

AGEC5103. Agricultural Microeconomics

Instructor: Qiuqiong Huang

Contact info: 479-575-2073 // qqhuang@uark.edu

Office hours (@ 221 Agriculture Building): Flexible. Usually afternoons [2-5pm] before problem set due dates.

By Appointment [You can always stop in and ask questions anytime the light is on in my office. If I am busy when you stop by, we will arrange for a mutually convenient time to meet. It is also a good idea to email or phone to schedule appointments].

Class hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM, HOEC0217

Objective of the course: This course provides Masters-level training in microeconomic theory and its applications to food, agriculture and the environment. The course focuses on the traditional topics of microeconomics, behavior of firms, households and markets, in more depth and rigor than encountered in undergraduate courses. For each topic, theories are explained and then applications relevant to food, agricultural, environment and resource issues are described. The emphasis will be on understanding microeconomic applications rather than theoretical or mathematical modeling. Upon completion of the course, students should have the skills to function as applied microeconomists in the real world.

Prerequisites: Principle of microeconomics; Survey of calculus or equivalent; Graduate standing. Students are encouraged to take intermediate microeconomics in preparation for this course.

Textbook: Walter Nicholson and Christopher Snyder, *Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions*, 11th Edition.

- Answers to odd-numbered exercises are at the end of the textbook.

Course website: Most course materials will be posted on **Blackboard** (Syllabus, Class notes, Problem Set answers, Exam info etc.)

Grading:

6 Problem sets	× 5%	= 30%
2 EXAMs	× 20%	= 40%
FINAL EXAM	20%	
In-class Discussions [†]	10%	

[†]There will be two or three classes allocated to discussions. Discussion questions will be distributed in advance. These questions will cover modeling exercises, empirical applications and policy questions. You are also encouraged to submit your own discussion questions.

Course Outline

Readings from Nicholson & Snyder in parentheses

I. Consumer Behavior and Demand

- A. Preferences and Utility (Chapter 3)
- B. Utility Maximization and Choice (Chapter 4)
- C. Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)

*Math Review (Chapters 1 and 2) is integrated into Part I.

EXAM 1

II. Producer Behavior and Supply

- A. Production (Chapter 9)
- B. Cost (Chapter 10)
- C. Optimization and Supply (Chapter 11)

EXAM 2

IV. Theory of Markets

- A. Perfect Competition (Chapter 12)
- B. Monopoly (Chapter 14)
- C. Imperfect Competition (Chapters 8 and 15)

FINAL EXAM

Tentative Schedule

Dates		Topic
T	Aug 23	Introduction Preferences and Utility (Chapter 3)
Th	Aug 25	Preferences and Utility (Chapter 3)
T	Aug 30	Utility Maximization and Choice (Chapter 4)
Th	Sep 1	Utility Maximization and Choice (Chapter 4)
T	Sep 6	Utility Maximization and Choice (Chapter 4)
Th	Sep 8	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)
T	Sep 13	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6) PS1 Due one week after Chapter 4 is covered
Th	Sep 15	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)
T	Sep 20	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)
Th	Sep 22	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)
T	Sep 27	Demand and Elasticity (Chapters 5 and 6)
Th	Sep 29	Discussion 1 (Discussion questions will be provided in advance)
T	Oct 4	Production (Chapter 9) PS2 Due one week after Chapter 6 is covered
Th	Oct 6	Production (Chapter 9)
T	Oct 11	EXAM 1 (covers I. Consumer Behavior and Demand, Chapters 3-6)
Th	Oct 13	Cost (Chapter 10)
T	Oct 18	Fall Break
Th	Oct 20	Cost (Chapter 10)
T	Oct 25	Cost (Chapter 10)
Th	Oct 27	Cost (Chapter 10)
T	Nov 1	Optimization and Supply (Chapter 11)
Th	Nov 3	Optimization and Supply (Chapter 11) PS3 Due one week after Chapter 10 is covered
T	Nov 8	Discussion 2 (You are more than welcome to submit your discussion questions!)
Th	Nov 10	Perfect Competition (Chapter 12) PS4 Due one week after Chapter 11 is covered
T	Nov 15	EXAM 2 (covers II. Producer Behavior and Supply, Chapters 9-11)
Th	Nov 17	Perfect Competition (Chapter 12)
T	Nov 22	Perfect Competition (Chapter 12)
Th	Nov 24	Thanksgiving Holiday
T	Nov 29	Monopoly (Chapter 14) PS5 Due one week after Chapter 12 is covered
Th	Dec 1	Monopoly (Chapter 14)
T	Dec 6	Imperfect Competition (Chapters 8 and 15)
Th	Dec 8	Discussion 3 (You are more than welcome to submit your discussion questions!) PS6 Due one week after Chapter 14 is covered
T	Dec 13	FINAL EXAM Comprehensive, 1:00—3:00 PM

Please hand in your Problem Sets to the instructor **before class** on due dates.

Coverage of each lecture and Due dates may vary depending on the progress of the class.

Classroom Rules

- Be on time for classes. No cellphone/smart phone/iPad.
- Questions and discussions relevant to class are more than welcome.
- **Academic Integrity—Academic Honesty.** "As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail. Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University's '[Academic Integrity Policy](#)' at honesty.uark.edu. Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor." Any scholastic dishonesty of yours will result in points taken off your Problem Sets or exams or even an F for the class grade. If you are caught cheating, campus procedures will be followed to exact the appropriate punishment.

Other Information

Emergency Preparedness— The University of Arkansas is prepared for a wide range of emergencies. Detailed information and contact numbers: <http://emergency.uark.edu/>

Inclement Weather— We will follow the campus's inclement weather policy (link below). If campus is closed, no lecture will be given. No assignment would be graded down in such a case and an exam would be re-scheduled. During inclement weather the instructor will try to communicate with students via e-mail. <http://emergency.uark.edu/>

RazALERT— The University of Arkansas has a campus-wide alert system for any hazardous conditions that may arise on campus. To learn more and to sign up: <https://emergency.uark.edu/emergency-notification-system/index.php>

Academic Support— A complete list and brief description of academic support programs can be found on the University's Academic Support site, along with links to the specific services, hours, and locations. The instructor can assist you with finding and using the support services that will help you be successful. <http://www.uark.edu/academics/academic-support.php>

Learning Disabilities— Students with learning disabilities will be accommodated in accordance with campus policies. Students with such disabilities should contact the instructor early in the semester so that the means of accommodation can be arranged.