

ECONOMICS OF HUMAN RESOURCES

(Oral Communication: OC)

Fall 2009
ECON 430 (001)
TR 9:00-10:15
Room: POST 127
Professor SH. Lee

Course Outline

Does college education truly increase a worker's productivity and earnings? Should the government increase minimum wage? Are salaries of top executives too high? How does business decide how many people to employ? What determines who chooses to work, and who does not? What characteristics make it more or less likely that workers will change locations or jobs? How do nature of technology and the tastes of workers interact to generate the wage differentials? How do earnings differ among families and individuals?

Economics of Human Resources tries to answer these questions. The learning outcome of this course is to present an analysis of the main areas in human resources and labor economics. In particular, this course includes very close scrutiny of the most recent U.S. labor policy, trends in employment and unemployment, wages and income distribution, and labor market outcomes. This course fulfills the Oral Communication requirement.

Prerequisite: ECON 301.

Textbook

Modern Labor Economics by Ehrenberg, R.G. and Robert S. Smith (2008, 10th ed. Addison Wesley Longman) is required and available on the bookstore for purchase.

Assignment

Assignments include i) four debate sessions which also requires students' presentational speaking (also requiring one-page summaries of debate issues and positions, ii) three discussions of assigned projects/readings, iii) a discussion on a film, and iv) seven quizzes and one final exam. Following each debate and discussion, there will also be post-debate discussions of debate topics.

Debate and presentational speaking: Each student will choose two topics from assigned topics. Exploiting assigned topic, each student will develop a 5 minutes presentation which cannot be read. Each student will receive brief roles in formal debates and play a different role in each debate. Debate topics include, but not limited to i) What is the economic impact of payroll tax and minimum wage?" ii) Are government subsidies of

investments in human capital an effective way to improve the economic well-being of disadvantaged workers? iii) What is the impact of affirmative action programs on the earnings of women and minorities? iv) What is the economic impact of unions both on their members and on the rest of the economy? I will pass out handouts for details.

Discussions of assigned readings and a film: Each reading and case study has a discussion day, during which students can discuss issues relevant to the book and course. I will distribute issue papers in class in order to stimulate discussion.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Debate and presentational speaking: This assignment gives students an opportunity to speak to an audience, and this will be done on an individual basis. The presentational speaking encourages students to understand course material well enough to communicate it to others. This assignment stresses a variety of factors such as delivery skills suitable to the presentation's objectives, listening to and critical evaluation of oral messages, development of arguments to support the speakers' purpose, etc.

Discussions of assigned readings and a film: These give students specific oral tasks, analyzing topics from assigned readings and a film. The debatable nature of this course's reading and video materials makes it ideal for discussion assignments. This assignment emphasizes factors such as an understanding of skill in dealing with group discussion, an awareness of how questioning technique helps or hinders group discussion, etc.

Students learn important steps for effective oral communication for each assignment. Before each assignment, I will give students lectures and handouts that students can follow so that they perform each task successfully. I will also show a video clips which I think is a good debate. The lectures, handouts, and demonstration are designed for the specific purpose of each task, depending on whether it is to inform (presentational speaking), to persuade (group discussion), and so on. This includes, but not limited to, several components of the presentation, such as focusing on research topics, organizing and outlining their presentation (or addressing their questions for debate), and delivering. A discussion on the effective way of oral communication will be followed by each lecture.

Feedback

Feedback from peers: In the class following each debate, students will respond to the various arguments and evidence presented during the debate. They will also discuss their problems and successes in presenting the debate position, in preparing arguments and evidence, in making eye contact, in handling notes. etc. This will be done in such a way that we as a class can discuss without drawing particular or potentially embarrassing attention to anyone's shortcomings.

Instructor feedback: I will provide feedback also spend time with students talking about the discussion process and the characteristics of good discussions. I will use the self-evaluation and feedback from peers (possibly midterm and the end of semester), hoping

to allow me to play off of students' own analyses in providing out-of-class written and oral feedback (arguments, handling notes, eye-contact, etc).

Grading

Debate and discussion	40%
Quizzes	20%
Final exam and class participation	40%

The oral communication performance accounts for 40% of the final grade. Several quizzes, class participation, and a comprehensive final exam will count for 60% of the final grade. This will assure that students can maintain a good grade although speaking is not one of their strength. Furthermore, because each student's leaning progress will be considered, initial weakness in speaking will not ruin a student's course grade. Grade is based on +/- system

Exam and Debate Policy

There will be no makeup exams. You will receive grade 0.0 if you miss the exam or presentational speaking. Final exam is on December 15th (Tuesday) at 9:45-11:45. Final exam is cumulative.

Help

Office Hours: TR 3:00-4:30 or by appointment
Office: SSB 512
Phone: 956-8590
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Schedule

1. Overview of the Labor Market (Ch. 2)
 - Demand for labor and supply of labor
 - Determination of wage
2. Demand for Labor (Ch. 3, 4, 5)
 - Short-run vs. Long-run
 - Payroll tax and other policy applications
 - Wage elasticity
 - Minimum wage laws
3. Supply of Labor (Ch. 6, 7)
 - Decision to work
 - Income and substitution effects
 - Household production

- Effect of child care
 - Labor force participation patterns by age and sex
4. Investment in Human Capital (Ch. 9, 5)
 - Schooling investment model
 - Measuring returns to schooling
 - Difficulties (signaling, quality, etc.)
 - General vs. specific training
 5. Worker Mobility, Unemployment, and Migration (Ch. 10, 15)
 - Migration decision (individual and family)
 - Turnover
 - Job search
 - Vacancies and unemployment
 6. Wage Structure (Ch. 8, 11)
 - Compensating wage differentials
 - Employee benefits
 - Effort, productivity, and pay
 - Efficiency wages
 7. Gender and Race in Pay (Ch. 12)
 - Theories of discrimination
 - Measuring discrimination
 8. Unions (Ch. 13)
 - Union structure
 - Theory of collective bargaining
 - Effects of unions

Debate/Discussion Topics (subject to change/not necessarily in order)

Debate 1: Does college education increase a worker's productivity and earnings?

Debate 2: Are salaries of top executives too high?

Debate 3: Should the US open borders more and allow more immigrants?

Debate 4: Do you vote for a strike?

Discussion 1: Does marriage increase a worker's productivity and earnings?

Discussion 2: Should the State government raise minimum wage?

Discussion 3: Will the retirement age increase in the future?

Discussion 4: Were federal antidiscrimination programs successful?

Discussion 5: Film (TBA)