

Economics 100A: Microeconomics A

Spring 2016, Professor Itai Sher

As the first class in the micro sequence, Econ 100A is designed to teach you how to set up, solve, and analyze optimization models and apply these mathematical models to the theory of the consumer (commodity demand, labor supply, and consumption/savings decisions). Finally, we will examine the fundamentals of decision making under risk and uncertainty.

Prerequisites

Microeconomic principles (Econ 1) and a year of calculus (either Math 10C or 20C or 21C).

Lecture and Discussion Section Schedule

Lecture	C00	TuTh	5:00p-6:20p	CENTR 101
865276 Discussion	C01	M	4:00p-4:50p	WLH 2205
865277 Discussion	C02	W	4:00p-4:50p	WLH 2205

Please go to the discussion section you are enrolled in. There will be no class meetings on university holidays.

Examinations

There will be two midterm examinations and a final examination. The midterm exams will take place during the normal class time on Thursday April 21 and Tuesday May 17. The final exam will take place on Thursday June 9, 7:00pm-9:59pm. The final is scheduled for three hours but we will not use the full three hours.

Class Website (TritonEd)

Materials will be posted at <https://triton.ed.ucsd.edu> on the page for Economics 100A.

Course Materials (Links to all material other than the textbook are posted on Ted)

- Textbook. Hal Varian, *Microeconomics with Calculus*.
- Class Notes. Class Notes corresponding to class lectures will be posted **after** each lecture.
- Intermediate Microeconomics Video Handbook (IMVH). There are video lectures to accompany the class. A link to the lectures is posted on Ted. Students should use the video lectures as a supplement to the class lectures.
- Professor Mark Machina's Mathematics Handout and Other Math Resources. There are lectures in the IMVH that cover some of the material on the handout (look under A Math Topics). This is the mathematical background for which students are responsible; it will not be covered in lecture. Another good math resource is Martin Osborne's online Math Tutorial: <http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/osborne/MathTutorial/index.html>. Chapters 1-6 of this book review the calculus tools taught in Math 10ABC or 20ABC that are most important for this course.

Peer Tutoring Lab for 100A. This lab is run by undergraduate tutors who have excelled in economics. It is shared between our class and for another Econ 100A class. The lab takes place in Econ 200, Monday and Tuesday 5:00pm-7:00pm, Wednesday and Thursday 7:00pm-9:00pm, and Sunday 1:00pm-3:00pm. There will not be lab on Week 1 and the weeks after midterms. This is a great resource, and you are encouraged to visit to ask tutors questions about the homework or to work on your homework and get help right away if you get stuck. The lab manager is Junda Liu jul155@ucsd.edu

Piazza

We will be using Piazza for class discussion. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates, the TAs, and myself. Rather than emailing questions to me or the TAs, please post your questions on Piazza. Piazza offers students the opportunity to answer questions posed by classmates. If you are one of the students in the top 25% of number of “good” answers (marked by me or TAs), you will earn a bonus equivalent to 1% of the class grade, and if you are in the top 10%, you will earn a bonus equivalent to 2% of the class grade. There is a link to Piazza on Ted.

Problem Sets

Problem sets will be assigned on Mondays, and answers will be posted the following Monday. Problem sets will not be graded and students do not need to submit them. However, students should think of the problem sets as if they are due in the discussion section a week later. In discussion section, the TA will go over some of the problems. You will be much better prepared for the exams if you attempt the problem sets before seeing the answers. Working on the mathematical exercises is a critical part of the learning process, so students are strongly urged to take problem sets seriously.

Grading Weights

Midterm 1 is worth 30% of your grade, Midterm 2 is worth 30% of your grade. The final exam is worth 40% of your grade. In addition, you can earn extra credit on Piazza (see above). The class will be graded on a curve.

Teaching Assistant and Contact Information and Office Hours

The TAs for this class is:

David Stowitts Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00pm-3:30pm in Sequoyah Hall 224
dstowitt@ucsd.edu

Alejandro Nakab is the Reader for this class.

Sher’s Office Hours and Location

Thursdays: 11:00-12:00 and 1:30-3:15 pm in Econ 113.

How to Succeed in the Course

Doing well in this course requires regular attendance at lectures and discussion sections and solving practice problems. Working through the mathematical exercises is a particularly important part of the learning process. It is not enough to glance at the solutions to the exercises. Students should work on as many exercises as they can before the discussion sections and before looking at solution keys. In general, you should take an *active* approach to the material. This involves testing yourself to make sure that you understand the material, translating what you read and learn in lectures into your own words, identifying what you don’t understand and working on it until you do, and working on exercises.

Course Outline

	Topic	Text Ch./	Video
1	Consumer Preferences, Utility, Budget Constraint	2, 3, and 4	C1, C2a
2	Utility Maximization and Demand Functions	5 and 6	C2
3	Comparative Statics of Demand	8	C3-C7
4	Supply of Labor	9	C8
5	Supply of Saving	10	C9
6	Decision Making Under Risk and Uncertainty	12	C10

Administrative Notes

1. If you have a documented disability, please bring your documentation to the professor or lead TA so that suitable accommodations can be made. If you believe that you have a disability and desire accommodation, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. For information on the steps for academic accommodation, please see <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app3.htm>.

2. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty in this course will earn a failing grade for the course. In addition to this academic sanction, the Council of Deans of Student Affairs will also impose a disciplinary penalty. For UCSD policy, please see <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>.

3. You will only need a writing instrument (pen or pencil) for examinations. No books, notes, or electronic devices (including calculators, headphones, cell phones) are allowed, and students may not consult with each other during the examinations.

4. If you arrive late to an exam, you will be allowed to take the exam in the time that remains as long as no one has submitted his/her exam and left the room. If you arrive after someone has submitted an exam, you will earn zero points on the test.

5. If you believe that an exam has not been properly graded, you must give a **written note** clearly explaining why your score is in error to your discussion section or TA's office hours **within seven days** from when exams were returned to the class. The professor and TAs will then discuss the question, review your entire exam, and increase or decrease your score as is necessary. You may not ask for another regrade or reinstate your original grade. Hence, by submitting a re-grade request you risk having your score decrease, so consider this decision carefully.

6. UCSD has automated wait-lists. If you have any questions regarding adding the class, please contact the undergraduate advisors in Sequoyah Hall 245. The economics department does not allow late additions (additions after the second week) to any class.