

Introduction to Microeconomics

Course code: ECO120

Term and year: Spring 2021

Day and time: Monday 11:30-12:45, Wednesday 11:30-12:45

Instructor: Jiří Lahvička, Ph.D.

Instructor contact: jiri.lahvicka@aauni.edu

Consultation hours: Tuesday 13:15-14:15 or by appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Introductory
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	Bachelor Required

1. Course Description

Introduction to Microeconomics is a basic review of microeconomic theory and its applications to real-life examples. The course covers supply & demand, government policy & market efficiency, production & different market structures, and game theory.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Have a clear understanding of the necessary terminology, such as consumer, producer, market, prices, regulations, taxes, externalities
- Comprehend the basic concepts of economic thinking such as benefits, costs, market interactions, consumption, production, competition, demand, supply
- Understand and analyze simple models describing the market environment and the behavior of its agents, for example: demand and supply diagram (in all basic market models as perfect competition, monopoly etc.), production possibility frontier and strategic interactions (games)
- Place the studied concepts in the context of real-life situations, analyze social interactions and phenomena by application of above-mentioned tools
- Understand effects of microeconomic policies on the market outcomes, including welfare considerations

3. Reading Material

Recommended Materials

- Mankiw, Gregory N.: Principles of Microeconomics, South-Western Pub., 7th Edition 2014 (Any editions after 2008 can be used)
- Complete course slides, accompanying videos, others (all these materials will be provided to students in NEO)

4. Teaching methodology

The course is delivered in a flexible format without required attendance and with all grading taking place online. Before every session, it is suggested that students first study the relevant materials at home (the relevant textbook chapter, others as needed).

Each week, there are two 75-minute lecture/practice/Q&A sessions. The sessions will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams with a recording available after each session (the sessions might switch to campus if the situation allows, but there will always be a recording). The sessions focus on practical applications and exercises, not explaining theory. Attendance is NOT required, but recommended.

All assessment takes place online in NEO. The grading scheme (multiple smaller assignments, not all of them count) is designed to be flexible and accommodate students that cannot fully participate in some weeks due to being sick, quarantined, or having other problems which would normally result in an excused absence.

There are two types of assignments – multiple-choice/matching tests (80% of the final grade, 6 in total, 4 best count) and longer practice assignments (20% of the final grade, 6 in total, 4 best count). The deadline for each assignment is Sunday, 23:59, at the end of the corresponding week.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Week 1 Feb 8 Feb 10	Topic: Introduction to Microeconomics Reading (Mankiw): Ten Principles of Economics, Thinking like an Economist Assignment: none
Week 2 Feb 15 Feb 17	Topic: Supply & Demand Reading (Mankiw): The Market Forces of Supply and Demand Assignment: none
Week 3 Feb 22 Feb 24	Topic: Elasticity Reading (Mankiw): Elasticity and Its Application Assignment: Multiple-choice test 1
Week 4 Mar 1 Mar 3	Topic: Market & Government Policy Reading (Mankiw): Supply, Demand, and Government Policies Assignment: Practice assignment 1
Week 5 Mar 8 Mar 10	Topic: Market Efficiency Reading (Mankiw): Consumers, Producers, and the Efficiency of Markets Assignment: Multiple-choice test 2
Week 6 Mar 15 Mar 17	Topic: Taxation Reading (Mankiw): Application: The Costs of Taxation Assignment: Practice assignment 2
Week 7 Mar 22 Mar 24	Topic: Externalities Reading (Mankiw): Externalities Assignment: Multiple-choice test 3
Week 8 Mar 29 Mar 31	Topic: Public Goods & Common Resources Reading (Mankiw): Public Goods and Common Resources Assignment: Practice assignment 3
Week 9	Mid-term break
Week 10 Apr 12 Apr 14	Topic: Production and Costs Reading (Mankiw): The Costs of Production Assignment: Multiple-choice test 4
Week 11 Apr 19 Apr 21	Topic: Perfect Competition Reading (Mankiw): Firms in Competitive Markets Assignment: Practice assignment 4

Week 12 Apr 26 Apr 28	Topic: Monopoly & Price Discrimination Reading (Mankiw): Monopoly Assignment: Multiple-choice test 5
Week 13 May 3 May 5	Topic: Oligopoly & Game Theory Reading (Mankiw): Oligopoly Assignment: Practice assignment 5
Week 14 May 10 May 12	Topic: Further Topics in Microeconomics Reading (Mankiw): Frontiers of Microeconomics Assignment: Multiple-choice test 6
Week 15 May 17 May 19	Topic: Review & extensions Assignment: Practice assignment 6

The timing of topics might be slightly different depending on the needs of the specific group of students.

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (hours)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Class Participation	42	0%		
Multiple-choice tests & preparation	86	80%	Mastery of basic concepts and methods	1
Practice assignments & preparation	22	20%	Ability to apply all concepts and methods in both familiar and completely new contexts	1, 2
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Multiple-choice tests:

There are 6 multiple-choice tests throughout the semester (every two weeks starting in week 3) checking basic understanding of the material covered each week. Each test is available in NEO at the beginning of the week; the deadline for completion is always at the end of the week (Sunday 23:59). The tests do not have any specific time limits otherwise.

Each test contains questions for 20 points (plain multiple-choice questions are for 1 point, matching questions are for 2 points with partial credit possible) and is scored instantly & automatically. Students are allowed to use any online/offline resources, but are expected to work on their own. The selection & order of questions/answers might be different (randomized) for each student.

Four best scores comprise 80% of the final grade (i.e. one point on the test = one percentage point towards the final grade).

Practice assignments:

There are 6 longer practice assignments throughout the semester (every two weeks starting in week 4). Each assignment is available in NEO at the beginning of the week in which it is due; the deadline for submission is always at the end of the week (Sunday 23:59). Students are supposed to answer either in a Word document or on paper and submit the document, scans, photos, or screenshots of their answers to NEO (allowed formats: doc/docx, pdf, jpg, png).

These practice assignments contain longer open-ended/freeform problems, mini-essays, and economic games for 5 points. Students are allowed to use any online/offline resources, but are expected to work on their own. Besides correctness, students might receive points for creativity or uniqueness (the exact scoring rules are a part of each assignment).

Some assignments might also contain simple economic games where points depend not only on the student's decisions, but also on decisions of the other students. However, there will always be an alternative way to receive points, so the student can get a full score either by playing the game well or explaining it well.

Four best scores comprise 20% of the final grade (i.e. one point on the assignment = one percentage point towards the final grade).

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams.

Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is expected and encouraged. However, the requirement that students miss not more than 35% of real-time classes is temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he can submit to the Dean of Students an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. These must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

The use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) is allowed at all times for any purpose (including during tests/assignments) as long as it is not disruptive for other students.

Eating is not allowed during in-person classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the exam or assignment will be failed and the student will be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities are asked to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95–100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A–	90–94	
B+	87–89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83–86	
B–	80–82	
C+	77–79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73–76	
C–	70–72	
D+	65–69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60–64	
F	0–59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Jiří Lahvička
Date: 2021-01-21

Approved by: Jan Vašenda
Date: 2021-02-03