.

Generative AI Statement

The use of generative AI (GenAI), such as ChatGPT, is no longer permitted in this course. While I cannot realistically prevent you from utilizing it, I would like to express my deepest caution over its use. College has many purposes including learning how to write, reason, and be a good citizen. The use of GenAI robs you of the ability to learn. Consider what you are giving up in order to improve the speed at which you complete assignments through the use of GenAI.

Detectable use of GenAI in this course will constitute an act of academic dishonesty.

Grading Scale

Students earn the grade determined by the standard:

Letter Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+
Percent Score	[100,98]	(98,93]	(93,90]	(90,87]	(87,83]	(83,80]	(80,77]

Letter Grade	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percent Score	(77,73]	(73,70]	(70-67]	(67,63]	(63,60}	<60

I reserve the right to make this scale more lenient, but this scale represents the most restrictive grading outcomes.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Updated 5/8/25)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due	Textbook	Additional Readings
Week 1	4/1	Introduction to Course and Urban Economics		Ch. 1	(Jacobs, 1960)
	4/3	Why Do Cities Exist?	"Pick a City!"	Ch. 2 Ch. 3	(Glaeser, 1998)
Week 2	4/8	City Size and What Drives Urban Economic Growth?		Ch. 4	--
	4/10	Rents and Land Use P I	City Paper Proposal	Ch. 10	--
Week 3	4/15	Rents and Land Use P II	PS1	Ch. 13	--
	4/17	Neighborhood Choice P I	<i>Mini Project 1</i>	Ch. 15	--
Week 4	4/22	Neighborhood Choice P II	Quiz 1	Ch. 15	--
	4/24	Neighborhood Choice P III	PS2	Ch. 20	--
Week 5	4/29	Into to Local Government	City Paper Rough Draft	Ch. 20	--
	5/1	Midterm Review + Economics of Zoning	Quiz 2	Ch. 16	--
Week 6	5/6	Midterm Exam			
	5/8	Introduction to Place-Based Policy	<i>Mini Project 2</i>	Ch. 16	--
Week 7	5/13	Economics of Zoning and Land Use Regulations		Ch. 16	--
	5/15	No Class – Work on Paper		--	--
Week 8	5/20	Crime and Public Policy	PS3	Ch. 23	(Ellen & O'Regan, 2010)
	5/22	Zoning and Housing Policy	<i>City Paper Final due 5/25 at 11:59pm</i>	Ch. 16 & 17	--
Week 9	5/27	Automobiles and Roads	Quiz 3	Ch. 18	--
	5/29	Public Transportation	PS4	Ch. 19	(Baum-Snow, 2006)
Week 10	6/3	The Geography of Income Inequality	Quiz 4	--	Chetty et al., 2016)
	6/5	Review for Final Exam	All Outstanding Mini Projects	--	--
Finals Week	6/11	12:30pm in our normal classroom			

REFERENCES

All additional reading assignments will be accessible via canvas.

Baum-Snow, Nathaniel, "Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(2006): 775–805.

Bergman, Margo, Dirk Mateer, Michael Reksulak, Jonathan Rork, Rick Wilken, and David Zirkle. "Your Place in Space: Classroom Experiment on Spatial Location Theory." *NSF Workshop on Classroom Experiments in Economics*.

Chetty, Raj, Nathan Hendron, and Lawrence Katz. "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Project." *American Economic Review* 106(2016): 855-902.

Ellen, Ingrid Gould and Katherine O'Regan, "Crime and Urban Flight Revisited: The Effect of the 1990s Drop in Crime on Cities." *Journal of Urban Economics* 68(2010): 247-259.

Glaeser, Edward L., "Are Cities Dying?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12 (1998): 139–160.

Hewett, Roger, Charles Holt, Georgia Kosmopoulou, Christine Kymn, Cheryl Long, Shabnam Mousavi, and Sudipta Sarangi. A classroom exercise: voting by ballots and feet. *Southern Economic Journal* 72, no. 1 (2005): 253-263.

Jacobs, Jane, *The Economy of Cities*. New York, NY: *Random House*, 1960.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This course incorporates materials collected from many locations and courses. The collection and disbursement of knowledge cannot be done alone. I want to thank Andrew Dickinson, Brietta Russell, and John Morehouse who provided me wonderful resources or guidance in developing this course.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates. Find out more at <https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest>.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number)."

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University Student Conduct Code (available on the Student Conduct Code and Procedures webpage) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at the Libraries' Citation and Plagiarism page.

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Oregon and I are dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments for all students and welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing campus-wide and classroom-related barriers. If you have or think you have a disability (<https://aec.uoregon.edu/content/what-disability>) and experience academic barriers, please contact the AEC to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. Visit 360 Oregon Hall or aec.uoregon.edu for more information. You can contact AEC at 541-346-1155 or via email at uoaec@uoregon.edu.
