

**ECON 3315: LABOUR ECONOMICS**  
*Fall 2011 Course Syllabus*

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 13:05-14:25, LSC-Common Area C220**

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**Office hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 14:30-16:00 (no appointment needed during this time).

**Meetings at any other time must be arranged in advance, preferably via e-mail.**

**Introduction:** This course is designed to introduce students to economic theory, data and policy issues in labour economics. The main focus of this course is to provide some insights on Canadian labour market. Examples of issues covered will be labour market effects of minimum wage laws, mandatory employee benefits, human capital formation, international trade and immigration. We will also study in depth the individual's decision to work and how welfare and income replacement programs affect such a decision. We will also investigate the explanations behind labour market trends such as the rise in female labour supply and causal association between female labour supply and childcare costs and maternity leaves.

**Email Policy:** I will do my best to respond to e-mail within 24 hours on a weekday, 48 hours on a weekend, according to the following policy:

- a. I will only respond to e-mails posing questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. For detailed questions, please see me in office hours.
- b. I will not reply to e-mails that request information that can be found on BLS or the syllabus, so you should check those places first.
- c. I will not reply to e-mails regarding the results of graded material– for that, please see me in office hours.
- d. I will not respond to email sent to my other accounts.

You are encouraged to use the BLS posting board and to answer questions posed on it. You are also encouraged to email your TA, especially for your assignment grades.

**Prerequisites:** Economics 1101, 1102, 2200, 2201.

**Textbook:** *Labour Market Economics: Theory, Evidence and Policy in Canada* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) by D. Benjamin, M. Gunderson, T. Lemieux and W. C. Riddell, 2007.

**Requirements and Grading:**

- 1) **Midterm:** 25% (in class on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>)
- 2) **Final Exam:** 37% (during Final Week, date to be announced)
- 3) **3 Assignments and Quizzes:** 21% (Each assignment will worth 7%)
- 4) **Term Project:** 10%
- 5) **Peer Review:** 4%
- 6) **Class Attendance and Participation:** 3%

**Exams:** Exams will draw heavily from lectures and problem sets, and not rely solely on the textbook. They are not open-book. They are not multiple-choice. The final exam will cover the subject matter of the entire course.

### NECESSARY ATTENDANCE DATES FOR THE EXAMS

**Mid-term:** Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 in room LSC-Common Area C220 from 13:05-14:25

**Final Exam:** The date, time and place of the final exam will be determined by the Registrar's Office.

*There will be NO make-ups or extensions given for exams and assignments except with prior consent from me or in the event of an unexpected emergency.*

*If you miss the final exam for a valid medical reason, you must notify the instructor immediately, provide appropriate medical documentation, and make arrangements to write-up exam as soon as health permits.*

**Quizzes and Assignments:** During this course, to complete homework assignments, you will be required to answer the questions of an assigned problem set. Three problem sets will be assigned, worth a total of 21% of your final grade. Homework assignments received after the due date will receive a grade equal to zero. No electronic submission of homework will be accepted. Only hard copies of homework turned in prior to class will be accepted. After submission of each assignment, you will have a quiz from some of the questions in your assignment, which will worth half of your assignment.

**Assignment and Quiz I:** Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in class by 13:05.

**Assignment and Quiz II:** Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in class by 13:05.

**Assignment and Quiz III:** Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 in class by 13:05.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** (1) Students are expected to attend every lecture, complete the readings in advance of the lecture, and participate in classroom discussion; (2) In each class, attendance will be taken and it will worth 3% of your final grade; (3) When you miss a lecture, you cannot get the handout for that missed lecture from me; (4) I will not give any information over the phone or in response to emails that you would have known had you attended class or read the BLS/syllabus information.

**Grading:** GRADES ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE. Do not contact me after the final semester grades have been posted asking me to change your grade for any reason. [Of course, if you believe your grade was posted erroneously by all means DO contact me.] Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
90+	85-89	80-84	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	50-59	<50

*\*Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss classroom or exam accommodations are asked to come and see me as soon as possible.*

## COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Chapter(s)</u>
<b>Part I. Introduction</b>			
Sept. 8	Week 1	Introduction to Labour Economics	Chapter 1
<b>Part II. Labour Supply</b>			
Sept. 13,15	Week 2	Labour Supply: Individual Attachment to Labour Market	Chapter 2
Sept. 20,22	Week 3	Labour Supply: Individual Attachment to Labour Market	Chapter 2
Sept. 27,29	Week 4	Labour Supply and Public Policy	Chapter 3
Oct. 4,6	Week 5	Labour Supply over Life Cycle	Chapter 4, (113-127)
Oct. 6	Week 5-Thursday	<b>Problem Set #1 Due and QUIZ#1</b>	
<b>Part III. Labour Demand</b>			
Oct. 11,13	Week 6	Demand for Labour in Competitive Labour Markets	Chapter 5
Oct. 18,20	Week 7	Labour Demand, Nonwage Benefits, and Quasi-Fixed Costs	Chapter 6
<b>Part IV. Labour Supply and Demand Together</b>			
Oct. 25	Week 8-Tuesday	<b>Problem Set#2 Due and QUIZ#2</b>	
Oct. 25,27	Week 8	Wages and Employment in Single Labour Market	Chapter 7
Nov. 1	Week 9-Tuesday	<b>MIDTERM- Covers Chapters 1-7</b>	
<b>Part V. The Determination of Relative Wages</b>			
Nov. 1,3	Week 9	Wages and Employment in Single Labour Market	Chapter 7
Nov. 8	Week 10	Human Capital Theory	Chapter 9
Nov. 15,17	Week 11	The Economics of Immigration	Chapter 11
Nov. 22,24	Week 12	The Economics of Discrimination	Chapter 12
Nov. 29,1	Week 13	Compensating Wage Differentials	Chapter 8
Dec. 1	Week 13-Thursday	<b>Problem Set #3 Due and QUIZ#3</b>	
Dec. 6	Week 14	Compensating Wage Differentials	Chapter 8
<b>FINAL (DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED)</b>			

\*\*\*\*The schedule of lectures above is only preliminary and is subject to change\*\*\*\*

## GUIDELINES FOR TERM PROJECT

The project will involve research on a topic that concerns labor economics and also is of public policy interest. The students should approach this project as if you were writing an extensive background article for the New York Times, The Economist or Global Mail. You should make it lively and interesting, but also use sound economic reasoning. In addition, this term project can form basis for your honors thesis next year. The deadlines are for the term project are listed below.

**October 13** One-page proposal (25%)– including list of sources

*Note: The sources should be serious academic sources and should be pre-approved by me.*

**October 27** Outline in presentation format (10%) (4-5 slides and more complete list of sources)

**November 17** First draft of projects (25%) (revised slides and 3-5 pages text and bibliography. Substance and quality as opposed to length is the key.)

**November 29** Peer review (2 pages report on projects of your classmates.)

**December 6** Revised Draft of projects due (40%) (3-5 pages text incorporating peer review and bibliography. Substance and quality as opposed to length is the key.)

### Topics of On-going Interest\*

How Will Tax Cuts Hurt or Help the Economy?  
Has Welfare Reform Worked in Canada or U.S?  
Is There a Shortage of Engineers and Scientists in U.S or Canada?  
What is the Return to Attending a Selective College?  
Are Unions Good or Bad for the Labor Market?  
Pros and Cons of Immigration  
Are Unskilled Immigrants Taking over the Jobs of Native Workers?  
Do Point System in Canada Achieve its Goals in Last Decades?  
What is the Effect of the Minimum Wage?  
What are the Reasons behind U.S. Jobless Recovery?  
What are the policy implications of U.S. Jobless Recovery?  
What are the effects of compulsory education?  
Do job training programs make individuals more employable?  
What are the effects of open trade policies like NAFTA on native workers?  
Pros and Cons of Unemployment Benefit  
Is flat or progressive tax scheme better for increasing the labor supply?

\* Other topics may also be chosen but have to have prior approval.