

ECON 103: Microeconomic Principles

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George Mason University Korea

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Class Hours: M/W 10:30-11:45am

Office Hours: M 12:00-1:45pm or by appointment

Course Description

ECON 103 Microeconomic Principles is a Mason Core Course and satisfies the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement. This course provides a survey of microeconomic issues at an introductory level. This course will introduce microeconomics in the context of current problems and explore how market mechanism allocates scarce resources among competing uses; uses supply, demand, production, and distribution theory to analyze problems. The course will also introduce students to economic methodology, including creating arguments, empirical verification, and policy decision-making.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students should understand the basic principles of microeconomics as a social science and such concepts as opportunity cost, scarcity, comparative advantage, markets and the laws of supply and demand, specialization and the division of labor, trade, and self-interest. Attention is given to the behavior of consumers who maximize utility subject to an income constraint and firms which maximize profits subject to market structures. In particular, student learning outcomes include:

- Explain the role of scarcity, specialization, opportunity cost and cost/benefit analysis in economic decision-making.
- Identify the determinants of supply and demand; demonstrate the impact of shifts in both market supply and demand curves on equilibrium price and output.
- Summarize the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility; describe the process of utility maximization.

- Calculate supply and demand elasticities, identify the determinants of price elasticity of demand and supply, and demonstrate the relationship between elasticity and total revenue.
- Describe the production function and the Law of Diminishing Marginal Productivity; calculate and graph short-run and long-run costs of production.
- Identify the four market structures by characteristics; calculate and graph the profit maximizing price and quantity in the output markets by use of marginal analysis.
- Determine the profit maximizing price and quantity of resources in factor markets under perfect and imperfect competition by use of marginal analysis.
- Describe governmental efforts to address market failure such as monopoly power, externalities, and public goods.
- Identify the benefits of free trade using the concept of comparative advantage.
- Address issues, policies, public opinions, expectations, environmental, and cultural changes that affect industry, society, choices, and the current economic state.

Required Text

Principles of Microeconomics, 9th Edition, N. Gregory Mankiw.

Course Requirements

1. Prerequisites: None
2. This can be taken to fulfill Mason Core Course and satisfies the *Social and Behavioral Sciences* requirement.

Course Structure

This course will be taught through a combination of assigned readings, lecture, course project, quizzes, and examinations. Class interaction allows the students to discover the strengths and weaknesses of alternative policy recommendations.

Assigned Readings

Textbook and other assigned readings present relevant topics, which will be covered more depthfully in class lecture. In class discussion of readings, instructor highlights most relevant reading topics and shows by example how to present data in a stimulating way, consistent with achieving course objectives.

Lecture

Lectures will be highly interactive. Instructor prompts students for response to questions posed and solicits his/her thoughts on issues discussed. Additionally, instructor provides concrete, real-world examples to illustrate concepts. Lecture format reinforces by example appropriate methods for asking questions, gaining relevant insights, and making appropriate recommendations.

Quizzes

Students will be provided several quizzes throughout the semester without prior warning (also known as a pop quiz). This is to ensure that students are keeping up with their readings and remembering the necessary facts. Only top 2 quiz results will be included in the final grade. Each quiz includes approximately 5–10 questions and those questions that many students get wrong might be included in the exams. Sorry but no make-ups for quizzes!

Exams

Exams will be closed-book and be composed of true/false questions, multiple choice, essay questions, some calculations that test students' ability to apply concepts discussed through the exam date. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any violation of the Institute's Honor Code will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. Non-programmable calculators are allowed. You are not allowed to use smartphones and tablets as calculators. Hence, please don't forget to bring your regular calculator on exam days.

Course project: Short policy memos

It is important that students be able to apply the economic theories and concepts discussed in class to real-life issues outside of class. Therefore, students will write 3 one-page policy memos applying a concept from class to a topic outside of class. Policy memos will be evaluated primarily based on English writing (structure, grammar, etc.), creativity, feasibility, and/or at the discretion of the instructor. Like quizzes, only top 2 policy memos will be included in the final grade. If any assignment is turned in late, your grade will be deducted 1 point for each day past the due date. An example of policy memo will be provided on Blackboard.

Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated on the basis of quizzes, exams, policy memos, and attendance. These components will be weighted as follows:

- 20% Midterm exam
- 40% Final exam (comprehensive)
- 10% 2 Best quizzes (5% each)
- 10% Course project: 2 Best policy memos (5% each)
- 20% Attendance and class participation (–1% for each unexcused absence)

Based on the cumulative grade, final grade will be specified as:

A+ = 97% and higher; A = 94% and higher; A- = 90% and higher; B+ = 87% and higher; B = 84% and higher; B- = 80% and higher; C+ = 77% and higher; C = 74% and higher; C- = 70% and higher; D = 60% and higher; F = below 60%

Course Policies

Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to engage in active classroom discussions; thus, class participation and attendance are mandatory. This includes submitting assignments, leading discussions, and participating in classroom debates. Students are expected to attend all classes, and attendance will be checked regularly. Attendance grade will be deducted 1 point for each unexcused absence. Students who miss an exam without an acceptable excuse (e.g., official doctor's note) may be penalized according to the instructor's grading policy. Students sleeping in class will be asked to wake up, get a drink, stand and stretch.

Email

GMU faculty and students are required to use GMU email accounts to communicate. You must regularly check your GMU email address, as important updates will be sent that way. Emails that I send to our class will also be posted as Blackboard announcements which you can view on the "Home Page" of our course Blackboard.

Electronics

All electronic devices (including laptops, tablets, cell/smartphones, earbuds, etc.) will be **strictly** prohibited in class. This is because they undermine the user's ability to learn effectively as well as those nearby the user.

Policy on Make-up Work

Students are allowed to make up work only for medical reasons (a doctor's note required), consistent with GMU Korea policy, except quizzes. You must notify the instructor **in advance** if you miss a class or exam.

University Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

George Mason University has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Please see <http://honorcode.gmu.edu/> to ensure that you abide by it. If you are uncertain about citation rules or assignment guidelines, ask me for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you feel unusual pressure or anxiety about your grade in this or any other course, please let me know and also seek help from University resources.

Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center offers tutoring and workshops to support your academic progress. To discuss academic support resource available to you, please contact Eunmee Lee, Ph.D., Director of the Academic Resource Center at elee45@gmu.edu. (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/academic-resource-center>)

Counseling and Wellness

Counseling and Wellness aims to provide comprehensive support services that promote the personal, social, and academic success of George Mason University Korea students. (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/counseling-and-wellness>)

Disability Services

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please visit the **Disability Services office**.

Course Modality

The Korean Ministry of Education's recommendation that higher education instruction be conducted in person this semester reaffirms Mason Korea's instructional modality. This course has been designed for in person instruction and learning. Course sessions will not be recorded to fully engage in an interactive learning environment. This course will follow all policies and guidance set by Mason Korea. Should any class sessions need to be adjusted or canceled due to health and safety concerns, students will be notified by email and can continue to check Blackboard for course materials and updates.

Classroom precautions during COVID-19

Although it is no longer required to wear a mask inside the Mason Korea building, you are required to wear a mask in the classroom if you have any suspicious symptoms or had a close contact with a confirmed case. If you test positive, please continue to immediately report to MK Emergency, Health and Safety (EHS) using online form or email (mksafety@gmu.edu). Mason Korea will follow the same procedure for a confirmed case as long as the Korean government mandates people to quarantine for 7 days when testing positive. There may be some occasions where I may ask you to wear masks. Please take all the recommended precautions to keep our community and yourself safe. MK EHS will supply masks and self-test kits, please visit the office at #545 when necessary. If you have any questions, please contact Mason Korea EHS at mksafety@gmu.edu or 032-626-5013.

Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. I reserve the right to adjust the pace of the course and the content covered as is necessary. Each exam will test on the material that was taught up until 1 week prior to the exam. The applications in the second half of the semester tend to build on the concepts in the first half of the semester though, so it is still important to at least review those concepts throughout the semester.

*AR: assigned readings

Week 01, 02/20 - 02/24: INTRODUCTION (AR: Chapter 1)

- Syllabus overview
- Chapter 1. Ten Principles of Economics

Week 02, 02/27 - 03/03: INTRODUCTION (AR: Chapter 2)

- Chapter 2. Thinking Like an Economist
- Wed Mar 1: Independence Movement Day (no classes)

Week 03, 03/06 - 03/10: INTRODUCTION (AR: Chapter 3)

- Chapter 3. Interdependence and the Gains from Trade

Week 04, 03/13 - 03/17: SUPPLY AND DEMAND I: HOW MARKETS WORK (AR: Chapter 4 & 5)

- Chapter 4. The Market Forces of Supply and Demand
- Chapter 5. Elasticity and Its Application

Week 05, 03/20 - 03/24: SUPPLY AND DEMAND I: HOW MARKETS WORK (AR: Chapter 6)

- Chapter 6. Supply, Demand, and Government Policies

Week 06, 03/27 - 03/31: SUPPLY AND DEMAND II: MARKETS AND WELFARE (AR: Chapter 7)

- Chapter 7. Consumers, Producers, and the Efficiency of Markets

Week 07, 04/03 - 04/07: SUPPLY AND DEMAND II: MARKETS AND WELFARE (AR: Chapter 8)

- Chapter 8. Application: The Costs of Taxation

Week 08, 04/10 - 04/14: Midterm Exam

- Wed Apr 12: Midterm Exam

Week 09, 04/17 - 04/21: THE ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR (AR: Chapter 9)

- Chapter 9. Application: International Trade

Week 10, 04/24 - 04/28: THE ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR (AR: Chapter 10)

- Chapter 10. Externalities
- Wed Apr 26: First policy memo due*

Week 11, 05/01 - 05/05: Spring Recess

- Mon May 1: Labor Day (no classes)
- Tue May 2-Thu May 4: Spring Recess (no classes)

Week 12, 05/08 - 05/12: THE ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR (AR: Chapter 11)

- Chapter 11. Public Goods and Common Resources

Week 13, 05/15 - 05/19: THE ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR (AR: Chapter 12)

- Chapter 12. The Design of the Tax System
- Second policy memo due*

Week 14, 05/22 - 05/26: FIRM BEHAVIOR AND THE ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY (AR: Chapter 13)

- Chapter 13. The Costs of Production

Week 15, 05/29 - 06/02: FIRM BEHAVIOR AND THE ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY (AR: Chapter 14)

- Chapter 13. The Costs of Production

Week 16, 06/05 - 06/09: FIRM BEHAVIOR AND THE ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY (AR: Chapter 14)

- Chapter 14. Firms in Competitive Markets
- Third policy memo due*

Week 17, 06/12 - 06/16: **Final Exam:** Friday, June 9, 4:00pm – 6:45pm