

ECN 751: Labor Economics I
Syracuse University
Fall 2023

Instructor: Maria Zhu

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Office: 426 Eggers Hall

Office Hours: W 1:00-3:00PM (in-person or virtual)

- To make appointment: <https://profzhu-officehours.youcanbook.me>

Class: M 12:45-3:35PM, Eggers Hall 112

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide Ph.D. students with an in-depth introduction to a selection of topics in the field of labor economics, as well as to develop skills and tools needed to be a successful researcher. This course is part of the sequence for the labor economics field in the Ph.D. program in economics. We will cover the theory behind core topics in labor economics, along with the empirical strategies used or developed to estimate important parameters to inform policy. The course will also provide students with relevant econometric concepts and tools widely employed in labor and other applied fields in economics. Furthermore, students will engage in developing their own research, as well as expanding writing and presenting skills.

The class will consist of participatory lectures, which implies that **students are expected to read the material before every lecture.**

Course website: Course materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Course textbook: Labor Economics, by Pierre Cahuc, Stéphane Carcillo, and André Zylberberg. Second Ed, MIT Press, 2014.

Office Hours: Office hours are available both in-person and virtually. You can sign up for office hour slots using the link at the top of the page. Note that you will be asked to select whether you would like to meet in-person or virtually when you book your appointment. If the scheduled Office Hours times do not work with your schedule, please feel free to email me and we can set up an alternative meeting time.

Grades will be computed as follows:

- Class presentations (of published papers) (30%--15% for each paper)
- Attendance (5%)
- Term paper proposal (15%)
- Term paper presentation (20%)
- Term paper (30%)

Notes

- Class presentations: Each student will do two separate 30-minute presentations of papers from the reading list. We will discuss presentation assignments and dates in

class. The presentation should be structured like an academic presentation. Be sure to emphasize the main contributions of this paper and how it advances the literature on the topic. It should also give a succinct summary of the paper so that the audience obtains clear “take-away” points about the paper.

- Term paper proposal: The goal of the term paper is to start a solid empirical analysis on a topic of your interest by the end of the semester. The proposal is due mid-semester and should be a 2 to 4-page (double-spaced) writeup of the proposed idea for the research project. The proposal should include the research question, how it contributes to existing literature, and how you plan to go about answering this research question in terms of the data and empirical strategy that will be employed. There should also be discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the analysis and hypothesized results and/or channels that may drive outcomes of interest.
- Term paper presentation: 30-minute presentation of the research in your term paper. The presentation should be structured like an academic presentation and cover the main sections of your paper. Make sure to emphasize the main contributions of this paper and how it advances the literature on the topic.
- Term paper: The term paper will consist, in most cases, in a literature review and a detailed plan including hypothesis, data that will be used, and empirical strategy to be employed. The paper can also include preliminary results. The page limit is 15 pages (double-spaced, including references and tables). Students are encouraged to talk to the instructor about the idea for the paper as early in the semester as possible.

Deadlines

- Each week: Read assigned papers “*” from the reading list that we will be covering for the week
- Class presentation: We will discuss paper assignments and presentation dates during the first class. Different students will present in different weeks.
- Term paper proposal: Wednesday, October 18
- Term paper presentation: Last two weeks of class (12/4, 12/11)
 - You should be ready to present either of these dates
- Term paper: Friday, December 15

Topic Schedule (tentative)

1. Introduction and Human capital (overview and returns to schooling)
2. Human capital (education production and evaluation)
3. Labor market equilibrium and compensating differentials
4. Intergenerational mobility
5. Discrimination: theory and empirics
6. Discrimination and learning models
7. Gender gaps in the labor market
8. Early life determinants of long-run outcomes (time permitting)
9. Social interactions and network effects (time permitting)

Note: throughout the semester, there will also be several short lectures about “doing” economics. These lectures will cover topics like idea generation, writing, and presenting.

Feedback: I am always happy to look at your work (proposals, drafts, slides, etc.) in advance and provide written feedback. Please feel free to send me an email with any material you would like me to look over, and I will get back to you within 72 hours (three days). Please budget enough time for me to look over your materials in this time frame—I am unable to do last minute turnarounds! (Additionally, you are always welcome to come to office hours to talk about your work and get feedback as well.)

Reading Assignments

- You are required to read articles marked with “*” on the reading list before class. Additional articles in the reading list are supplemental material as they benefit your development as a researcher.

Class Policies

Academic Dishonesty: Complete academic honesty is expected of all students. Any incidence of academic dishonesty, as defined by the SU Academic Integrity Policy will result in both course sanctions and formal notification of the College of Arts & Sciences. For more information about the policy: <http://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/>. In this course, students are encouraged to study together, but exams must represent the work of the individual student.

Center for Disability Resources: Students with disabilities who desire accommodations are asked to go through the Center for Disability Resources (CDR). To reach CDR, please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu. CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. CDR policy stipulates that all paperwork associated with academic accommodations due to a disability be completed and returned to their office at least 10 days in advance of the exam date requested. All scheduled exams will be administered in the CDR testing center at 804 University Avenue. You must contact the CDR Service Coordinator at least 2 days prior to the scheduled exam to confirm the date and time of the event. Only students who register with the CDR office in a timely manner will be given accommodations on exams.

Faith Tradition Observance: Syracuse University’s religious observance policy (<https://policies.syr.edu/policies/university-governance-ethics-integrity-and-legal-compliance/religious-observances-policy/>) recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Mental Health: Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and

resources effectively to navigate stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. There are a range of resources available at the Barnes Center (<https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/>) and I encourage you to seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000.