

**Tentative Syllabus--Subject to Revision—27 November 2006**

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA**

Department of Economics

Spring 2007 Semester

**ECON 130A Principles of Economics-Micro  
Honors Section**

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Saunders 242

Professor Sumner La Croix

Office Hours: Tues. 8:30 – 10 am, Thurs. 2-3 pm, and by appointment.

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The syllabus and class announcements are posted on the Economics 130A homepage at <http://myuhportal.hawaii.edu>. The lecture powerpoints—because of their size—are posted on <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~lacroix>. The powerpoints for each lecture are available for download from 12 pm the previous day. Some additional learning materials can be found at <http://mankiw.swlearning.com>.

**Course Description**

This course uses the popular **Mankiw textbook**—adopted at such varied schools as Harvard University and California State University-Northridge—to provide students with the basics of microeconomic theory. Students learn how to use economic theory to analyze markets, firm behavior, and individual behavior with economic models. Topics include: supply and demand analysis; comparative advantage; theory of the firm including production and costs, perfect competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition and oligopoly; and public policy analysis of various issues including, but not limited to, excise taxation, externalities and market structure.

Microeconomics has traditionally been known as the **dismal science**, an eccentric economist tries (with little success) to reposition it as the **joyous science**, and, now, Steven Levitt has popularized the term **Freakonomics**. Over the course of 5-6 classes, Econ 130A students will read and critique selections from the Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner best seller, **Freakonomics**, as well as the subsequent *New York Times Sunday Magazine* articles based on the book. The book's economic analysis will help you understand how legalized abortion and crime rates may be related; why world cup soccer players tend to be born in January, February, and March; and why public school teachers sometimes change their student answers on standardized exams (yes, the teachers cheat!) to improve the exam results for their students, class, and school.

### **Prerequisites**

No course prerequisites. The analytical skills required for successful completion of this course are elementary mathematical and graphical ability.

### **Texts**

N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Thomson South-Western, 2006. Required. (New and used softcover copies at UH bookstore.)

Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. HarperCollins, 2005. (New and used hardcover copies at UH bookstore. Softcover editions exist but are hard to locate. You may want to check on-line.)

Various Freakonomics columns from the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*.

### **College Computer Labs**

Don't have a computer? Use the College of Social Sciences computer labs:

Saunders Hall 635

Saunders Hall 342

Lab users are required to log in with their UH email address (without the @hawaii.edu) as their username and their UH ID number as their password. See the example below of a student ID card. The numbers in the box are your UH ID number and your password.



Once you're entered into the system, the computer will ask you to change your password.

### **Grade determination**

Letter grades are assigned using the University of Hawaii plus/minus grading system. The course is **NOT** graded on a curve. Grades depend on individual student performance which is evaluated via the following components.

Class Attendance and Participation	20%
Homework Assignments	10%
Group Research Project	10%
Mid-term exam (1 March 2007)	20%
<u>Final exam (10 May 2007)</u>	<u>40%</u>
TOTAL	100%

### **Examinations**

Examinations will consist of short essay questions. Examinations are closed-note, closed-book. You are responsible for all material covered in the lectures, the assigned readings and homework problems, and the in-class exercises. The final examination is cumulative, with roughly 65-70 percent of the points earned on questions referring to topics covered since the midterm.

Attendance at all examinations is mandatory. No make-up examinations will be offered except for University-sanctioned excuses. If you do miss an examination, be sure to e-mail the instructor and explain why you missed the examination. Students with an unexcused absence will receive zero (0) points and a "F" letter

grade on that examination. Students who miss the midterm examination are advised to withdraw from the course at their earliest opportunity.

Check the time of the final exam—10 May 2007. If you cannot take this exam at the scheduled date/time, do not take this course.

### **Class attendance and participation**

Class attendance is required. Students unable to attend the course lectures as scheduled should withdraw immediately. Attendance will be measured through a sign-in system. Students unable to attend the entire lecture should not sign-in. Because attendance will count toward course credit, abuse of the sign-in system will be treated as academic dishonesty. Students can miss two classes without penalty. Each subsequent class missed results in a 1.0 loss in the maximum 20 percent of the grade that can be earned from class attendance.

### **In-class exercises**

We may devote all or part of 3-5 classes to in-class exercises. The exercises are fun. They are not graded. **No animals or UH students will be harmed!!!**

You must come to class AND participate in these exercises to receive daily attendance credit on class exercise days. Possible topics include:

- International trade
- Voluntary provision of public goods
- Private Resolution of externalities
- Diminishing returns
- Prisoner's dilemma (game theory)

### **Group research project**

During the April-May discussion of the Levitt-Dubner book, students in this class will also be working on a group research project. The course instructor will assign a project to the class. Each student will then be responsible for a component of the project AND for bringing the project's parts together as a coherent, carefully executed, clearly explained project. The class project report is due on Friday, 20 April 2007 at 11:30 pm. An additional handout will be provided in March 2007 detailing the report's format, analysis, length, etc.

## CLASS READING-LECTURE SCHEDULE

SUBJECT TO REVISION THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER  
AT DISCRETION OF INSTRUCTOR

Tuesday, January 9	Course Introduction
Thursday, January 11	Mankiw, ch 2
Tuesday, January 16	Mankiw, ch 3
Thursday, January 18	Mankiw, ch 3
Tuesday, January 23	Mankiw, ch. 4
Thursday, January 25	Mankiw, ch. 4
Tuesday, January 30	Mankiw, ch. 5
Thursday, February 1	Mankiw, ch.5-6
Tuesday, February 6	Mankiw, ch. 6
Thursday, February 8	Mankiw, ch. 7
Tuesday, February 13	Mankiw, ch. 8
Thursday, February 15	Mankiw, ch. 9
Tuesday, February 20	Mankiw, ch. 10
Thursday, February 22	Mankiw, ch. 10
Tuesday, February 27	Mankiw, ch. 11
Thursday, March 1	Midterm Examination
Tuesday, March 6	Mankiw, chs 13
Thursday, March 8	Mankiw, chs 13-14
Tuesday, March 13	Mankiw, ch. 14
Thursday, March 15	Levitt, intro and ch. 1
Tuesday, March 20	Levitt, ch. 2
Thursday, March 22	Levitt, ch. 3
March 26-30	No Class—Spring Break!!!

Tuesday, April 3	Levitt, chapter 4.
Thursday, April 5	Levitt, chapter 5, maybe part of ch. 6
Tuesday, April 10	Mankiw, ch. 15.
Thursday, April 12	Mankiw, ch. 15
Tuesday, April 17	Mankiw, ch. 16
Thursday, April 19	Mankiw, ch. 16
Friday, April 20 at 11:30 pm	Group project report due.
Tuesday, April 24	Mankiw, ch. 17
Thursday, April 26	Mankiw, ch. 18
Tuesday, May 1	Mankiw, ch. 18 (last day of class for Econ 130A!)
Thursday-Friday, May 3-4	UH-Manoa Study Days

**Final examination information**

DATE: Thursday, 10 May 2007

TIME: 9:45 – 11:45 am

PLACE: Our usual classroom—different time!!!!

Want to know your course grade? UH makes it available to you via the UH web site starting Tuesday evening, 15 May 2007.