

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Department of Economics

Course Outline

ECON1220 L1 – Thinking Like An Economist I: Microeconomics (Fall2026-27)

Lecture Time:	Mon & Wed 3 pm – 4:20 pm
Venue:	Rm 2407 (Lift17-18)
Course Website:	CANVAS
Instructor:	SIU, Kam Wing (蕭錦榮)
Office:	Room 6054, Lee Shau Kee Business Building
Email / Phone:	eckwsiu@ust.hk / (852) 2358-7617
Office Hours:	By appointment
Teaching Assistant	SHI Yun
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Office Hours:	TBA
Credits:	3
Pre-requisite	None
Exclusion:	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-referenced grading, 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 must turn in your own problem-set answers by the deadline. Submit problem sets by uploading your answers through CANVAS. NO late submissions 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 the 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 toward 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.

- 30 Oct (Friday) during the regular class hours

There will be no make-up exams for the midterms. If you are absent from the midterm exam with my approval, the midterm exam weighting 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. An unapproved absence from the midterm exam will result in a score of ZERO.

(3) Final exam

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

- Date of final exam: 7 to 19 December 2026 (To be announced by the ARO)

If you intend to travel at the end of the semester, please plan your travel carefully to avoid scheduling conflicts. Requests to change the 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 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). The individual requesting a make-up exam is responsible for ensuring that he or she is available.

All arrangements for the make-up exam are at the instructor's discretion. The student must comply with all requirements communicated by the instructor before the make-up final exam. The failure to meet any requirements may result in a ZERO score.

(4) Overall grading for the Course:

Scheme 1:

Problem Sets	10%
Midterm	30%
Final Exam	60%

Scheme 2:

Problem Sets	10%
Midterm	0%
Final Exam	90%

A student who attends both the midterm and final will have his or her final grade calculated according to the scheme that gives 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 students' 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 the fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework of microeconomics. 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 the fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework of microeconomics. 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 the fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework of microeconomics. 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 the fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework of microeconomics. 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 the fundamental concepts, methodology, and analytical framework of microeconomics. 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 add 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 contact me by email (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 acknowledgement 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	6	Interdependence and the Gains from Trade (II)
23-Sep	7	The Market Forces of Supply and Demand (I)
25-Sep	8	The Market Forces of Supply and Demand (II)
30-Sep	9	Elasticity
2-Oct	10	Efficiency of Markets
7-Oct	11	Government meet Market (I)
9-Oct	12	Government meet Market (II)
14-Oct	13	The Costs of Production (I)
16-Oct	14	The Costs of Production (II)
21-Oct	15	Firms in Perfect Competitive Market (I)
23-Oct	16	Firms in Perfect Competitive Market (II)
28-Oct	17	Monopoly (I)
30-Oct		Midterm Exam
4-Nov	18	Monopoly (II)
6-Nov	19	Strategic Interaction and Oligopoly (I)
11-Nov	20	Strategic Interaction and Oligopoly (II)
13-Nov	21	Externalities
18-Nov	22	Public Good
20-Nov	23	TBA
25-Nov	24	TBA
27-Nov	25	TBA

END