

ECON 100: The Economics of Social Issues Syllabus

Spring 2026

Colin Johnson

Course Description and Instructor Information

Course Description

A survey of basic economic theory with an emphasis on the basics of the market system, this course shows the application of economics to real world problems such as pollution, inflation, health care and unemployment. Cardinal Directions: Social Science; iCon Engaging Civic Life.

There are no explicit prerequisites, however it is assumed students will have a basic working knowledge of high school algebra.

Instructor Information

I am here to help you! I encourage you to reach out to me if you have a question or concern or just want to talk about the concepts in our course, and I'll be happy to help you. Please contact me in any of the following ways:

- **Email Address:** cmjohnson@noctrl.edu
- Office Location: SBE 262
 - Upper level, back corner near Bloomberg Lab
- Designated Hours for Students (Office Hours): I will hold office hours each week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30, but I will generally be in my office before and after class each day. Contact me by email and I will be happy to arrange a different meeting time in person, by videoconference, or by phone that accommodates both of our schedules.
- I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours

Course Objectives, Materials, and Structure

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze general equilibrium conditions for supply and demand
- Explain how economic shocks shift supply and demand
- Explain the differences between micro and macro economics
- Analyze various social issues in the context of an economist
 - International trade, pollution, healthcare, insurance, unemployment
- Understand the role the Federal Reserve plays in fiscal policy

Course Materials and Technologies

Other than the textbook, all required course materials will be provided via Canvas.

Required Materials and Technologies

Textbook: Economic Analysis of Social Issues, v3, by Alan Grant (2023).

The textbook is published by FlatWorld, who have provided a direct link for you to purchase the book:

<https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/engage/courses/2616003>

When you follow this link, it defaults to selecting “Standard,” but you do not need to purchase this option. You need only the “Basic” option, which provides access to the ebook. It should be approximately \$35. You are welcome to select whichever option you believe will help you best, but we will not be using any of the online homework assignments the book provides. You are also welcome to purchase the book from whichever source you choose, but purchasing directly from FlatWorld is by far the most cost-effective option.

ISBN: 978-1-4533-4303-6

Course Structure

Explain how your course is organized. For example, how does your course break down into multi-week units or modules? What does a typical week include, in what order?

The course is roughly divided according to the textbook chapters. There are 3 “sections” of the course: start of the semester to midterm 1, midterm 1 to midterm 2 (spring break), and spring break to end of the semester.

Grading and Assessments of Learning

Course Grades

I will assign final course grades based on the following percentage system and weighting of assessments of learning:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%

Letter Grade	Percentage
F	Below 60%

Course Material	Weight
Assignments (6)	30% (5% each)
Midterm 1	20%
Midterm 2	20%
Presentation	10%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

Time Management, Late Work, and Absences

You should expect to spend at least a couple hours out of class each week working on course assignments. Assignments will be provided well in advance of the due date (I will aim for, but cannot guarantee, at least 7 days). **I do not accept late work without previous arrangements.** If you believe you will have trouble submitting something on time for some (legitimate) reason, please talk to me, and I will be happy to work with you. Please note though that I may require documentation depending on the circumstance. **Late work will otherwise be scored a zero.**

While there is no penalty for missing class, I do take attendance for my records. There is one exception: **attendance on exam days is mandatory.** If you are absent on an exam day and do **not** inform me ahead of time (ahead of time means before the start of the exam at 9:20 am), you will need to provide valid documentation to excuse your absence, or you will receive a zero on the exam. If you do speak with me ahead of time, then we will come up with a mutually agreeable time for you to still take the exam. If you must miss an exam due to a college-sponsored activity, then you simply need to provide the documentation, and we will arrange a time to make up the exam.

Assignments

To assess learning, and to provide a good review for exams, there will be six assignments throughout the course. There will be two assignments prior to each exam.

Unless you have an approved accommodation with the college: all assignments must be handwritten. They need to be scanned and uploaded to Canvas by the assigned due date as a PDF. No other document format will be accepted.

You are welcome to collaborate on assignments with your classmates, but you must submit your own assignment. Collaborator names must be clearly written at the top of the assignment. You are not permitted to use any form of artificial intelligence (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, etc.).

Midterms

There will be two midterms. They are not inherently cumulative, but certain topics may reemerge. The midterms will be given in class on the days outlined in the course schedule.

Exams will comprise of multiple choice, short answer/quantitative, and essay questions. The best review will be the assignments and questions at the end of the textbook chapters. Each midterm will be worth 20% of the overall course grade.

Presentation

Each student will do a brief presentation (5-7 minutes) on a topic from a list I provide, or may choose a topic with my approval. Presentations will take place in class Monday and Wednesday of week 16. The presentation will be worth 10% of the overall course grade. I will provide more information as the semester progresses.

Final Exam

The final exam is not explicitly cumulative and will be given in class on **Wednesday, April 29 from 8-10 am**. The final is worth 20% of the overall course grade. On the final exam, you should be prepared to potentially answer questions regarding the content of your individual presentation in addition to the relevant course content.

Feedback and Grading Response Time

I will aim to return all work within 7 days of submission.

Important Policies Regarding AI

The use of generative artificial intelligence is growing, especially in the field of economics. I am not inherently opposed to you using generative AI to attempt to learn more information about topics we discuss in class. **However, the use of any form of artificial intelligence, generative or otherwise, on any submission is strictly prohibited.** This includes, but is not limited to, ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, etc. As stated in our College's Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures, "Attempts to obtain credit for work other than one's own constitutes cheating." You should also be aware that AI tools may provide inaccurate and biased information which may impact the quality of your submission and therefore your grade. You may contact me at any time to discuss further the appropriate use of AI in this course.

College Policies and Resources for Students

Our course syllabus includes by extension the college policies and resources for students posted in Canvas. Visit [College Policies and Resources for Students](#) to learn more about college policies that students are expected to abide by in all courses and resources and offices that are available to support students.

Schedule

This tentative schedule is accurate as of 12-31-2025. I reserve the right to make changes as needed. When changes are needed, I will provide updates in class and via email.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Instructional Materials	What Is Due
1	1-5	Fundamental Concepts in Economics, Cost-Benefit Analysis	Chapter 1, Chapter 2	Nothing
2	1-12	Supply and Demand	Chapter 3	Nothing
3	1-19	International Trade	Chapter 5	Wednesday, January 21: Assignment 1
4	1-26	Market Systems	Chapter 6	Friday, January 30: Assignment 2
5	2-2	Market Systems, Review	Chapter 6	Friday, February 6: MIDTERM 1
6	2-9	Public Goods and Role of Government	Chapter 10	Nothing
7	2-16	GDP and Macroeconomics	Chapter 16, 17	Monday, February 16: Assignment 3
8	2-23	Money, Banks, and Financial Institutions; Taxes, Spending	Chapter 18, 19	Friday, February 27: Assignment 4
9	3-2	Taxes, Spending, Review	Chapter 19, 20	Friday, March 6: Midterm 2
10	3-9	Spring Break		Nothing
11	3-16	The Nature of Pollution	Chapter 7	Nothing
12	3-23	Government Policies, Resource Depletion and Sustainability	Chapter 8/9	Nothing
13	3-30	Public Goods	Chapter 11	Wednesday, April 1: Assignment 5
14	4-6	The Volunteer's Dilemma	Chapter 12	Nothing

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Instructional Materials	What Is Due
15	4-13	Economics of Health Care and Health Insurance; Additional Topics in Economics	Chapter 14	Friday, April 17: Assignment 6
16	4-20	Presentations		Presentations as assigned
17	4-29	Final Exam		Wednesday, April 29, 8-10 am, SBE 200
