

**The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**  
**Department of Economics**

**Course Outline**

**ECON1220 L1 – Thinking Like An Economist I: Microeconomics (Fall 2025-26)**

|                           |                                                                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lecture Time:</b>      | Tu & Th 16:30 - 17:50                                                |
| <b>Venue:</b>             | Rm2504 (Lift 25-26)                                                  |
| <b>Course Website:</b>    | CANVAS                                                               |
| <b>Instructor:</b>        | SIU, Kam Wing (蕭錦榮)                                                  |
| <b>Office:</b>            | Room 6054, Lee Shau Kee Business Building                            |
| <b>Email / Phone:</b>     | <a href="mailto:eckwsiu@ust.hk">eckwsiu@ust.hk</a> / (852) 2358-7617 |
| <b>Office Hours:</b>      | By appointment                                                       |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> | Teresa LAU                                                           |
| <b>Office:</b>            | Room 6066, Lee Shau Kee Business Building                            |
| <b>Email</b>              | <a href="mailto:ectylau@ust.hk">ectylau@ust.hk</a>                   |
| <b>Office Hours:</b>      | TBA                                                                  |
| <b>Credits:</b>           | 3                                                                    |
| <b>Exclusion</b>          | ECON 2103, ECON 2113, SOSC 1440                                      |

**A. Course Description**

This common core course is designed for non-business students interested in microeconomics. Students learn the "economic way of thinking" in this course. We will explore fundamental microeconomic concepts and tools, such as comparative advantage and specialization, demand-supply analysis, market equilibrium, the government's role in markets, game theory, and people's interactions, to explain and analyze consumer and producer decisions, as well as social issues. Students will develop problem-solving skills in addressing new social issues and cultivate their sense of community and consideration through the lens of microeconomics.

This course is delivered through a combination of lectures and tutorials. Students attend two 80-minute lectures per week. Please attend all lectures and participate in discussions. Tutorials will be arranged as needed. Tutorial times and topics will be announced during lectures and on CANVAS.

**B. Intended Learning Outcome (ILOs):**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze the decision-making process of people in the context of microeconomics.
2. Analyze the behavior of consumers and producers by the Demand-Supply framework.
3. Evaluate what can and cannot be achieved by the market mechanism in different market structures.
4. Evaluate the impacts of government policies on people and the market.
5. Apply the economic way of thinking to other social issues.

### **C. Assessment and Grading:**

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing, and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation

#### **Assessments:**

##### **(1) Problem Sets**

You have to turn in your own problem-set answer on or before the deadline. Problem set submissions will be made by uploading your answers through CANVAS. NO late submission will be accepted. I strongly suggest forming small study groups to work on the problems. Suggested solutions will be posted on CANVAS. If you have any questions about the problem sets, please seek help from me or TA.

( $n-2$ ) problem sets will be counted into your final course grade. For example, if 11 problem sets are assigned, I will count the best 9 to your final course grade.

##### **(2) Midterm exam**

There will be one midterm exam. The midterm exam will cover lecture materials, problem sets, and assigned reading.

- Date of midterm exam: 28 October (Tuesday) during the lecture hour (Coverage: Ch1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

There will be no make-up exams for the midterms. If you are absent from the midterm exam with my approval, the weighting of the midterm exam will be transferred to the final exam. In order to be granted an absence from the midterm exam, you must provide a valid document, such as an original copy of a medical certificate issued by a licensed physician. The absence from the midterm exam without approval will result in a score of ZERO.

##### **(3) Final exam (60%)**

The final exam is CUMULATIVE. The final exam will cover lecture materials, problem sets, and assigned reading (if any).

- Date of final exam: 8 to 19 December 2025 (To be announced by the ARO)

If you plan to travel at the end of the semester, please carefully arrange your travel plans to avoid any scheduling conflicts. Request for a change of final examination date will not be accommodated.

With my approval, I will arrange make-up exams for students absent from the final exam. The absence request must be supported by valid documents, such as an original copy of a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner. Absence from the final exam without approval will result in a score of ZERO. A make-up exam will usually be scheduled on the day following the official final exam date (if your medical certificate indicates that you are entitled to one day of sick leave). It is the responsibility of the individual requesting make-up to ensure that he or she is available.

All arrangements regarding the makeup exam are at the instructor's discretion. The student must comply with all the requirements as communicated by the instructor in advance of the make-up final exam. Failure to meet any requirements may result in a ZERO score.

(4) Overall grading for the Course:

*Scheme 1:*

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Problem Sets | 10% |
| Midterm      | 40% |
| Final Exam   | 50% |

*Scheme 2:*

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Problem Sets | 10% |
| Midterm      | 0%  |
| Final Exam   | 90% |

A student who attends both midterm and final will have his or her final grade calculated according to the scheme that gives you the highest result.

**Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks:**

| Teaching & Learning Activities | Roles                                                                                                              | ILOs Addressed |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Lectures                       | Explain key concepts and their applications; Cases and examples to build student's critical and analytical ability | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  |
| In-class Q&A and discussion    | Encourage class participation, critical thinking and discussion                                                    | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  |
| Tutorials                      | Further exploration of economic concepts covered in lectures using newspaper articles and current events           | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  |
| Problem Sets                   | Enhance understanding of course materials and their application through practice                                   | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  |

**Grading Rubrics**

(1) Problem Sets

Grading is based primarily on effort. Those students who demonstrate reasonable effort in solving the problem set questions will receive the full score.

(2) Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. Correct answers will result in a score.

(3) Final Exam

The final exam will consist of questions that require answers in words, graphs, and mathematical calculations. Each question (or sub-question) will be scored based on the correctness and completeness of the answers. Incomplete answers will be considered for partial credit.

**Final Grade Descriptors:**

| Grades | Short Description        | Elaboration on subject grading description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A      | Excellent Performance    | Demonstrates an excellent understanding of microeconomics's fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework. Exhibits exceptional problem-solving skills, including problem definition, evaluation of information and sources, and applying critical and creative thinking to real-world economic issues.      |
| B      | Good Performance         | Demonstrates a solid understanding of microeconomics's fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework. Exhibits solid problem-solving skills, including problem definition, evaluation of information and sources, and applying critical and creative thinking to real-world economic issues.                 |
| C      | Satisfactory Performance | Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of microeconomics's fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework. Exhibits problem-solving skills to some extent, including problem definition, evaluation of information and sources, and applying critical and creative thinking to real-world economic issues. |
| D      | Marginal Pass            | Demonstrates a limited understanding of microeconomics's fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework. Exhibits limited problem-solving skills, including problem definition, evaluation of information and sources, and applying critical and creative thinking to real-world economic issues.             |
| F      | Fail                     | Demonstrates a lack of understanding of microeconomics's fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework. Exhibits little or no problem-solving skills, including problem definition, evaluation of information and sources, and applying critical and creative thinking to real-world economic issues.        |

### Communication and Feedback

1. Problem set scores will be released via Canvas within one week of submission, with suggested solutions provided for reference.
2. Midterm exam scores will be released via Canvas within two weeks, with paper-checking sessions to be conducted within three weeks.
3. Final exam scores will be released via Canvas within three weeks, with paper-checking sessions to be conducted within four weeks.

### D. Required Texts and Materials

Required: *"Principle of Microeconomics,"* Tenth Edition, by N. GREGORY MANKIW.  
Published by Cengage Learning.

I will supplement the course with additional materials outside the textbook. All additional and supplementary materials will be delivered in the lecture PPT or posted on CANVAS.

## E. Office Hours and Appointments

Given your different schedules, if you have any questions about the course materials, please do not hesitate to contact me by email ([eckwsiu@ust.hk](mailto:eckwsiu@ust.hk)) to schedule an appointment.

## F. Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST - Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

## G. Course AI Policy

The use of Generative AI in project is permitted with proper acknowledgment and will NOT be contributed to the students' work.

## H. Outline and Schedule (Tentative and subject to change)

|        |    |                                               |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2-Sep  | 0  | Logistics                                     |
| 4-Sep  | 1  | Ten Principles of Economics (I)               |
| 9-Sep  | 2  | Ten Principles of Economics (II)              |
| 11-Sep | 3  | Thinking Like an Economist                    |
| 16-Sep | 4  | Interdependence and the Gains from Trade (I)  |
| 18-Sep | 5  | Interdependence and the Gains from Trade (II) |
| 23-Sep | 6  | The Market Forces of Supply and Demand (I)    |
| 25-Sep | 7  | The Market Forces of Supply and Demand (II)   |
| 30-Sep | 8  | Elasticity                                    |
| 2-Oct  | 9  | Efficiency of Market                          |
| 7-Oct  |    | Holiday                                       |
| 9-Oct  | 10 | Government meets Market (I)                   |
| 14-Oct | 11 | Government meets Market (II)                  |
| 16-Oct | 12 | The Costs of Production (I)                   |
| 21-Oct | 13 | The Costs of Production (II)                  |
| 23-Oct | 14 | Firms in Perfect Competitive Market (I)       |
| 28-Oct |    | Midterm Exam                                  |
| 30-Oct | 15 | Firms in Perfect Competitive Market (II)      |
| 4-Nov  | 16 | Monopoly (I)                                  |
| 6-Nov  | 17 | Monopoly (II)                                 |
| 11-Nov | 18 | Strategic Interaction and Oligopoly (I)       |
| 13-Nov | 19 | Strategic Interaction and Oligopoly (II)      |
| 18-Nov | 20 | Externalities                                 |
| 20-Nov | 21 | Public Good                                   |
| 25-Nov | 22 | TBA                                           |
| 27-Nov | 23 | TBA                                           |

END