

URBAN ECONOMICS

SYLLABUS

ECON 3320-01, 3 credit hours

Fall 2020

MWF 2:05-2:50 P.M. in HT B07 (Basement of Howard-Tilton Memorial Library)

Instructor: Professor Patrick Button
Department of Economics
School of Liberal Arts
Tulane University

Pronouns: He/Him or They/Them (What's this?)

Office hours: By appointment on Zoom using patrickbutton.youcanbook.me/

Email: pbutton@tulane.edu or you can message me on Canvas.

Course Zoom URL: <https://tulane.zoom.us/j/93080934242?pwd=Q1B3N2Y3dTZwYmE3ZG1mQU43MG81Zz09>

Course Zoom Meeting ID: 930 8093 4242

Course Zoom Passcode: 615279

Twitter: @ProfPButton

Catalog/Course Description

A review of the determinants of the location, size, growth, and form of urban areas. Study of the major issues of contemporary urban life: physical deterioration, growth of ghettos, congestion, pollution, transportation, and land use.

A More Detailed/Updated Course Description

The field of urban economics addresses a wide variety of questions and topics. At the most general level, the field introduces space into economic models and studies the location of economic activity. Urban economics incorporates a lot of topics that also overlap with other fields, but the topics have a spatial or regional element. For example, the economics of crime overlaps with labor economics, since labor economics typically discusses the choice to work or not work, but because crime is thought of as a local phenomenon, it also falls under urban economics. Similarly, local government finance falls under both public economics (since that field deals with government) but also urban economics due to the local nature of the government.

Given how broad the field of urban economics is, this course focuses on the following urban economics topics: geographical data, agglomeration economies and the economics of cities, economic development and tax incentives, crime, housing and housing policy, neighborhood effects, and transportation (time-permitting).

My course covers both the theoretical (applications of mathematical models) and empirical research (statistical analysis) on urban economics about equally. Many instructors only cover theory, presenting mathematical models of the economy (often using graphs, because math is hard!) By empirical methods I mean that I will be teaching you at a very non-technical and intuitive level how economists use data to analyze urban economics questions. Essentially I will be teaching you applied econometrics without as many equations or statistical theory. The lessons will be very intuitive and more focused on how the methods are used in policy analysis. I will also teach you how to use geographical data from the Census using tools such as American Factfinder.

Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this course are introductory microeconomics (ECON 1010) and high school-level algebra (e.g., solve for X, graph a line) and high-school level statistics (e.g., calculating medians and standard deviations, hypothesis testing.)

Unofficially, familiarity with statistics and econometrics will be helpful. For example, knowing what a standard error is and what confidence intervals are would be ideal. Understanding the basics of linear regression will also help a lot. Most students can easily handle the course material since I handle statistics in a more intuitive way, but more background always helps.

Course Goals

This course provides an introduction to urban economics. Topics include the economics of cities, local and regional economic development, using geographic data, housing markets and housing policy, and crime.

Course Learning Objectives

The learning outcomes below list many of what I hope students will grasp after this course. This is a non-exhaustive list and it may change over time.

After completing this course, students will be able to...

– Geographical Data

- Explain how the U.S. Census defines regions (e.g., CBSA, MSA)
- List census geographies by size (i.e. region to Census Block)
- Describe the type of data on American FactFinder
- Select data on American FactFinder by level of geography
- Select from different topics on American FactFinder
- Create maps on American FactFinder
- Download data from American FactFinder as a spreadsheet

– Agglomeration and Clusters

- Define urban agglomeration and be able to explain it intuitively to a non-economist.
- Discuss and evaluate at least three factors that can lead to urban agglomeration.
- Discuss the positive spillover effects from agglomeration.
- Identify urban amenities that lead to agglomeration economies.
- Summarize the effect of agglomeration on at least one industry (e.g., entertainment, technology).
- Discuss at least two regional clusters (e.g., Silicon Valley, Route 128, the “Hollywood” film industry, Detroit’s Auto Industry).
- Evaluate the likely impact of agglomeration on particular firms of industries.
- Use the online tools on clustermapping.us to find data on how industries are distributed geographically, and find data on the industry mix within particular regions.

– Urban and Regional Economic Development

- Explain both graphically and intuitively the effects of economic development on labor and land markets.
- Argue who is more likely to benefit (or not) from economic development.
- Discuss the extent to which tax rates and subsidies could be used to increase economic development.
- Evaluate which factors affect the location of firms.
- Discuss at least three papers that studied the effect of tax incentives on firm location or economic development.
- Argue using evidence what the effect of tax incentives on firm location and economic development is.
- Discuss what factors might make tax incentives more influential for firm location, or less influential.
- Discuss the effects of at least two of the following incentives: film incentives, biotech incentives, and enterprise zones.
- **Crime**
 - Use the “rational criminal” model to predict how certain events (e.g., increase in inequality) may affect crime.
 - Argue why the efficient level of crime is not zero in this model.
 - Discuss to what extent this model played out in practice in different readings (e.g., (Yang, 2017))
 - Explain why it is difficult to measure the impact of police on crime.
 - Contrast at least three crafty ways that economists have tried to estimate the effect of police on crime given the issue of endogeneity.
 - Explain implicit bias
 - Discuss research on to what extent implicit bias affects decisions in policing and in the criminal justice system, synthesizing this research into your own position and narrative.
 - Discuss research and come to conclusions on the extent to which there is racial bias in policing and criminal justice outcomes
 - Explain what the “ban the box” movement is and the implications of not letting employers ask about applicants’ criminal histories.
 - Discuss the implication of “ban the box”, especially by race and ethnicity.
 - Apply economics research to questions motivated by the Black Lives Matter movement, such as if racial bias exists, if police disproportionately apply force to minorities, if defunding the police is a good idea, and what policy approaches exist to help solve the issues we face.
- **Housing Markets, Policy, and Neighborhood Effects**
 - Describe at least three effects that neighborhoods can have on the socio-economic outcomes of individuals and/or families.
 - Provide at least one example of how researchers have tried to estimate the effect of neighborhoods while controlling for the self-selection of individuals and families into neighborhoods.

- Critique the Moving to Opportunity program.
- Evaluate policies designed to make housing more affordable or accessible.
- Apply the basic supply-and-demand (perfect competition) model to predict the effects of rent control on the housing market.
- Evaluate the applicability of the basic supply-and-demand (perfect competition) model relative to other models of the housing market.
- Recite some empirical evidence on the effects of rent control on housing markets.
- Apply consumer theory to explain why some individuals are homeless.
- Use consumer theory to predict how certain policies or changes (e.g., decrease in housing prices) affects homelessness.
- Discuss what "Neighborhood effects" are.
- Discuss how it is difficult to measure the effects of neighborhoods or the value of the good neighborhoods.
- Explain to a parental figure how the Moving to Opportunity program worked.
- Argue why an experiment was necessary to measure the causal effect of neighborhoods in this case.
- Explain what problems occur given that not everyone accepts "treatment" in an experiment.
- Explain what "Intent to Treat" means in the context of an experiment.
- **Transportation**
 - List the costs and benefits of new transportation options such as Uber/Lyft and e-bikes/e-scooters (Bird, Lime, etc.)
 - Discuss how the effects of new transportation modes (e.g., Uber/Lyft, e-bikes/e-scooters) could be measured in a causal way.
 - Design a draft idea for a study to quantify the impact of e-scooters/e-bikes.
- **Student Learning Outcomes that are not Topic-Specific**
 - Explain the concepts of a confidence interval and "statistically significant" intuitively.
 - Determine from reading published tables what estimates are statistically significant.
 - Calculate a 95% confidence interval from reading a point estimate and standard error from a table.
 - Explain the intuitive idea behind difference-in-differences.
 - Explain how difference-in-differences provides more causal estimates of the effects of policies compared to cross-sectional comparisons.
 - Explain how differences-in-differences is used in at least one urban economics research paper.
 - Evaluate the validity of a particular difference-in-differences approach in a research paper.
 - Locate and download economic and demographic data at different regional levels (e.g., ZIP, county/parish) using the American Community Survey.
 - Calculate basic statistics using geographical data.

- Locate peer-reviewed research using Google Scholar.
- Create reference section and add in-text citations in APA or Chicago Author-Year format.
- Use Google Scholar to get APA citations.
- Identify at least two peer-reviewed journals that publish urban economics research.
- Explain the difference between an endogenous variable and an exogenous variable and give an example of each from one model discussed in class.
- Learn how Wikipedia works and how individuals can contribute to it.
- Draft potential edits and contributions to Wikipedia
- Discuss how COVID-19 affects the study of urban economics, such as which topics are important to study, or which urban economics phenomena are occurring.

Program-Level Outcomes

This course contributes to economics major/minor by filling one of the elective requirements. This course also contributes to the major/minor by teaching students how to use/interpret the tools of microeconomics (theory, empirical methods) to explain topics in urban economics.

The course is also useful to urban studies students who wish to learn economic approaches to analyzing urban issues. This course also contributes to the over-arching goal of ensuring that social science students are comfortable working with data.

Core Curriculum Outcomes

Under the core requirements, required of all undergraduate students regardless of school/major, this course can satisfy either the “Social & Behavioral Sciences” requirement or the “Race & Inclusion” requirement (but not both, since only one course can be used to satisfy each criteria). If you are using this course to satisfy “Race & Inclusion” I would appreciate if you use the research proposal and “contact your representatives” assignments to further the emphasis on race, ethnicity, diversity, and inclusion by choosing topics for those that relate to diversity, such as racial bias in criminal justice, discrimination in housing markets, or other topics that have a racial/ethnic/other minority status lens.

Plans for In-Class Time

This is a hybrid in-person and online course. First, it’s hybrid because you can choose to attend class either in-person or via Zoom. Given quarantining that is and will continue to occur, there will always be some fraction of you (or me) that cannot attend in person, and thus I will always provide a Zoom option. Attending via Zoom or in-person is entirely up to you and you should make a decision that best balances your health, schedule, and learning. However, if you were advised to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, then please do so and attend the class through Zoom.

Second, I will be having roughly half of our in-class time be in person (where students can choose to attend in-person or through Zoom) and the other half on Zoom (all of us will be on Zoom). I want to encourage student-to-student interaction and group work, and this type of

interaction is only possible to do safely and feasibly through Zoom. You will collaborate with your peers on Zoom for in-class activities, group briefing notes, and to discuss your Wikipedia writing.

Canvas

I will be uploading all files related to the course on Canvas. Through Canvas you can also access your grades/scores, the most up-to-date syllabus (under “files”), our course Zoom and Zoom recordings, and you can also submit all your assignments (other than Wikipedia ones) through Canvas. You can also use Canvas to send me messages, or you can use email (pbuton@tulane.edu).

Zoom Information

Time: Starting Aug 19, 2020 02:05-2:50 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Continues every week on Mon, Wed, Fri, until Nov 23, 2020, 41 occurrence(s) (Note: No class on Monday September 28 as this is Yom Kippur and we will do an asynchronous lesson)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system. Weekly:

<https://tulane.zoom.us/meeting/tJctf-mhrT8oHtatkMv-VS6A1jSbMML-SRMh/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCrrjMqE9eRsh2PztilBgrdcibTIFW11UVXXZ-hxMJ9SPJXj>

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://tulane.zoom.us/j/93080934242?pwd=Q1B3N2Y3dTZwYmE3ZG1mQU43MG81Zz09>

Meeting ID: 930 8093 4242

Passcode: 615279

You can also access our Zoom sessions through the Canvas course.

For security reasons, you will need to be logged into your Tulane zoom account to be admitted to the Zoom sessions. If you run into any issues with Zoom, please let me know.

Required Student Resources

The textbook for this course is

Brueckner, Jan. 2011. *Lectures on Urban Economics*. Cambridge: MIT University Press.

This textbook is available at the bookstore and is relatively cheap compared to other textbooks. In addition to the textbook, there will be several other readings, all of which will be available through Canvas. Roughly half of the course follows this textbook and the other half follows other readings or my own lecture material.

I will give announcements either via email and/or in class about upcoming readings and advice on what to focus on. Some of the readings are technical pieces from economics journals. The degree to which you to be familiar with the details of a paper will be clear from the emphasis given to the paper in lecture or will be clear based on instructions I give you. See more discussion of this later in the syllabus.

It is your responsibility to follow my announcements and do the readings. Not keeping up to date on readings will negatively affect your ability to achieve the course learning objectives and will negatively affect your grade. For example, many classroom activities may require that you have read the readings before class.

Evaluation Procedures and Grading Criteria

Success at achieving the learning outcomes above is measured through various course assignments. Your final course grade is based on the following breakdown:

- Quizzes (Best 3 out of at least 5 x 6% = 18%) (throughout the semester)
- Cumulative Final Exam (18%) (Dec. 1 from 12:00 P.M. –3:00 P.M.)
- Group Briefing Notes (Best 2 out of 3 x 4% = 8%)
- Wikipedia Writing - Weekly WikiEdu Training and Activities (7%)
- Wikipedia Writing - Get Approval for your Topic (2%) (due Sept. 26)
- Wikipedia Writing - Two Peer Reviews (2 x 4% = 8%) (due Oct. 17)
- Wikipedia Writing - Response to Peer Reviews (4%) (due Oct. 24)
- Wikipedia Writing - Your Final Article (15%) (due Nov. 21)
- Wikipedia Writing - Reflective Essay (5%) (due Nov. 30)
- Wikipedia Writing - Course Review Activity (5%) (due Dec. 5)
- Other Activities (10%)

In determining your final letter grade, I will first calculate a percentage grade based on the above criteria. Then I will convert this final percentage grade to a final letter grade as follows:

- A = 93% to 100%, A- = 90% to 92.99%,
- B+ = 87% to 89.99%, B = 83% to 86.99%, B- = 80% to 82.99%,
- C+ = 77% to 79.99%, C = 73% to 76.99%, C- = 70% to 72.99%,
- D+ = 67% to 69.99%, D = 63% to 66.99%, D- = 60% to 62.99%,
- F = 0% to 59.99%

Note that I do not round grades up if you are close to a cut-off or otherwise tweak grades (e.g., apply a curve). I would prefer not to add subjectivity into the process as this is not fair. Please do not ask me to do this.

Below are more details on each individual evaluation criteria.

Quizzes

There will be at least five short quizzes, all conducted during class time. These can be taken remotely or in-person. While these are “open book” meaning you can bring and use course notes, documents on your computer, books, etc, you cannot communicate or work with anyone else. Your best three quiz scores will each form 6% of your total course grade, for a total of 18% of your total course grade. If there are more than five quizzes, this works in your benefit in terms of your course grade. The quizzes will be roughly twice a month. I will provide one week notice for when the quizzes will be. You are allowed to bring a non-programmable calculator to the final exam but you will not need one.

The quizzes will be approximately two short answer questions and will be similar to the types of questions you will see on the final exam, and practice questions that you’ll see through activities.

Cumulative Final Exam

The final exam will cover all material from the course: assigned readings in the text, other assigned readings, and any additional material that I cover in lecture. The final exam is similar to the quizzes in terms of question types. The final exam will be about eight short answer questions. The final exam will again be open book, but communication with others is not allowed. The final exam is scheduled for **Tuesday December 1 from 12:00 P.M. –3:00 P.M.** and will be conducted online. This cumulative final exam is worth 18% of your final course grade.

If you know will not be available during the final exam time, then please enroll in another course or contact me if you absolutely must take this specific course. This all said, sometimes an illness or event can make it difficult to write final exams. As per Newcomb-Tulane College policies: "Students may be excused from final examinations by the Newcomb-Tulane College dean and the course instructor when there is a serious, incapacitating medical problem or when there is a death in the immediate family. Students who must be absent from the final examination for one of these reasons must contact the Newcomb-Tulane dean's office before or within 24 hours after the examination for approval. A student with an excused absence will receive a grade of I and a make-up examination; a student with an unexcused absence will earn a grade of F in the course. (See school sections for further information.)" (See http://www.tulane.edu/admin-cat/pdfcat/section8/fm_policies_05.pdf)

Group Briefing Notes

There will be three graded group briefing note assignments, but only your best two will be counted. The goal for these is that you will get practice with the following:

1. Concise writing.
2. Citing sources, and creating a references section in APA format or Chicago Author-Year format.
3. Doing a literature review using Google Scholar.
4. Reading and summarizing published economics journal articles.
5. Coming to reasonable conclusions based on your assessment of the research.

How this will work is that you will form groups of three or four beforehand, or I will create groups randomly. Your group will work on Zoom in breakout rooms, during class time, to write a one page briefing note, single-spaced, in a Google Doc. We cannot do this activity in person given safety concerns, but it works well on Zoom.

I will provide guidance for the content of each briefing note through handouts, provided to you on Canvas beforehand. Your briefing note will seek to quickly introduce the reader, who may not have an economics background, to the topic and to summarize what the research says about the topic. Briefing note topics will likely be:

1. To what extent do tax incentives encourage economic development?
2. Is there racial bias in policing and in the criminal justice system?
3. What are the impacts of rent control on housing markets?

These briefing notes will be graded on a ten point rubric that will be provided to you. You will start working on the first draft in class and you will have until the start of the next class to submit the first draft to me. You will submit it to me by email, including a link with the Google Doc. Please ensure that the link allows anyone with the link to edit it. See more on Google Docs below. Failure to share the Google Doc properly will could result in your assignment being late.

I will then grade your first draft as if it is a final document, so that you know exactly where you stand with that draft. I will be grading it as if I am a picky bureaucrat, and this briefing note were actually to be used to brief, say, an important government official. Thus, first round grades will be lower, between 4/10 and 8/10 likely.

However, this first round grade is only temporary. If you submitted this draft by the deadline (before the next class) then you get a chance to make revisions. You will have one week from when I first grade your briefing note to make any revisions. I will provide detailed feedback that will guide you towards revisions you can make. Most students make revisions that increase their scores by at least two points. When you submit your final version, please email me the link to the Google doc again and in the body of your email, summarize your changes so I can more easily identify them and reward you for them.

If you failed to submit your first draft before the deadline (before the next class) then whenever you submit, I will grade it as the final version but you will not have the opportunity to resubmit. Note that incorrectly sharing the Google Doc with me could result in your assignment being late.

Students that miss day(s) when we do briefing notes will get a zero on that assignment unless they choose to do the briefing note on their own later (email me to make arrangements). However, to provide some additional flexibility, I drop your lowest briefing note grade. That is, I use your two best (out of three) scores. This policy is designed to accommodate students who cannot attend the course when we have a briefing note assignment.

***A Note about Google Docs**

Google Docs are an awesome way to collaborate. The tricky thing though is that it is easy to not share the doc correctly with me or others. Here is the issue. My Google account is associated with my Gmail email address (patrickbutton@gmail.com). So if you “share” your document with me using my Tulane email then I can’t access it properly. The easiest thing to do is create a shareable link and send that to me. See <https://support.google.com/docs/answer/2494822?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

Wikipedia Writing

A major component of this course is writing or significantly editing an article on Wikipedia that relates to urban economics. This can be on an urban economics topic that is covered in the course, an urban economics topic that is not covered in the course, or it can be about an economist who researches urban economics, an academic journal or outlet that publishes urban economics, or an urban economics organization. Basically, anything that has some relationship to urban economics, broadly defined. Students who are not sure if their topic has enough connection to urban economics can ask me and/or their peers for feedback. The article you select can already be on Wikipedia, but is very lacking in content, or it could be a new article that you would create for the first time.

I have partnered with WikiEducation to provide you with training so that you can write for Wikipedia in a way that maximizes your learning and potential contributions to Wikipedia. Instead of having you just do a typical writing assignment, you can actually benefit society by im-

proving an information source that is commonly used. While you may have been taught not to use Wikipedia as a source in writing, articles on Wikipedia can range from high academic quality to poor quality. While imperfect, Wikipedia is a highly viewed website that many people go to to learn the basics about topics.

You will do this Wikipedia writing with a partner of your choosing, although you are welcome to work solo if you want. A group of three can only be approved by me if the group has a more ambitious article that merits an extra person. I will grade those who work solo a bit easier and groups of three, if any, will be graded more harshly.

The end goal of creating/significantly editing a Wikipedia article is broken down into multiple smaller portions and milestones. You will participate in asynchronous online Wikipedia training modules that will teach you how to edit on Wikipedia and find articles to contribute to. We will also occasionally discuss our Wikipedia writing during class time.

All together, all the Wikipedia tasks including the article you write or significantly edit add up to 46% of your course grade. The Wikipedia tasks all seem like a lot but it's a lot of small things, broken up into small parts. This 46% is broken up as 7% for completing all the weekly WikiEdu short training modules, tasks, and activities, 2% for having a (nearly) approved article topic by September 26, 4% each for two peer reviews of draft articles by your classmates, 4% for your response to your peer reviews, 15% for your final article, 5% for a short reflective essay on your experience editing Wikipedia in this course, and 5% for a course review activity that involves Wikipedia.

All the Wikipedia content works through the WikiEdu dashboard: dashboard.wikiedu.org. Please use this URL to register with Wikipedia and our course WikiEdu dashboard: [https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/courses/Tulane_University/Urban_Economics_\(Fall_2020\)?enroll=nxklaiso](https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/courses/Tulane_University/Urban_Economics_(Fall_2020)?enroll=nxklaiso). You'll do everything Wikipedia-related through this dashboard. The only thing that is not on the dashboard are grades related to these Wikipedia assignments, which I will add to Canvas manually.

On the course dashboard, you can see the training, deadlines, and milestones for each week. To summarize the major deadlines, you need to have a partial draft of your article completed by October 12, your two peer reviews of other groups draft articles by October 17, your response to your peer reviews are due October 24, your final article is due November 21, and your reflective essay is due November 24.

Other Activities

Research shows that students often learn better when instructors adopt some "active learning", where students participate in class, relative to when instruction is based on lecture only. For this reason, there will be several in-class activities throughout the semester, in addition to some that you will do outside of class. These activities will vary by day, with some days having no activities and others having more than one. A common activity is doing problems in small groups (on Zoom). These problems are often similar to midterm questions. Other activities that I hope to use are mini-projects that you'll work on in groups during class time and are very lightly graded. I also plan to do some polls and interactive quizzes.

The weight given to each activity will differ depending on how complex the activity is. I will not always be able to provide warning as to which days will have activities, or what the activities will be, but it is likely that most days will have an activity of some sort. If an activity requires preparation before class (e.g., reading an article) or requires that you bring something (e.g., laptop), I will give you instructions and notice. Otherwise the activities are meant to be done without preparation and are mostly to gauge and encourage participation with the course content.

On average I would say that there is an activity at least every second class, but I can't tell you in advance at all times which days will have activities and which will not. Because in-class activities are crucial to achieving many of the above learning outcomes, attendance at lecture is important. Those who do not attend will not receive credit for any in-class activities done that day. I do not allow make-ups for in-class activities. However, I will automatically drop three graded in-class activities from the calculation of your in-class activities grade. The in-class activities that will be dropped will be the ones with the lowest scores. If there are two activities with the same grade that could be dropped (e.g., two different zeros), then the grade with the most weight will be dropped (e.g., 0/3 would be dropped over 0/2). I do this "dropping" manually, so please note that your other activities grade on canvas does not include this dropping and will always be an under-estimate.

I will not drop any in-class activities beyond three. Please do not ask. However, if you experience an extended, documented, disruption to your ability to participate in class (two weeks or longer), then we will come up with an individualized plan for you to make up some activities if you would like to.

Many of the in-class activities are lightly graded. Most students get full points if they put in a reasonable amount of effort. Given this and the excellent attendance of my students in previous semesters, roughly half of the class get a perfect score (100%) for in-class activities, with the vast majority of the rest of them getting a boost in their final letter grade due to a very high in-class activities score. So, it usually isn't necessary to raise concerns about specific in-class activity grades. But poor attendance will significantly lower your in-class activity score and your final course grade, both by significantly reducing your in-class activities score and also because you won't learn the course content as well.

Course Grader

This course has a grader, Karina Bull. She is a Ph.D. candidate in the City, Culture, & Community program at Tulane. This is a sort of "Urban Studies" program. She will be assisting with grading the activities and briefing notes for the course. The professor will grade everything else. Her email address is kbull1@tulane.edu.

Regrading

Students may ask that an exam or assignment be regraded if they feel that a mistake has been made, by giving the professor (or the grader, Karina Bull, if she graded it) a request via email explaining the reasoning behind why there was a grading error. Please do not come up to me before, during, or after class to ask me to regrade a question unless it is simply an addition error. I cannot and will not re-grade "on the spot" as I need more time to carefully consider your situation.

If we do decide to regrade the assignment or exam, then the entire exam or activity will be regraded. After regrading, the grade may rise or fall. Students who are fishing for points typically have no change on average, although some have had scores go down. Those with legitimate concerns sometimes get an increase. Please note that regrading quizzes and exams will not be allowed for students who take their quizzes or exams in pencil.

Attendance

Success in this class requires that you attend class regularly, either in person or via Zoom. It is up to you if you want to attend via Zoom or attend in-person (on days when the class is "in

person”, otherwise you’d attend on Zoom). My course is designed that you should be able to participate fully either way, although some may prefer one over the other. No one will be in any way penalized for their choice of how they attend class. However, **please stay home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, recently tested positive for COVID-19, or were recently in contact with anyone with COVID-19.** The university is sending out text messages every day for you to check your symptoms and exposure risk. Please follow the recommendations of this system and stay home if it tells you to do so. I will work with you to minimize any impacts that quarantining and such could have on participation in this course.

You do need to attend class regularly (in person or via Zoom) as much as possible because I will regularly cover material that is not in the text or in the assigned readings or I will cover it differently. A lot of the course material is of my own doing and doesn’t have a direct parallel in an assigned reading. My class include both traditional lecturing and some in-class activities, and participating in these activities is crucial to achieve the learning outcomes. In addition, important announcements regarding the course may be made during class.

Of course, you may be sick or something may prevent you from attending the class in-person or online. In that case, you can watch the recorded lecture later. You may miss out on an activity we did in class. You can ask me if that can be made up or not. Recall that the “other activities” grade is calculated in a way that allows many activities to be dropped, so it will not be a problem if there are a few activities that you miss and cannot make up.

Faculty and students must comply with University policies on COVID-19 testing and isolation, which are located here: tulane.edu/covid-19/health-strategies. Faculty and students must wear face coverings in all common areas, including classrooms, and follow social distancing rules. Failure to comply is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and students will be subject to University discipline, which can include suspension or permanent dismissal. If a student cannot attend class for any reason, the student is responsible for communicating with their instructors to make up any work they may miss. Faculty will provide online options for class participation, outlined in this document, and unless a student is seriously ill, they are expected to use this option. The University Health Center will provide documentation verifying a student is ill, as well as verification that a student may return to class. With the approval of the Newcomb-Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

Class Recordings

Classes will be recorded and the recordings will be posted to Canvas. Students may not post a class recording elsewhere, either wholly or in part. These recordings will provide useful if you cannot attend class (in person or remotely). I am also teaching an online-only section of this course (ECON 3320-02). I will be providing this online-only section with the recordings as well, and you may also get some of the recordings from their class if we covered something in that class that was not covered in our class.

ADA, Accessibility, and Accommodation Statements

Tulane University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. Instead, to establish reasonable accommodations, I may

request that you register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. Goldman Center contact information: goldman@tulane.edu; (504) 862-8433; accessibility.tulane.edu. The COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the delivery of our courses may also create barriers and I would be delighted to work with you to reduce and prevent those. This is going to be a difficult semester for all of us (myself included) and I would like to work together to make this course go as smoothly as possible.

Below are some other ways I am trying to make my course for accessible to those with different backgrounds.

Mental Health

There are many other barriers to learning that I want to remove. For example, students may experience mental health issues during their time at Tulane. This is especially the case during this difficult COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes these mental health concerns are dealt with formally, such that students work through the Goldman Center to get needed accommodations. But often-times these situations appear and haven't yet been dealt with in a formal way. As someone who sometimes struggles with mental health issues, I understand how mental health issues can be a significant barrier to the ability to learn. I want to work with students who have situations that may or may not be documented to see what we can do to reduce any barriers to learning and to ensure that students can take care of their health in addition to performing in the course. If you have facing barriers to your learning, please let me know what I can do to help. Coming to me earlier usually allows me to be of better help, but I can attempt to assist at all stages.

Religious Accommodation Policy

Per Tulane's religious accommodation policy, I will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are able to observe religious holidays without jeopardizing their ability to fulfill their academic obligations. Excused absences do not relieve the student from the responsibility for any course work required during the period of absence. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester, if possible, about their intent to observe any holidays that fall on a class day or on the day of the final exam.

Please note that I have already planned for there to be no synchronous lecture or class meeting on Monday September 28 since many of you may celebrate Yom Kippur. This lesson will be planned asynchronously.

Children in Class

I applaud all of you who go to school with children! It is difficult to balance academic, work, and family commitments, and I want you to succeed. Here are my policies regarding children in class. Although, note that the option to, anytime you want, attend class via Zoom will help accommodate those with children who may find it better to stay at home.

1. All breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as necessary.
2. Non-nursing babies and older children are welcome whenever alternate arrangements cannot be made. I understand that babysitters fall through, partners have conflicting schedules, children get sick, and other issues arise that leave parents with few other options. However, I would strongly suggest attending class via Zoom if you need to attend to any children.

3. In cases where children come to class, I invite parents/caregivers to sit close to the door so as to more easily excuse yourself to attend to your child's needs. Non-parents in the class: please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates. All students are expected to join with me in creating a welcoming environment that is respectful of your classmates who bring children to class.
4. I understand that sleep deprivation and exhaustion are among the most difficult aspects of parenting young children. The struggle of balancing school, work, childcare, and graduate school is tiring, and I will do my best to accommodate any such issues while maintaining the same high expectations for all students enrolled in the class. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions of concerns.
5. However, none of these policies override Tulane's COVID-19 policies, which would require children aged 2 or older to be at least six feet away from everyone else and wear a mask. If this is not possible then alternative arrangements would need to be made, which could include attending the class via Zoom.

(This sub-section adapted from the syllabi of Andrew Heiss and Christopher Jones. It was of course updated given COVID-19.)

Preferred Gender Pronouns

My preferred pronouns are he/him/his or they/them/their. If you've never heard of preferred pronouns before, please read this for an introduction: mypronouns.org/.

Thank you to those of you who added your preferred pronouns to your account on Gibson! I would appreciate if everyone could add those, regardless of your gender or gender identity. This is helpful for several reasons:

- Members of the Tulane community know which pronouns to use for you, making it more likely that people will use pronouns for you that you prefer.
- It normalizes the use of pronouns. If few people mention preferred pronouns on Gibson or in other contexts (e.g., email signatures) then it stands out more when transgender or gender non-conforming individuals mention them. Cisgender allies can be very helpful by mentioning their preferred pronouns too and helping to normalize this.

For more information on how to add your preferred pronouns to Gibson, or other ways Tulane is working to be more inclusive about preferred pronouns and preferred names, see: <https://registrar.tulane.edu/first-name-and-pronoun/faqs>. Thank you for helping make Tulane more welcoming to transgender and nonbinary students and faculty.

Course Schedule

Assessment Schedule

I will keep the assessment schedule for the course updated on Canvas. Here is a summary of all the deadlines scheduled thus far:

- Cumulative Final Exam: Tuesday December 1 from 12:00 P.M. –3:00 P.M.

- Wikipedia Writing - Weekly WikiEdu Training and Activities: These occur every week, with some weeks having short training or activities, and other weeks just being “continue to work on your article.” Students should follow the schedule on our WikiEdu dashboard as much as possible since some activities (e.g., peer reviews) require everyone to be a minimum point of having a draft. All the WikiEdu training modules must be completed by Saturday December 5, which is when I will add grades for these to Canvas in order to calculate your final grade.
- Wikipedia Writing - Get Approval for your Topic: Due Saturday September 26
- Wikipedia Writing - Two Peer Reviews: Due Saturday October 17
- Wikipedia Writing - Response to Peer Reviews: Due Saturday October 24
- Wikipedia Writing - Your Final Article: Due Saturday November 21
- Wikipedia Writing - Reflective Essay: Due Monday November 30
- Wikipedia Writing - Course Review Activity: Due Saturday December 5

Assessment items that are not yet scheduled:

- Quizzes: There will be at least five, and they will be spread out across the course. I will provide one week notice for when quizzes will be.
- Group Briefing Notes: There will be three graded group briefing notes. The timing of when you’ll work on these in-class (on Zoom) with your classmates and when they will be due will vary. These will be spread out across the course. The first draft of group briefing notes are due at the start of the next class. Final, revised versions are due one week after your group received feedback and a temporary grade from me on your first draft.
- Other Activities: These are spread out across the course, with there being an activity during more class times, but not all, and sometimes there are more than one.

Topics and Readings Outline

This is a list of topics and the readings we will cover. This schedule is subject to change. I will notify you of any changes. Readings other than the main textbook will be available in PDF format on the course website. Readings with a “B” in front of them will be covered in a briefing note assignment, such that you won’t need to read all of them necessarily, but you will be exposed to all of them.

Some advice on reading papers. These are academic papers in peer-reviewed journals. They are written to an audience of academic economists. So most of the readings will be very difficult for you to understand as an undergraduate student. I am not expecting you to understand all the details of the papers. For example, many of the papers will use econometric methods. While having a background in econometrics is helpful, you don’t need to understand the technical aspects of what they are doing. What you need to understand is the intuition. You can often grasp the intuition of what they are doing from reading the introduction and conclusion. I will focus on the intuition when I cover these papers in class.

- **Introduction to the Course**
 - Introductions
 - Going over the syllabus
 - What is urban economics?
 - Models vs. Empirical Methods

- Icebreaker
- **Geographical Data**
 - Census geographical definitions (e.g., CBSA, CSA, MSA, census block,...)
 - O'Sullivan (2012)
 - Online scavenger hunt activity
 - Using American Factfinder
 - Selected data by level of geography
 - Selecting data by topic
 - Creating maps
- **Agglomeration and Clusters**
 - Why do cities exist?
 - Scale economies
 - Agglomeration economies
 - Brueckner (2011, Ch. 1 to 1.3)
 - City amenities and the growth of cities
 - Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz (2001)
 - More agglomeration
 - Input pooling and "thick" markets
 - Examples in the motion picture production industry, Silicon Valley
 - Knowledge Spillovers
 - Strange (2008) (but skip the section entitled "Agglomeration economies in a system of cities or regions")
 - Kerr and Robert-Nicoud (2020)
 - In-Class Activity - Agglomeration and Industry Clusters
 - Saxenian (1996) OR
 - Florida, Mellander and Stolarick (2011) OR
 - Klepper (2007) (You will be randomly assigned one of the three for an in-class activity.)
 - Quantifying agglomeration spillovers
 - An introduction to Difference-in-Differences
 - Greenstone, Hornbeck and Moretti (2010)
 - Angrist and Pischke (2015) (Chapter 5 up to "What are you weighting for?" on page 201)
- **Urban and Regional Economic Development**
 - Can tax incentives increase economic growth?
 - Who benefits from tax incentives?
 - O'Flaherty (2005)
 - Brueckner (2011, Ch. 9.1 to 9.3)

- An empirical example - tax incentives for the film industry
 - Button (2019)
- Group Briefing Note - Effectiveness of Tax Incentives
 - B - Neumark and Kolko (2010)
 - B - Holmes (1998)
 - B - Moretti and Wilson (2014)
 - B - Coates and Humphreys (2000)
 - B - Strauss-Kahn and Vives (2009)
 - B - Lee (2008)
- **Crime**
 - General trends and background on crime
 - (Dills, Miron and Summers, 2010)
 - The “rational criminal” model
 - How exogenous variables (e.g., income changes) affect crime
 - Brueckner (2011, Ch. 10)
 - Marie (2014)
 - How do economic circumstances affect criminal activity in practice?
 - Yang (2017)
 - Palmer, Phillips and Sullivan (2019)
 - Measuring the effect of police on crime
 - Endogeneity (i.e. “chicken or the egg” issue)
 - Crafty ways around this
 - Levitt (1997)
 - Tella and Schargrodsky (2004)
 - Dur and Vollaard (2019)
 - Cheng and Long (2018)
 - Sullivan and O’Keeffe (2017)
 - Breaking research on COVID-19 and crime
 - Ravindran and Shah (2020)
 - (Bullinger, Carr and Packham, 2020)
- **Racial Bias in Criminal Justice and Policing**
 - Implicit Bias
 - The Implicit Association Test
 - Levinson, Cai and Young (2010) OR
 - Levinson (2007) OR
 - Rachlinski et al. (2009) OR
 - Correll et al. (2007) OR

- Smith and Levinson (2012) OR
- Kang et al. (2012) (You will be assigned one for an in-class activity)
- Group Briefing Note - Racial Bias Part A: Criminal Justice and Policing
 - B - Arnold et al. (2017)
 - B - Alesina and Ferrara (2014)
 - B - Eren and Mocan (2018)
 - B - Antonovics and Knight (2009)
 - B - Coviello and Persico (2015)
 - B - Sloan (2020)
- Group Briefing Note - Racial Bias Part B: Police Use of Force
 - B - Fryer Jr. (2018)
 - B - Fryer Jr. (2019)
 - B - Hoekstra and Sloan (2020)
 - B - Johnson et al. (2019)
 - B - Ross (2015)
- Policy responses (“Pattern or Practice”)
 - Devi and Fryer (2020)
- **Criminal Justice and the Labor Market**
 - Summary of possible effects of incarceration on labor market outcomes
 - Bhuller et al. (2016)
 - Eren and Mocan (2019)
 - Introduction to “Ban the Box”
 - Introduction to audit experiments in the social sciences
 - Agan and Starr (2018)
 - Doleac (2019) (A helpful podcast that discusses the research on “Ban the Box”)
- **Housing Policy**
 - Compare and contrast the theoretical impacts of an income grant, proportional rent subsidy, housing voucher, and public housing
 - Brueckner (2011, Ch. 7)
 - Housing vouchers in practice (Section 8)
 - Introduction to housing policies in action
 - Metcalf (2018)
 - Homelessness
 - Gubits et al. (2017)
 - Evans, Sullivan and Wallskog (2016)
 - Evictions
 - Humphries et al. (2019)

- Discussion of COVID-19 and evictions
- Rent Control - Theoretical short run vs. long run effects
 - Brueckner (2011, Ch. 7)
- Empirical Studies on Rent Control
 - Jenkins (2009)
- **Housing Discrimination**
 - Background, summary, and introduction to audit studies
 - Yinger (1998)
 - Example of a rental housing discrimination audit
 - Fumarco (2017)
 - Example of a mortgage loan discrimination audit
 - Balfe et al. (2019)
- **Neighborhood Effects**
 - Do neighborhoods affect outcomes?
 - How can we measure neighborhood effects?
 - An introduction to experiments in social science
 - The “Moving to Opportunity” experiment
 - Compliance in experiments
 - “Intent to Treat” (ITT) effects
 - Stages of the experiment: baseline characteristics, showing the treatment had first-order effects, showing the treatment had second-order effects
 - Ludwig et al. (2012)
 - Bergman et al. (2019)
- **Transportation**
 - Breaking research: effects of Uber/Lyft
 - Greenwood and Watal (2017)
 - Hall, Palsson and Price (2018)
 - In-class activity - design a difference-in-differences study of the impact of the introduction of e-scooters/e-bikes
 - Other topics as time permits

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., Code of Academic Conduct and Code of Student Conduct) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

I take matters of academic honesty *very* seriously. A student who commits academic dishonesty disrespects the hard work of their classmates. Any student found cheating, plagiarizing, or improperly colluding during the course will be subject to possible disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Academic Conduct and the Code of Student Conduct. If you fall behind in your coursework and even feel tempted to cheat, please see me first to see if we can find solutions.

Unless I indicate differently on instructions, all assignments and exams are to be completed individually and without any study aid, including textbooks, class notes, or online sites. If you have any question about whether a resource is acceptable, please ask me rather than assuming.

Title IX

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking.

“Lauren’s Promise”: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening or harassing you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah campus. *We must all take action to ensure that this never happens again.*

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing the behaviors detailed above, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am mandated by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as Tulane and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You do not need to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

Confidential

Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one’s self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): (504) 314-2277 or The Line (24/7): (504) 264-6074
 Student Health Center: (504) 865-5255
 Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE): (504) 654-9543

Private

Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.

Case Management & Victim Support Services: (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu
 Tulane University Police (TUPD): Uptown - (504) 865-5911. Downtown - (504) 988-5531
 Title IX Coordinator: (504) 314-2160 or msmith76@tulane.edu

Emergency Preparedness and Response

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM: TU ALERT	RAVE GUARDIAN
<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download the RAVE Guardian app from the App Store • Communicate with dispatchers silently by selecting “Submit Tip” feature in the app • Use the Safety Timer feature to alert your “guardian” (TUPD, family, friend) when travelling alone at night <p>For more information, visit publicsafety.tulane.edu/rave-guardian</p>
ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER	SEVERE WEATHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUN – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible • HIDE – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, silence cell phones, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT • FIGHT – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort <p>For more information on Active Shooter emergency procedures or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens • Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given • Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe • Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event

Articles and Books on the Syllabus

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