EC 1131 Principles of Microeconomics
Fall 2015
(subject to change, at the discretion of the instructor)

Instructor: Can Erbil
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Office: 21 Campanella Way, Maloney Hall 381
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30pm - 2:30pm, Maloney 381
Scheduled Class Time and Location: T, Th 10:30am -11:45am, Devlin 008

Teaching Assistants:
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PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS

Most decision-making entities, such as individuals, families, firms and nations, have more material needs and goals than they have means to meet them. Faced with the inability to do all that they would like to do, decision-makers have to allocate their scarce resources to meet some, but not all, of their needs and goals. Microeconomics analyzes how these allocation decisions are made, by households and by firms, and how these individual decisions are aggregated into markets for goods and services. We will study the characteristics and outcomes of different types of markets, from competitive oligopolistic to monopolistic. Finally, we will discuss the role of the public sector (government) in a modern market economy.

This course is an introduction to the field of Economics. It will:
- give you an idea of the range of behaviors that economists investigate
- introduce you to the basic tools we use to analyze the economy
- apply these tools to public policy issues

Perhaps most important, this course will introduce you to the “economic way of thinking,” an approach to decision making that applies to personal decisions, to the decisions of businesses, labor unions and other organizations, and to the larger choices that society faces.

This course satisfies the School of Social Science distribution requirements and the Quantitative Reasoning component of the General University Requirements. It is also the first course for any student considering a concentration or minor in Economics.

A note on EC1131 and the Core:

EC1131 is designed to meet a number of needs. It is the first course in the economics major and minor, it is a required course for all CSOM students, it is one of the choices to fulfill the social sciences Core requirement, and it serves as an elective to anyone who wants an introduction to economics. It introduces the basic tools of economic analysis and applies these tools both to problems of historical interest and to current public policy. It explores the development of economic analysis through the work of Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, Joseph Schumpeter and other giants in the field. Finally, it looks at how we bring together what we learn from economics with what we learn from other fields.

The total amount of reading in this course is modest, but the prudent student will read it several times. I highly recommend that you read the material assigned before we discuss it in class, and then read it again afterwards. In addition to the chapters in the textbook, I will look (and so should you!) for relevant material in newspapers and magazines, and I will often post articles of interest to you (on our Canvas site). If you see something related to one of our topics, send it to me, and I may pass it on to your classmates. The course material is cumulative, with each topic building on prior ones, so missing classes and falling behind are particularly bad ideas.
Even though this is a very large (300 students!) lecture course, I will encourage **discussion in class** by asking you questions, which I urge you to think about and answer. I also encourage you to **ask questions in class**, especially when you are confused. If you are confused, so are many of your classmates. Do us all a favor, and speak up!

In addition to our Tuesday and Thursday classes at 10:30 am, each of you will have a 50-minute **discussion section** during most weeks run by one of our four Teaching Assistants: Zulma Barrail - [zulma.barrail@bc.edu](mailto:zulma.barrail@bc.edu), Nicholas Diebel - [nicholas.diebel@bc.edu](mailto:nicholas.diebel@bc.edu), Francesca Toscano - [francesca.toscano@bc.edu](mailto:francesca.toscano@bc.edu), and Pierre De Leo - [mailto:pierre.deleo@bc.edu](mailto:pierre.deleo@bc.edu), all of whom are very capable doctoral students in Economics at Boston College. They will be your “**Micro Mentors**” during the semester.

These discussion sections and the Teaching Assistants’ weekly office hours (TBA) will provide you additional opportunities to discuss class material. Discussion sections will start the week of September 7th.

The times and locations of the discussion sessions are as follows:

**Francesca Toscano:** ECON1130.13 (M9) McGuinn Hall 029, ECON1130.14 (M10) McGuinn Hall 029, ECON1130.16 (M12) McGuinn Hall 030

**Zulma Barrail:** ECON1130.15 (M11) McGuinn Hall 030, ECON1130.17 (M2) McGuinn Hall 030, ECON1130.18 (M3) McGuinn Hall 029

**Pierre De Leo:** ECON1130.19 (T12) McGuinn Hall 030, ECON1130.20 (T1) McGuinn Hall 029, ECON1130.24 F (10) McGuinn Hall 029

**Nicholas Diebel:** ECON1130.21 (W11) McGuinn Hall 400, ECON1130.22 (W12) McGuinn Hall 400, ECON1130.23 (W2) McGuinn Hall 029

You can learn the office hours of your TA directly from her/him.

I encourage you to meet with your TAs and ask them questions. You can also **make an appointment** with any of them, if your schedule doesn't fit to their office hours. Your TAs are primarily in charge of the **problem sets** and the **discussion sessions**, where they will take **attendance** and monitor your **participation**.

Hence, **all questions related to the problem sets first go to the TAs.**

You can also find free tutoring assistance at the Connors Family Learning Center in O’Neill Library.

We will be using mandatory homework software by **Aplia** (CengageBrain), which allows weekly problem sets to be submitted and graded electronically. The software is designed for our textbook, Krugman/Wells, Microeconomics, 3rd edition (2013).
The Boston College bookstore offers the Aplia software access card, and the card + the *KW Microeconomics* textbook, but the bookstore is usually a little more expensive.

Please find more information on how to register to Aplia at the end of the syllabus.

In a Principles of Economics course, **problems sets** are essential for understanding the material. There is no substitute for hands-on experience with economics questions. The Aplia problems sets will be submitted electronically. The Aplia software will not accept problem sets that are submitted late (even a minute late!) and will assign a grade of zero for problem sets not submitted on time, so do not wait until the last minute to submit them. Computer glitches happen! To deal with unanticipated events that might prevent you from submitting a problem set on time, the lowest of your problem set grades will be dropped from the grade calculation.

I urge you to **study** this material **together**. You can learn as much from each other as you can from the textbook or from class.

NOTE: The *KW website* provides excellent resources for you, including key term self-quizzes and flashcards, and PowerPoint slides, all under <Student Resources> at: http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/krugmanwellsmicro3/default.asp#t_768085

**Information Dissemination**

In Economics 1131 we will maintain a course website on **Canvas**.

Please check the website frequently as the additional problem sets, answer keys, notes, announcements and more will be posted there (as .pdf) and will be available for you to download/access.

The best way to reach me is via e-mail (can.erbil@bc.edu). Please don’t leave any voice messages on my office phone, since I don’t check them on a regular basis.

If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, and would like to set up an appointment to see me, please send me your academic schedule (courses you are taking, their meeting times and professors, and classroom locations) and I will try to find time for you.

**Optimizing Your Performance**

Here are some suggestions that may help you to have the best chance to do well in Economics 1131:

1) **Attend the lecture.** The purpose of the course is to teach you something, not to toss out information and see how much sinks in.

2) Do the **assigned readings** before class to get a preview of the material to be covered and to prepare any questions you have about this material. Study the material, don’t just read it.
3) Check our course website regularly. I will update it weekly to indicate our progress on the outline.

4) Take the problem sets seriously, because they are the best indication of whether you understand the material and they are the best preparation for the exams.

5) When preparing for exams, let the lectures guide you as to what is really important.

6) And by all means, seek help from the TAs if you need it, and before you get hopelessly behind.

IMPORTANT DATES (Please put them in your calendar now!)

Midterm exams are scheduled for:

Thursday, October 15th and
Thursday, November 19th, both during regular class time.

The comprehensive final exam will be given on:

Saturday, December 12th, 2015, at 12:30pm

If you have to miss a midterm, please contact me as soon as you know it. I will have to report it your Dean and will work through the formal procedure to grant you an excused absence.

Please note that there will be NO make-up exams; if you miss an exam (with an excused absence), the weights on your subsequent exams will be adjusted proportionately.

Approximate weights for your final grade will be:

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<th>Part</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem sets</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm I</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Midterm II</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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I will determine your letter grades at the very end of the semester, after our final exam. Until then, there won’t be any assessment with letter grades. You will be provided information on the mean, median and the spread (distribution) of the scores of each exam, so you will know your own relative standing.

Although it is my wish that all of my students score perfectly from each assignment and all achieve straight “A”s, it rarely (well, never) happens. The typical grade distribution in an economics class is as follows: upper 30% “A range”, lower 30% “C and below”, mid 40% “B range”.
Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise at Boston College requires academic integrity, which in this course means that all your work on exams is your own. You may work with others in preparation for the problems sets, but the electronic submission should be your own work. Given that the primary goal of the problems sets is to learn the material, doing your own work is also in your own best interest. Any infraction of Boston College’s Academic Integrity Policy (available online at http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html) will result in an automatic F for the course and the offense will be reported to the Dean’s office and then reviewed by the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Integrity Committee. There will be no exceptions.

Other consequences can be even more serious. I urge you to review university policy and procedures, available in the Boston College Catalog or online under <academic integrity> at http://www.bc.edu/integrity

Disability Services

Boston College is committed to providing equal and integrated access for students with disabilities to all available academic, social, and recreational programs and activities. The Disability Services Office at Boston College ensures that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations and assistance in order to participate fully in University programs. Students requiring assistance are advised to get in touch with the Office of the Dean for Student Development (on the web at http://www.bc.edu/offices/odsd/disabilityservices.html). Please make sure to hand me your letter from the ODSD if you are entitled for additional time or other accommodation.

If you have any other questions, please consult with me.
Course Outline
(Preliminary and subject to change at the instructors discretion)

(1\textsuperscript{st} week)
\textbf{PART 1 What is Economics?}
\textit{Intro: The Ordinary Business of Life}
1 First Principles
2 Economic Models: Trade-offs and Trade
\textit{Appendix: Graphs in Economics}

(2\textsuperscript{nd} – 4\textsuperscript{th} weeks)
\textbf{PART 2 Supply and Demand}
3 Supply and Demand
4 Price Controls and Quotas: Meddling with Markets
5 Consumer and Producer Surplus
6 Elasticity

(5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} weeks)
\textbf{PART 3 Individuals and Markets}
7 Taxes
8 International Trade

\textbf{PART 4 Economics and Decision Making}
9 Making Decisions

(7\textsuperscript{th} week)
\textbf{PART 5 The Consumer}
10 The Rational Consumer
\textit{Appendix: Consumer Preferences and Consumer Choice}

(8\textsuperscript{th} week)
\textbf{PART 6 The Production Decision}
11 Behind the Supply Curve: Inputs and Costs
12 Perfect Competition and the Supply Curve

(9\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} weeks)
\textbf{PART 7 Market Structure: Beyond Perfect Competition}
13 Monopoly
14 Oligopoly
15 Monopolistic Competition and Product Differentiation

(11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} weeks)
\textbf{PART 8 Microeconomics and Public Policy}
16 Externalities
17 Public Goods and Common Resources
18 The Economics of the Welfare State
(13th- 14th weeks) – if time allows

**PART 9 Factor Markets and Risk**
19 Factor Markets and the Distribution of Income
**Appendix: Indifference Curve Analysis of Labor Supply**
20 Uncertainty, Risk, and Private Information

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**How to access your Aplia course**

**Principles of Microeconomics - Fall 2015**
**Instructor: Can Erbil**

Start Date: 09/01/2015

**What is Aplia?**
In just 10 years, more than one billion answers have been submitted through Aplia, the premier online assignment solution. Millions of students use Aplia to better prepare for class and for their exams. Join them today!

**Registration**
2. Follow the prompts to register for your Aplia course.
3. 

**Payment**
After registering for your course, you will need to pay for access using one of the options below:

Online: You can pay online using a credit or debit card, or PayPal.

Bookstore: You may be able to purchase access to Aplia at your bookstore. Check with the bookstore to find out what they offer for your course.

Free Trial: You can access Aplia until 11:59 PM on 09/21/2015 during your free trial. After the free trial ends you will be required to pay for access.

Please note: At the end of the free trial period, your course access will be suspended until your payment has been made. All your scores and course activity will be saved and will be available to you after you pay for access.

If you already registered an access code or bought Aplia online, the course key to register for this course is: **WCLT-6XV2-9RUP**

**System Check**
To check whether your computer meets the requirements for using Aplia, go to [http://www.aplia.com/support/config.jsp](http://www.aplia.com/support/config.jsp).
How to access my EconPortal to accompany KW3:

With EconPortal, you get interactive content developed specifically to complement your text and access to the resources you need to be successful in your course all in one location. See below for how to get registered and started today!

1. Go to www.yourEconPortal.com
2. Click on “Find your Portal”
3. Locate your Portal by clicking on your textbook author.
4. Choose your textbook.
5. Click “Register An Activation Code.”
6. Create your login information. The activation code is printed inside your access card.
7. Once you confirm the information is correct, click “CREATE ACCOUNT.” You will receive an email confirmation that your registration was successful.

RECOMMENDED BROWSERS:
- In Windows, we recommend that you use:
  - Firefox: v1.0 or above
  - Microsoft Internet Explorer: v6.0 or above
- In Mac OS, we recommend that you use:
  - Firefox: v1.5 or above

Need help? Call Tech Support 1-800-936-6899
Other very useful, recommended reading sources:

- "The Economist"
- "The NY Times"
- "The Financial Times"
- "The Wall Street Journal"