

**ECN 310: Economics of Education**  
Syracuse University  
Fall 2019

**Instructor:** Maria Zhu  
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**Office:** 426 Eggers Hall  
**Office Hours:** W 2:30pm-4:30pm

**Class:** MW 12:45PM-2:05PM, Carnegie 122

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**Course Description:** The economics of education analyzes how and why people make decisions to invest in education, the effect of education on long-term social and economic outcomes, the behavior of institutions that “produce” education, and how best to design and implement public policies affecting the level and distribution of education resources and outcomes. Throughout the course, there is an emphasis on examining empirical tests of the economic theory and measuring the effects of policy initiatives on educational outcomes.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Explain the broad impacts of education on both individuals and society as a whole
- Understand the practical challenges of education research and know how to distinguish good research from bad
- Think critically about the potential effects of various education policies

**Textbook:** *Economics of Education*, by Lovenheim and Turner. First Edition: 2017

**Prerequisites:** ECN 101 and 102 or ECN 203

**Course website:** Assignments and other course-related materials will be posted on Blackboard.

**Grades will be computed as follows:**

- **Homework (15%):** Homework assignments are due at the *beginning* of class on the due date, and each assignment will be checked and graded based on **completeness**. Feel free to work together with classmates on assignments, but everyone must submit their own homework. Homework submitted after class starts will be considered late. I will post solutions online after the problem set is due, and it is your job to go over your own work. If you cannot make it to class, please submit the assignment to my mailbox *before* the beginning of the class

period the assignment is due. You must complete all parts of every problem to receive full credit.

- **Midterm 1 (25%)**
- **Midterm 2 (25%)**
- **Final (30%)**
- **Attendance/Participation (5%):** Attendance is mandatory and participation is encouraged.

**Re-grade Requests:** You may resubmit an exam with an additional sheet explaining **in a few words** why you deserve a better grade. Remember, you are graded based on what you put down on your exam, NOT what you know. Re-grade requests are accepted for one week after the graded test is returned. Your entire exam will be regraded and the score may go up or down as a result. Please note that I scan all answer sheets after you turn in your exam. Any modifications to original answers will result in an automatic zero on the exam and additional sanctions per the Academic Integrity Policy (see below). Out of fairness to other students, grades for the class cannot be bumped up at the end of the semester upon request.

**Late Work and Make-up Policy:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class, not later that day. Homework is graded on a scale of 0 to 3, with 3 being awarded for assignments in which every problem has been answered. Any late work will automatically lose 1 point for every class day that it is late (starting with after class on the due date). If you know in advance you will be absent on the day an assignment is due, you can turn in the assignment early to my mailbox. No late work will be accepted three days after the due date. Make-up exam accommodations will only be made if your absence is excused by the Office of Student Assistance. Note that they will only provide absence excuses if the event is serious enough to warrant an absence over 48 hours.

**Computers and Cell Phones:** No cell phones in class. Laptops and tablets are discouraged; research in the economics of education actually have shown the use of these devices adversely affect student learning:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html?module=inline>.

**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.

**Office of Disability Services:** Students with disabilities who desire special arrangements are asked to go through the Office of Disability Services (ODS), located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. ODS

policy stipulates that all paper work 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 ODS testing center at 804 University Avenue. You must contact the ODS 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 ODS office in a timely manner will be given accommodations on exams.

**Religious 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 among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided 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 before the end of the second week of classes. An online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/ Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>                               | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Due</b> |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1           | 8/26        | Introduction                               | Ch. 1          |            |
|             | 8/28        | Structure and History of Education Markets | Ch. 2          | HW 0       |
| 2           | 9/2         | NO CLASS (Labor Day 🗑️)                    |                |            |
|             | 9/4         | Human Capital Model I                      | Ch. 4          | HW 1       |
| 3           | 9/9         | Human Capital Model II                     | Ch. 4          |            |
|             | 9/11        | Signaling Model I                          | Ch. 5          |            |
| 4           | 9/16        | Signaling Model II                         | Ch. 5          | HW 2       |
|             | 9/18        | Empirical Tools I                          | Ch. 3.1-3.2    |            |
| 5           | 9/23        | NO CLASS                                   |                |            |
|             | 9/25        | Empirical Tools II                         | Ch. 3.1-3.2    | HW 3       |
| 6           | 9/30        | Review for Midterm                         |                |            |
|             | 10/2        | Midterm 1                                  |                |            |
| 7           | 10/7        | Empirical Tools III                        | Ch. 3.3        |            |
|             | 10/9        | Empirical Tools IV                         | Ch. 3.3        |            |
| 8           | 10/14       | Returns to Educ./Educ. Production Function | Ch. 6,7        | HW 4       |
|             | 10/16       | Financing of Local Public Schools          | Ch. 8          |            |
| 9           | 10/21       | Relationship between Inputs and Outputs    | Ch. 9          |            |
|             | 10/23       | School Choice                              | Ch. 10         | HW 5       |
| 10          | 10/28       | Test-Based Accountability Programs         | Ch. 11         |            |
|             | 10/30       | Teacher Labor Markets                      | Ch. 12         | HW 6       |
| 11          | 11/4        | Review for Midterm                         |                |            |
|             | 11/6        | Midterm 2                                  |                |            |
| 12          | 11/11       | Market Dimensions of Higher Education      | Ch. 13         |            |
|             | 11/13       | Economics of College Life                  | Ch. 15         | HW 7       |
| 13          | 11/18       | Paying for College                         | Ch. 14         |            |
|             | 11/20       | Paying for College                         | Ch. 14         |            |
| 14          | 11/25       | NO CLASS (Thanksgiving 🍁)                  |                |            |
|             | 11/27       | NO CLASS (Thanksgiving 🍁)                  |                |            |
| 15          | 12/2        | Guest Lecture                              |                | HW 8       |
|             | 12/4        | Review for Final                           |                |            |
|             | 12/11       | Final Exam 5:15-7:15PM                     |                |            |