

ECO 2020 – PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Fall 2026

In this course, you will learn to apply the tools and models we've learned in class to something that we've never seen in class.

(Note this syllabus is common to all my Principles of Microeconomics classes to emphasize that all students without distinction are subject to the same course content, same assessment process, and same policies. References to in-class sections should be ignored by online students; references to online sections should be ignored by in-class students.)

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Please don't call me in my office or message me on Canvas. I am often away from my phone for teaching or other university-related obligations. Your inquiries will be answered more promptly by email and I will do my best to answer you all on the weekends.

SECTIONS

- Section 001 — In person, Mon/Wed 8:00–9:20 am, King Center 306
- Section 002 — In person, Mon/Wed 11:00 am–12:20 pm, King Center 306
- Section 012 — Online, asynchronous

OFFICE HOURS

You can meet with me Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am, and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 10:30 am, in my office (except when I am in a meeting or traveling for a conference). If those hours are not working with your schedule, you can also simply schedule a time with me using the meeting scheduler on the course website — pick a time, enter your MSU Denver email, and I will confirm by email. Meetings can be in person or virtual (Zoom or Teams), whichever works for you — virtual is the natural option for online students or when I am traveling. Scheduling should be done at least 24 hours before the meeting so I can make sure there are no scheduling conflicts and prepare for the meeting.

PREREQUISITES

You must be able to read and write English; you must be able to do basic algebra, equation solving, calculate areas (rectangle, square, triangle, parallelogram, and trapezoid), and read graphs. Things you have learned in high school.

LET'S GET STARTED ... PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Welcome to ECO 2020: Principles of Microeconomics. Economics is fun! Economics is exciting! Economics is sexy! This semester, we will live, eat, and breathe economics. We will learn how economists think and the tools we use to better understand the world in which we live in.

This is a university level course. Therefore, I expect students to behave accordingly. The fact that this institution is called Metropolitan State University of Denver and you might be working and/or have family obligations doesn't change what is expected from you. We have learning objectives specific to this course and to general studies that must be met. I use the pedagogical and assessment tools that I believe will help you meet these learning objectives.

First, read the syllabus in its entirety and refer to it for any questions you may have. I believe that 99% of the questions you could have are answered in the syllabus (particularly on the university policies). I have taken the time to ensure that everything is as clear as possible (but it's always possible I made a mistake or there is an inconsistency). I certainly and gladly will clarify any obscure points or answer questions that haven't been answered but please read the syllabus first.

I understand that some among you work or have other constraints and obligations that make your life very busy and possibly stressful. Even though I understand all of this, it remains that you enrolled in this class willingly. Therefore, in doing so, you signaled to me you are willing to make the sacrifices (bear the opportunity costs – one of the most important concepts in economics) associated with your decision. This is the #1 principle of economics; preferences are expressed by actions (as long as the actions are non-coerced). You are enrolled in an economics class and you are expected to behave and think like economists.

Economics is about unpleasant truths! Therefore, you should expect to have your views and opinions about how individuals, businesses, governments, politicians, markets, and institutions operate challenged. To quote Eugene D. Genovese (1991, p. 33): "First Law of College Teaching: Any professor who, subject to the restraints of common sense and common decency, does not seize every opportunity to offend the sensibilities of his students is insulting and cheating them, and is no college professor at all."

Again, once more with feeling, you should treat this class like a job. Like any job you are expected to do the tasks that are delineated in your job contract and a syllabus is a contract that delineates what is expected from you to succeed in this class: Read the syllabus, do the readings, ask questions by email, review the learning material, work the practice problems, complete quizzes in time, etc.

[SPECIAL EVENT / EXTRA CREDIT: Extra credit opportunities may or may not be announced in advance.]

COURSE FOCUS

This course offers an introductory analysis of economic decision making in a market system. The roles, actions, and interactions of consumers, firms, and the government are explored. Market failure and

government failure are also considered. Microeconomic principles and analysis are applied to current events and problems and are used to explore human behavior.

SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE STUDENT BEHAVIORAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course Specific Learning Objectives

- Explain the fundamental concepts of economics including scarcity, choice, opportunity costs, the gains from trade, use of models and positive/normative analysis.
- Apply microeconomic analysis (including supply and demand analysis and marginal analysis) to evaluate human behavior and economic events and/or problems.
- Analyze the effects of government interventions (including price controls, taxes and tariffs) on market outcomes and human behavior.
- Describe types of market failures and potential solutions to market failures.
- Analyze the features and implications of noncompetitive and competitive market structures, including impacts on human behavior.
- Analyze and interpret economic data, tables and charts.

General Studies Mission: The General Studies program provides the foundation for the bachelor's degree. Students develop thinking, reasoning, and communication skills while discovering new ideas and expanding their views. The coursework is designed to create the opportunity for learning across different disciplines and builds experiences for students as they grow into lifelong learners.

Description: Courses in Social and Behavioral Science study the behavior and actions of individuals, groups, and/or institutions using scientific methods and approaches. Social and Behavioral Science also develops a student's ability to examine and influence those behaviors and actions between and among larger social, economic, political, and/or geographic contexts.

General Studies Learning Outcomes

- Describe fundamental concepts in the social and behavioral sciences.
- Examine how individuals, groups, communities, and social institutions relate or interact with each other and/or the natural world using theories and methods in the social and behavioral sciences.
- Engage with social and behavioral science tools, approaches, and skills to explore complex human, social, political, cultural, and/or global interactions and issues.

RECOMMENDED - NOT REQUIRED - TEXTBOOK

Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrok, Modern Principles: Microeconomics, 5th (2021) or 6th (2024), New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

THE COURSE WEBSITE

This course lives on my website — not on Canvas. Bookmark the course page; it is the one URL you need all semester. Each week on the course page you will find the material we cover that week, interactive

demonstrations that let you play with the models yourself, and practice problems with answer keys. The only thing that lives on Canvas is your grades. If you are ever lost, go to the course page and it will tell you exactly where we are and what is due.

EMAIL

You are REQUIRED to activate and use your MSU Denver email account. This is for the simple reason that MSU-Denver email is an official mean of communication. If you miss or didn't read an email with important information, you are responsible. NOTE: I don't answer email before 9:00 am and I don't reply to email after 5:00 pm.

PARTICIPATION POLICY

Participation in the class will be considered completed if you attend class or complete a quiz before the participation deadline of September 2nd at 12 pm. This also includes engaging in class discussion and participating in class activities and assignments.

GRADING

Grades will be based on student performance on the following activities:

Sixteen (16) multiple-choice online quizzes, taken on the course website, for a total worth 100% of your course grade. Quizzes 1 through 14 are weekly quizzes on the course material. Quiz 15 is a review quiz assigned before fall break and due at the end of review week. Quiz 16 is the comprehensive final quiz, due during finals week.

95.00 - 100.00%	A+
93.00 - 94.99%	A
90.00 - 92.99%	A-
87.00 - 89.99%	B+
83.00 - 86.99%	B
80.00 - 82.99%	B-
77.00 - 79.99%	C+
73.00 - 76.99%	C
70.00 - 72.99%	C-
67.00 - 69.99%	D+
63.00 - 66.99%	D
60.00 - 62.99%	D-
00.00 - 59.99%	F

Note: I don't curve grades and I don't round up grades. I also don't provide extensions or make-ups for late or missed quizzes. No exceptions. The two attempts and the week-long window on every quiz are the built-in flexibility.

I don't provide equivalencies either such as doubling one of your quizzes because you missed a quiz or adding the weight of a missed quiz to another quiz.

There is no exception other than Access Center approved disability accommodations or any applicable University Policies.

WEEKLY QUIZZES (100% of course grade)

All quizzes are taken on the course website. They are due every week. Every Sunday, a quiz on the material we covered the week before will be due.

Quizzes are multiple-choice questions. The time allotted to each question will be on average 5 minutes (though for more difficult topics, I have increased the time allotted for you to take the quiz by 50% or 100%). While the quizzes are multiple-choice questions, the questions are mostly not memorization or definition questions. They are questions where you will be asked to think through the answer to demonstrate you understand and, therefore, can apply what you learned to the question asked.

For each quiz, you have two attempts and your highest score on the two attempts is the one counting toward your course grade. After your first attempt, you are allowed to see once the answers you answered correctly and the ones you answered incorrectly. After your second attempt, you will be allowed to see the correct answers to the quiz.

Deadlines for the quizzes are indicated on each quiz. Quizzes are due the week after we covered the learning material on Sunday before 11:59 pm. Quiz 1 covers the first week of material and is due before Sunday, August 23rd, before 11:59 pm — completing it also satisfies the participation requirement. For example, on week 2 (08/24 – 08/28), we are covering Gains from Trade. Quiz 2, which covers weeks 1 and 2, will be due before Tuesday, September 1st, before 11:59 pm. In other words, Quiz 2 can be taken at any time between Monday August 24th and Tuesday, September 1st, before 11:59 pm.

Due dates are listed on the syllabus, on the course website, and on the quizzes.

Please note that you can take the quiz on the week we cover the material so therefore, technically, you have almost two weeks to take a quiz since you have a week to take the quiz after we cover the material. This is a lot of time to take a 10 multiple-choice question quiz. Therefore, please read again, the course policy regarding missed or late quizzes.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS (Note: I give the same advices in all my courses)

TIP #1: DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE the DIFFICULTY of learning the material covered in this course. Learning how to think like an economist can be very challenging for most students particularly when the conclusions we derive go against beliefs that we have held for years. In consequence, prepare yourself, toughen up, and keep up.

TIP #2: DISCIPLINE, COMMITMENT, and PASSION are the keys to your success in this class.

DISCIPLINE: TO MASTER the use of the economic tools used in this course, you will need to apply yourself again and again in trying to think like an economist. You shouldn't stop at your readings, you should try to look at your daily life, your environment, what's going in politics, in the news, even the sport news and try to see how you can apply economic tools to understand what's going on. It must

become for you completely mechanical (It is like shooting free throws. To achieve the highest rate of success, you must practice again and again and practice again under stress). Discipline also means that you must pay attention to the question asked, read the question, think about what you are being asked to do, what are the concepts involved, where did I read about those concepts, what are the tools I have to use to answer the questions, etc. Be sure you understand what is being asked from you.

COMMITMENT: The most important thing that you must do is obviously to do your daily assignments: readings, playing with the interactive demonstrations, working the practice problems, asking questions, etc. You have plenty of time to do your readings and take your quiz. You must be committed to learning, you must be committed to your education, and you must be committed to think like an economist. If you are in this class just hoping to pass it so you can move on and get your degree, you are in the wrong class. You are here to learn, to get an education, and to do so you must be committed to learning.

PASSION: As emphasized just above, if your only hope is just to pass this class or you are in this class just because you are required and you only want to get a piece of paper that says degree on it, you are in the wrong class. I demand **PASSION** from my students. I want my students to want to learn, they must be thirsty to acquire more knowledge because they know that **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**. You are here because you are aware of your ignorance, that you are lacking knowledge and, therefore, you want to remediate to this lacuna. This class is an introductory economics class, it's not designed for economics majors, so you should attempt to seize the opportunity offered here, which is to increase your human capital.

I cannot emphasize enough what was said above: It's up to you to contact me if you have problems. I am here to help you, but you must seek help to be helped!

COURSE SCHEDULE [SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS]

Week	Dates	Module / Assessments
Week 1	08/17 – 08/21	Welcome to the Class + Basic Principles [Quiz 1 due before Sunday 08/23. Completing it satisfies the PARTICIPATION POLICY]
Week 2	08/24 – 08/28	Gains from Trade & Comparative Advantage [Quiz 2 – covers weeks 1 and 2 – due before Tuesday 09/01]
Week 3	08/31 – 09/04	Supply, Demand & Equilibrium [Quiz 3 due before Sunday 09/06]
Week 4	09/07 – 09/11	The Price System: Signals, Speculation, and Prediction [Quiz 4 due before Sunday 09/13]
Week 5	09/14 – 09/18	Price Ceilings, Price Floors & Elasticity [Quiz 5 due before Sunday 09/20]
Week 6	09/21 – 09/25	Taxes and Subsidies [Quiz 6 due before Sunday 09/27]
Week 7	09/28 – 10/02	Competitive Markets: Costs, Profit Maximization, Entry & Exit [Quiz 7 due before Sunday 10/04]
Week 8	10/05 – 10/09	Market Power and Monopoly [Quiz 8 due before Sunday 10/11]
Week 9	10/12 – 10/16	Price Discrimination and Pricing Strategy [Quiz 9 due before Sunday 10/18]
Week 10	10/19 – 10/23	Externalities: Pigou to Coase [Quiz 10 due before Sunday 10/25]
Week 11	10/26 – 10/30	Public Goods and the Tragedy of the Commons [Quiz 11 due

		before Sunday 11/01]
Week 12	11/02 – 11/06	Asymmetric Information Problems [Quiz 12 due before Sunday 11/08]
Week 13	11/09 – 11/13	Public Choice and Regulation [Quiz 13 due before Sunday 11/15]
Week 14	11/16 – 11/20	Applications & Catch-Up [Quiz 14 due before Sunday 11/22] [Quiz 15 – Review Quiz – assigned this week, due before Sunday 12/06 (end of review week)]
Week 15	11/23 – 11/27	Fall Break Holiday [Quiz 15 remains open]
Week 16	11/30 – 12/04	Review Week (no new material) [Quiz 15 due before Sunday 12/06]
Finals	12/07 – 12/13	Final Exam Week [Quiz 16 – the COMPREHENSIVE Final Exam – due Saturday, December 12th, before 11:59 pm]

Due dates are indicated in the quiz (see above for explanation on deadlines/due dates). No extension or make-up will be provided for missed quizzes. The deadline to take Quiz 16 (the comprehensive Final Exam) is Saturday, December 12th, 2026, before 11:59 pm.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENT POLICY – WITHDRAWAL (W)

W Policy: Last day for a withdrawal is Friday, November 20th, 2026. It is done online through the Student Hub with no signature required.

ACCOMMODATIONS (ADA)

The Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. Students with a diagnosed condition/disability which may impact their access, performance, attendance, or grades in this class should contact the Access Center, located in the Plaza Building, Suite 122, 303-615-0200.

The Access Center is the designated department responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Accommodations will not be granted prior to my receipt of your faculty notification letter from the Access Center. Please note that accommodations are never provided retroactively (i.e., prior to the receipt of your faculty notification letter.) Once I am in receipt of your official Access Center faculty accommodation letter, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss your accommodations. All discussions will remain confidential. Further information is available by visiting the Access Center website www.msudenver.edu/access.

CLASS ATTENDANCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students at Metropolitan State University of Denver who, because of their sincerely held religious beliefs, are unable to attend classes, take examinations, participate in graded activities or submit graded assignments on particular days shall without penalty be excused from such classes and be given a meaningful opportunity to make up such examinations and graded activities or assignments provided that advance written notice that the student will be absent for religious reasons is given to the faculty members during the first two weeks of the semester.

GETTING COURSE GRADES

Final course grades will be available by telephone (303 575 5880), the Web (www.msudenver.edu) and campus kiosks located in the Central Classroom, West Classroom, and Tivoli St. Union Buildings.

GRADE STUDENT APPEAL PROCEDURE

If students have reason to question the validity of a grade received in a course, they must make their request for a change before the end of the second week of the semester following the completion of the course (the following spring semester in the case of the fall semester). The Grade Appeal Guidelines can be obtained from the students' respective deans. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate a grade appeal within the time limit, and to follow the procedures specified for grade appeals in the current Student Handbook. The handbook may be obtained from the Office of Student Services. All decisions of the Grade Appeal Committee will be reviewed by the associate vice president for academic affairs.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

Absolutely NO CHEATING. Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. At a minimum, a permanent F in the course, with expulsion from school being a worst-case scenario. See the Student Code of Conduct for more information:

<https://www.msudenver.edu/deanofstudents/studentconduct/studentcodeofconduct/>

GUARANTEED TRANSFER (GT) PATHWAYS PROGRAM IN THE GT-SS1 CATEGORY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved ECO 2020 for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the GT-SS1 category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C- grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to:

<http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html>

ETHICAL USE OF AI

As part of the commitment to uphold academic integrity and ethical standards, this course encourages the responsible and transparent use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Students are expected to utilize AI technologies in a manner that supports learning, research, and academic success, while also respecting intellectual property, privacy, and the accuracy of information. The use of AI should not replace independent thinking, problem-solving, or creativity but should be integrated to enhance learning outcomes. Plagiarism, including the use of AI-generated content without proper attribution, will not be tolerated. Students must always acknowledge when AI tools have been used to assist in their work and ensure that the use of these technologies aligns with the university's code of conduct, upholding the values of honesty, fairness, and academic rigor. By promoting the responsible use of AI, we aim to foster an environment where technology complements human skills, learning, and personal growth.

CAMPUS SAFETY

The Auraria Campus Police Department (ACPD) is a dedicated, full-service police department, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For your personal safety while on campus, the ACPD recommends the following:

- **PROGRAM YOUR CELL PHONE: 303-556-5000.** Program the ACPD Dispatch number in your cell phone for emergencies on campus. 911 calls from cell phones are routed to the Denver Police Department, causing a delay in our response time. 911 calls from campus landlines and emergency phones are routed directly to the ACPD.
- **TEXT-A-TIP: 720-593-TIPS (8477).** Discreetly text tips (even photos) about suspicious activity on campus to ACPD Dispatch.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **RUN, HIDE or FIGHT.**
- When parking on campus, always lock your vehicle and never leave valuables in sight.
- Do not leave computers, backpacks, cell phones, or other belongings unattended for any period of time while on campus.

Auraria Alerts: Auraria Alerts are sent out to campus community members' cell phones. These messages can alert the community of safety threats, inclement weather, building closures, etc.

Timely Warnings: Timely Warnings are sent out in compliance with the Federal Jean Clery Act. This law requires that ACPD report 7 crime categories to the community when they take place on the Auraria Campus, and a suspect is not arrested. These warnings are delivered to the campus community via email.

Fire Drills: When inside of campus buildings, please take a moment to locate the nearest fire exit to your classroom. Building floorplans showing evacuation routes can be found inside of each campus classroom. Any time a fire alarm is activated, all building occupants must evacuate the building. Upon exiting the building, please move away from the building.

Safety Equipment: AEDs and Bleeding Control Kits can be found in most campus buildings, which can be located on the emergency plan map located in each campus classroom.

Safety Escorts: Safety escorts on campus are provided by the ACPD. Please contact dispatch at the number listed above to request a safety escort. Escorts can be to anywhere on the Auraria Campus or to the CU Buildings across Speer Boulevard.

Training: The ACPD and all three schools on campus provide free training to all Auraria Campus affiliates. These training opportunities can be found at www.ahec.edu, or each school's website.

Emergency Guideline and Evacuation Plans: Emergency Guideline and Evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms. Please take note of the location in your classroom for quick reference.