

Microeconomics for Public Policy: PAUS 8141 (Graduate level)
Fall, 2001
(Computer # 2611)
Dr. Amy Helling

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Georgia State University

Class meetings: Classes will meet Tuesday afternoons from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Room 321 in the General Classroom Building.

Contacting Dr. Helling: My office is in Room 1274, (Tel. 404-651-3352) in the Urban Life building. I will have office hours on Mondays and Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Thursdays from 5 to 7 p.m. and by appointment. When possible, I prefer that you contact me by e-mail rather than telephone. My e-mail address is ahelling@gsu.edu. I may send class-related e-mail messages to you at your GSU e-mail address, so please check that address regularly or have mail you receive at that address forwarded to an address you use more often.

Class Webpage: Make a regular practice of checking our class website, accessed through the WebCt website (which also contains links to help and directions for those unfamiliar with WebCT) at <http://webct.gsu.edu/webct/public/home.pl>. If you appeared on my first class roll, you should be able to log in, but send me an e-mail if you have problems.

Required readings:

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace. (This text is on electronic reserve. The method for accessing it will be explained in class. Note that because this is a prepublication draft, the pages are not continuously numbered. Check the syllabus to be sure you read the right chapters, and don't forget the unnumbered pages of figures at the end of each chapter.)

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies written style reference

Turabian, Kate L. 1996. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Sixth edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (I do not require that you purchase this book specifically for this course.)

Course objectives:

This course will aim to attain the following objectives:

1. Acquaint or reacquaint students with the basic principles of microeconomics relevant to a wide range of public policy topics.
2. Practice using microeconomics to understand specific public policy issues and to make decisions.

Evaluating Students' Progress: I will determine students' grades in the course as follows:

1. Weekly quizzes: 30%
2. In-class exam in the sixth week: 20%
3. In-class exam in the eleventh week: 20%
4. Class concept and example presentation: 10%
5. Final exam: 20%

Quizzes

I will give a short quiz based on the week's required readings at the beginning of class each week except for our first class meeting and weeks that we have in-class exams. To take a quiz, a student must be present when it is given. I will drop the two lowest quiz grades in calculating each student's quiz average.

Presentations of Concepts and Examples to the Class

Each student will be assigned a week during which they will make a presentation to the class on an economic concept drawn from that week's reading. The choice of concept is up to the student as long as it is covered in the readings for that week, is relevant to public policy, and has not already been chosen by another student. The presentations will begin in Week 4, and will continue until the end of the semester.

Each presentation should use Microsoft PowerPoint and last approximately 15 minutes. The PowerPoint file is due to me at the conclusion of the presentation. It should be organized in three parts:

- (1) Thoroughly and clearly define and explain the named concept.
- (2) Present an original, fictional example of how the concept can be used in public policy, using numbers and graphs. Make sure everyone in class follows the example.
- (3) Provide a real-life example of how this concept applies to public policy, providing as much detail as you can to make it interesting.

At the beginning of the presentation, each student should distribute a one-page handout to the entire class, which gives the presenter's name, topic of presentation, outline of main points, and sources

consulted, in proper citation style. See the final page of this syllabus for advice on avoiding plagiarism and citing sources properly. I will consider the following factors in grading the presentations:

1. Does the presentation thoroughly and clearly explain the named concept?
2. Does the presentation provide an original, fictional example of how the concept can be used in public policy, using numbers and graphs?
3. Does the presentation provide a real-life example of how this concept applies to public policy?
4. Does the handout cite at least 5 appropriate sources in addition to the required readings, following proper citation style?
5. Did the rest of the class find the presentation accurate, understandable and informative?

Penalty for Late Work

Examinations, class presentations and classwork should be completed on the dates scheduled, and it is the student's responsibility to know those dates. If you have any question about when examinations are scheduled or work is due, ask or e-mail me. I will only accept late work (including make-up exams and rescheduled class presentations) without penalty if there is an important reason and the student contacts me ahead of time to discuss how to reschedule. In all other cases the grade will be reduced for lateness. Some assignments, like quizzes, do not lend themselves to rescheduling and must be received on time receive any credit. See me if you have questions.

Final Exam

The final examination for this course will be given in our classroom, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on December 11.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions, discussion of course outline. Class Topic: Semester overview and introduction.

Readings (by class time):

None.

Week 2: Quiz. Class Topic: Supply, demand, equilibrium, efficiency, equity, and other basic concepts.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 1: Thinking like an economist, and Chapter 2: Supply and demand. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 3-65.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 7: Efficiency and equity. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 3: Quiz. Class Topic: Rational choice within constraints.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 3: Rational consumer choice. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 67-102.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 4: Choice and demand. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 4: Quiz. Class presentations begin. Class Topic: Individual and market demand, elasticities, types of market intervention.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 4: Individual and market demand. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 103-146.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 3: Market dynamics and interventions. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 5: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Using rational choice and demand theory to make decisions.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 5: Applications of rational choice and demand theories. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 147-185.

Week 6: In-class exam on material covered through week 5. No presentations.

Readings (by class time):

None.

Week 7: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Production.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 9: Production. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 281-308.

Week 8: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Costs.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 10: Costs. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 309-345.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 5: Costs and supply. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 9: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Perfect competition.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 11: Perfect competition. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 346-393.

Week 10: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topics: Monopoly, oligopoly and monopolistic competition.

Readings (by class time):.

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 12: Monopoly, and Chapter 13: Oligopoly and monopolistic competition. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 394-484.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 8: Monopoly and degrees of competition. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 11: In-class exam on material covered through week 10. No presentations.

Readings (by class time):

None.

PAUS 8141, Fall 2001, Dr. Helling

Week 12: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Labor and capital.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 14: Labor, and Chapter 15: Capital. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 485-552.

Week 13: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topic: Project economics and cost benefit analysis.

Readings (by class time):

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 6: Project economics and Chapter 11: Cost benefit analysis. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 14: Quiz. Class presentations continue. Class Topics: Externalities and property rights.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 17: Externalities, property rights, and the Coase Theorem. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 584-623.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 9: Externalities. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Week 15: Quiz. Final class presentations. Class Topics: Altruism. Public goods.

Readings (by class time):

Frank, Robert H. 2000. Chapter 7: Explaining tastes: The importance of altruism and other nonegotistic behavior, and Chapter 18: Government. Microeconomics and Behavior. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 222-251 and 624-660.

Steinemann, Anne, H. James Brown and William C, Apgar. Forthcoming. Chapter 10: Public goods. Microeconomics for Public Decisions. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace.

Note: This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Policy on Joint Work and Citing Sources*

Any student who is expected to do individual work and utilizes the work of others without explicit acknowledgment is guilty of plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration. The following, from the Georgia State 'Policy on Academic Honesty' defines plagiarism:

"Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Furthermore, plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own....Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism...."

The policy also defines unauthorized collaboration:

"Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with or with assistance from another person or source, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by an instructor is allowed."

The following rules guide this class:

1. All work is to be individual, original, and not collaborative, unless I explicitly state otherwise. Students may not share the content of their work with one another until after I have collected that assignment. One student may not help another with the design work or development required by an assignment or project. Likewise, students may not utilize materials or receive assistance from other students who have taken the course previously. Papers and presentations for other classes will not be eligible for credit in this class except in the case of unusually substantial projects for which the explicit permission of both instructors is obtained in advance.
2. Students should take great care to cite sources, whether published or not. For example, unless the source is cited, it is plagiarism to use maps, tables, figures or text from an agency planning report, a MARTA publication or a consultant's report.
3. Students are free to study together for tests, compare class notes, and share any material not specifically related to the class assignments or projects.

* This policy is based on one developed by Professor William Drummond of the Georgia Institute of Technology Graduate City Planning Program.

PAUS 8141: Microeconomics for Public Policy
Dr. Helling
Course schedule, Fall 2001

Week	Date	Topic/Activity
1	Tuesday, August 21	Introduction and semester overview
2	Tuesday, August 28	Supply, demand, equilibrium, equity, efficiency and other basic concepts
3	Tuesday, September 4	Rational choice within constraints
4	Tuesday, September 11	Individual and market demand, elasticities
5	Tuesday, September 18	Using rational choice and demand theory to make decisions
6	Tuesday, September 25	Exam
7	Tuesday, October 2	Production
8	Tuesday, October 9	Costs
9	Tuesday, October 16	Perfect competition
10	Tuesday, October 23	Monopoly, oligopoly and monopolistic competition
11	Tuesday, October 30	Exam
12	Tuesday, November 6	Labor and capital
13	Tuesday, November 13	Project economics and cost benefit analysis
14	Tuesday, November 20	Externalities and property rights
15	Tuesday, November 27	Altruism, public goods
	Tuesday, December 12	Final exam