

ECON 4244

ECONOMICS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Semester: Spring 2025

Lecture time: Monday and Wednesday 12:00nn – 1:20pm

Classroom: 4579, Lift 27-28

Office hours: open-door policy

Homepage address: <https://canvas.ust.hk/courses/60822>

Credits: 4

Lecturer: Prof. S. F. Leung

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OBJECTIVE

This course applies economic principles to understand various aspects of human behavior that have usually been considered to be outside the realm of economics. Topics include irrational behavior, crime, marriage, divorce, family, and philanthropy. Both theoretical and empirical analyses will be emphasized.

READINGS

The CANVAS course homepage contains all the lecture notes, readings, announcements, and homework assignments.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

It is intended that, after completing this course, students will

1. critically evaluate practical economic models and exercise sound economic judgment in applying mathematical and economic principles to achieve justifiable solutions and making effective decisions supported by analytical and quantitative techniques.
2. communicate quantitative and economic concepts and methods effectively to a range of audiences, both in oral and written forms.
3. be effective users of information technology and use statistical and econometrics software to deal with databases in conducting empirical analysis in business applications.
4. understand the professional and ethical responsibility and have informed ethical thinking based on rigorous quantitative and economic analyses

TEACHING APPROACH

This course is delivered primarily through lectures and tutorials. *Due to time limitation, some of the tutorials will be used as lectures.* Students are expected to attend class and tutorial regularly and on time, and to participate actively in class/tutorial discussion. A considerable amount of time will be devoted to class and tutorial discussions as they play a major role in learning. Videos (documentary and movie clips) are shown from time to time.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

Microeconomics (ECON 3113 or ECON 3014), Econometrics (ECON 3334)
Multivariate Calculus

GRADING

There will be a final exam. No makeup exams will be given. The weights determining the course grade are as follows.

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|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Class participation | 3% |
| Tutorial participation | 1% |
| Four homework assignments (4.5% each) | 18% |
| Midterm (tentatively Mar 26, 2025) | 20% |
| Final exam | 58% |

HOMEWORK

There will be four homework assignments. You are allowed, and indeed encouraged, to discuss the homework with your classmates, but **you must write the answers by yourself**. All parties involved in plagiarism will be severely punished. Late homework will not be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

The University is a community designed for scholarship — for learning, teaching and research. Academic integrity and honesty are critical values in upholding HKUST's reputation as a community of scholars and its claim to the "intellectual property" created by staff and students. All students who join HKUST are therefore committed to an Academic Honor Code. (<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>)

What happens if you are caught cheating?

The Student Disciplinary Committee can take away your eligibility for a degree; suspend you from the University, or simply dismiss you from the University. (<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/what-happens-if-you-are-caught-cheating>)

TEACHING ASSISTANT

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Teaching Assistant: | Ms Astor FOK (Email: ecastor@ust.hk) |
| Office: | LSK 6066 |
| Office Hour: | By appointment |
| Tutorial hour: | Monday 5:30pm – 6:20pm |
| Tutorial room: | LSK 1033 |

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

Students often ask professors to write recommendation or reference letters for them in their job or graduate school applications. After many years of hard work, we have established a very good reputation for our programs and students. Good grades are neither necessary nor sufficient for strong recommendation letters. Nevertheless, good grades make it easier for professors to write strong recommendation letters.