

Econ 329: Labor Economics
Moravian College, Spring 2015
Department of Economics and Business

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 10 – 11:30 am; Thursdays: 1:30 – 3:30 pm; or by appointment

Class Information:

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:10 pm – 2:20 pm

Class Location: Comenius Hall Room 005

What is this course all about? Our goal in this course is to analyze various labor market phenomena and problems, and suggest policy alternatives using the tools of economic analysis. The questions we will investigate vary broadly. For example, why has married women's participation in the labor force grown so rapidly in recent decades? Why has labor union membership drastically declined lately? How much do unions affect wages? Are the net effects of immigration on the U.S. economy favorable or harmful? How good of an investment is a college education? In fact, you should find that labor economics is one of the most interesting areas of economic analysis!

What I am required to read? *Modern Labor Economics, Theory and Public Policy*, 12th Edition, Ehrenberg, Ronald G. and Robert S. Smith, Pearson, Prentice Hall Publishers, Massachusetts c. 2014. ISBN: 978-0-133-46278-4

Several websites have excellent and regular information on health and health-economics related issues. As you peruse various links, be sure to verify the credentials of each author. Databases available through Reeves Library are excellent sources of scholarly articles.

Other relevant readings and course materials will be posted on the Blackboard site for this class. Please check Blackboard regularly.

What preparation do I have to have? Econ 152, Econ 225, and Writ 100 or Linc101

How will I be assessed?

CPAs	40%
Project 1	15%
Project 2	20%
Current Event Analyses	15%
Participation	10%

What are the learning outcomes for this course?

- Understand how wages and employment are determined in labor markets
- Apply human capital analysis to worker education and training decisions
- Understand the role and effects of concentration, information and search, and worker mobility in labor markets
- Analyze and evaluate the effects of unions on wages, employment, and other important economic variables
- Understand the theory of wage and employment discrimination and the effects of discrimination on workers
- Analyze the problem of unemployment and its incidence
- Understand the phenomenon of growing inequality in earnings and its consequences

What is the workload expectation for this course?

This course is a full-unit course that meets twice per week for 70 minutes at each class period. Middles States Accreditation requires that each full-unit course include at least **174 hours of course work** during the fifteen-week semester. Over the course of this semester we will meet 28 times for 70 minutes each; therefore, our classroom time will only account for 33 of these required hours plus an additional three hours for final presentations. This implies that **work outside of the classroom** must meet a minimum threshold of 138 hours, or **nine hours per week**. The activities and assignments required for successful completion of this course are designed with that goal in mind.

What makes this a Writing Intensive (WI) course?

Over the course of gaining knowledge in the area of labor economics, we will make use of the writing process in addition to our traditional empirical methods of economic analyses. Do not let this scare you! Writing provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts we will study. As with all Writing Intensive (WI) courses, we will meet the following minimum requirements through the assignments and lessons within this class:

- Opportunities for the writing process to work (i.e., writing assignments provided in writing; sufficient time between assignment and due date of writing; chances for students to receive feedback on early drafts of papers, whether from classmates, Writing Center tutors, or the instructor; chances to revise and edit drafts).
- Use of more informal or exploratory—and ungraded—writing (e.g., first drafts of formal essays or reports, written responses to other students' work, journals, reading responses, in-class writing).
- At least 50% of the course grade based on assessment instruments that employ written discourse (e.g., essays, essay exams, lab reports, texts for public speaking).
- A minimum of 25 pages of writing (consistent with the first three points above).
- Provision of models of, and practice in, the conventions of writing within the Economics discipline (e.g., formats, style, documentation, language and tone).

What happens if there is inclement weather?

In hazardous weather conditions, the College may be closed and classes cancelled, or the college may opt to run on a two-hour delayed schedule (see below). The decision to close or delay the opening of classes will be announced on the inclement weather hotline, [610 625-7995](tel:6106257995), and will be communicated on the following radio and TV stations: WLEV-FM 100.7, WAEB-FM 104.1, WAEB-AM 790, WCTO-FM 96.1, WRFY-FM 102.5, WBYN-FM 107.5, WODE-AM 99.9, WWYY-FM 107.1, WKFB-FM 107.5, WSBG-FM 93.5, WZZO-FM 95.1, and WFMZ-TV (Channel 69).

These closings or delays will also appear at the top of the login page on the College's internet portal AMOS (amos.moravian.edu) as well as the College's website (www.moravian.edu <<http://www.moravian.edu/>>). College-wide cancellations *after the start of the class day* will be announced on the public-address system of the HUB, the campus e-mail system, the radio and TV stations mentioned above, and AMOS and the College's website.

Two-Hour Delay: If the decision has been made to open with a two-hour delay, the day does not begin with third-period classes; it begins with first-period classes on a shortened schedule. When following the delayed schedule, please note that there will be no "A" or "B" periods. A 2-hour delay does not affect courses, which begin at 4PM or later. Those courses would run on their normal schedule, if the college were open. Morning and afternoon science labs and studio art classes have their own schedule. Music lessons and practice are cancelled for the day when the delayed schedule is in effect.

What should I do if I need an accommodation in this course?

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Upon successful completion of this course you may become eligible for the Economics Honor Society (ODE)!

Omicron Delta Epsilon (ODE) is the economics honor society. Its purpose is to recognize scholastic achievement in economics and to promote closer ties of students and faculty. This spring, ODE will organize short evening biweekly meetings for any interested students. Current students will present their research and young economics alumni will talk about their careers. Look for upcoming announcements. To become eligible for induction into ODE, students must attain junior status and have a 3.0 GPA in three or more economics courses as well as overall.

What are the classroom policies?

1. **Attendance is expected** at each class period. Absences will reduce your participation grade.
2. As a common courtesy for your fellow students and myself, I expect students to **be on time**. Lateness will reduce your participation grade.
3. I permit **appropriate and responsible use of technology** during class. Phones, tablets, and laptops can be used as calculators or as 'Internet-enabled' devices for **purposes of class assignment and discussion**.
4. Violations of the Moravian College Academic Honesty Code will not be tolerated. **Plagiarism**, regardless of intent, is a violation of academic honesty; all cases **will be reported to the Dean Traupman-Carr** and the offender will receive a zero on the plagiarized work.
5. Communication for this course will occur through your **Moravian e-mail account and Blackboard**. You are required to check these sources regularly for updates and assignments related to this course.
6. **Late assignments are not accepted** and a grade of zero is recorded. Please be cognizant of the due dates for each assignment. No exceptions will be made to accommodate late work.
7. Part of your responsibility as a Moravian student is to attend classes and to take notes. This is an essential part of the learning process. I will therefore not post extensive lecture notes online. Also, note that this course will be fairly intense, so it is essential that you do not fall behind in your readings.
8. Depending on the final enrollment in the class, we may need to use the final exam period for presentations. Attendance is expected, even if you are not presenting on this date.
9. In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the decisions made by the college (see details below).
10. **I do not offer extra credit.**

The following pages detail specific information regarding each assessment. More details will be provided as due dates approach.

COURSE PREPARATION ASSIGNMENTS

Course preparation assignments (CPAs) are designed to facilitate discussion in the classroom. You will be required to prepare weekly CPAs according to the schedule detailed above. Topics and response requirements will be detailed each week on Blackboard.

Your CPA must be submitted to Blackboard before class begins! The CPAs are due via Blackboard **by 1 pm** on the due date listed below. You are also required to bring a (hard- or electronic-) copy of your CPA to class on the date it is due, so you can reference it during classroom discussion.

CPAs will include a review of a current article related to the weekly topic of discussion. Discussion or empirical analysis of specific economic points will be required.

I will randomly select a student to lead the class discussion corresponding to the CPA assignment on the date it is due. Each student should come prepared to facilitate the discussion on that topic. Your facilitation of that class discussion will represent half of your class participation grade.

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation accounts for five percent of your final grade. Simply attending class will earn students an approximate participation grade of 75%. Students can marginally improve their participation grade through “passive participation”, which implies attending class, taking notes, and being attentive. Students can substantially improve their participation grade through “active participation”, which includes volunteering thoughtful questions and answers on a regular basis. Students who choose not to attend class on a regular basis (i.e. have more than three absences during the course of the semester) or are perpetually late to class will receive a participation grade lower than a 75%. Additionally, there will be surprise assessments on a regular basis to check students’ understanding of course material. Successfully completing these assessments will also improve a student’s participation grade.

CURRENT EVENT ANALYSES FOR LABOR ECONOMICS VIA GOOGLE COMMUNITY

We will be using the Google Communities application to discuss current events related to the various aspects of labor economics studied over the course of the semester. We will also use this forum to identify different types of economic writing displayed across the media. We will use the Google Community application in order to facilitate continual discussion on these topics.

The Google Community will serve as one of our informal writing components of this course. Students are expected to continually monitor this forum and are required to post to

this community on a weekly basis. Each week, students should post an interesting anecdote about their current event and respond to another student's post.

Active participation within the Google Community includes:

1. posting an original article, or
2. referencing a second resource in your response to a classmates' post.

At a minimum your comments should include:

1. identification of the specific labor economic concept(s) is (are) discussed in the article;
2. a demonstration of your understanding of the concept(s); and
3. an explanation of how this relates to theories discussed in class.

The following "rules" apply:

- Articles must have appeared in print since the beginning of the semester.
- Source and date of each article must be indicated. All types of magazines and newspapers are eligible, but sources should be verified as credible.

Posts will be graded on:

- Quality of the discussion (items 1-3 above).
- Appropriateness of the articles selected.
- Diversity of topics covered in the articles.

Weekly posts are due at noon on Fridays, according to the schedule detailed below.

Your community posts and CPAs will be graded on a scale of 1-5 according to the following:

- 5: Excellent, response includes clear and complete thoughts and a detailed, accurate analysis
- 4: Good, response contains fully developed ideas, but the understanding of the concepts is slightly confused
- 3: Fair, response is not fully developed and understanding of the concepts is not evident
- 2: Poor, response is incomplete and analysis is missing or totally inaccurate
- 1: Unacceptable, response is unintelligible and lacks proper analysis and thought development
- 0: Late or missing

PROJECTS

There will be two main projects during the course of this semester in which students will have the opportunity to investigate different labor economics topics while improving their writing skills. In the first project, students will estimate the net present value of their expected future earnings stream and the expected rate of return of their college degree. In the second project, students will investigate a specific labor economic topic of their choice, and conduct a literature review to understand the current research, insights, and challenges in that field of study. Students will present their findings related to the second project at the culmination of the semester.

In both projects, students will work with the writing center, the library staff, and each other to improve research and writing skills. More details on the specific requirements of each project will be provided as the semester continues.

What schedule* will we follow in this course?

Week:	Topic:	Assignments Due:
1: Jan. 19 and 21	Introduction to and Overview of Labor Economics: Ch 1 & 2	Syllabus Sign. Page: Jan. 21
2: Jan. 26 and 28	Demand for Labor: Ch 2 & 3	CPA 1: Jan. 28 GC 1: Jan. 30
3: Feb. 2 and 4	Demand Elasticities: Ch 3 & 4	CPA 2: Feb. 4
4: Feb. 9 and 11	Supply of Labor: Ch 6	CPA 3: Feb. 11 GC 2: Feb. 13
5: Feb. 16 and 18	Supply of Labor, cont.: Ch 7	CPA 4: Feb. 18
6: Feb. 23 and 25	Investments in Human Capital: Ch. 9	CPA 5: Feb. 25 GC 3: Feb. 27
7: Mar. 2 and 4 Library Session Mar. 2	Review and Project 1 Draft Workshop	Project 1 Draft: Mar. 4
8: Mar. 9 and 11	Spring Break; No Classes	
9: Mar. 16 and 18	Frictions in the Labor Market: Ch. 5	CPA 6: Mar. 18 GC 4: Mar. 18
10: Mar. 23 and 25	Labor Markets and Wage Determination: Ch 8	Project 1: Mar. 25
11: Mar. 30 and Apr. 1	Labor Mobility and Migration: Ch 10	Project 2 Proposal: Apr. 1
12: Apr. 6 and Apr. 8 Library Session Apr. 6	Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Labor Market: Ch. 12	CPA 8: Apr. 8 GC 5: Apr. 3
13: Apr. 13 and 15	Unions and the Labor Market, Ch. 13	Project 2 Draft 1: Apr. 15 GC 6: Apr. 17
14: Apr. 20 and 22	Unemployment: Ch 14	
15: Apr. 27 and 29	Review and Project 2 Draft Workshop	Project 2 Draft 2: Apr. 27
Final: Wednesday, May 6 @ 1:30 pm	Presentations	Final Report Due: May 6 @ 1:30 pm

* Schedule subject to change with notice.

Weekly readings will be listed on Blackboard at least one week prior to discussion in class. Detailed course preparation assignments will be listed on Blackboard one week prior to their due dates

