

Course Syllabus: Spring 2009

Office Hours: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., MW and by appointment, Brooks 504

Class Hours: 2:30 – 3:20 p.m., MWF, Sanford 112

Assessments: (2) Tests – 50%: February 13 and April 3
Final Exam – 50%: May 4, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Textbook: Borjas, Labor Economics, 4th edition (2008)

Course Policies: The policies of this course governing attendance, academic honesty, and examinations are given at www.terry.uga.edu/~rswjr/4600

Scope of the Course: In this course, we will apply microeconomic theory to the study of individual behavior and government policies affecting the operation of the labor market. Examples of topics we will analyze with this approach are welfare reform, immigration, the value of a life, incentive compensation, and unemployment. In addition to reading the textbook assignments listed below and occasional class handouts, you are urged to keep informed about current labor-market developments by reading a major daily newspaper such as the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Borjas, Ch. 1

Jan. 9: The Economic Approach to Human Behavior

II. THE SUPPLY OF LABOR

A. Static

Borjas, Ch. 2

Jan. 16: Religious Background and Labor Supply

Jan. 19: No Class – MLK Day

B. Dynamic

Borjas, Ch. 3 (pp. 70 – 87)

Jan. 23: The Intertemporal Labor Supply of Stadium Vendors

C. Household Production

Borjas, Ch. 3 (pp. 88 – 94)

III. THE DEMAND FOR LABOR

Borjas, Ch. 4; Ch. 5 (pp. 163 – 196)

Jan. 30: Affirmative Action

Feb. 6: The Minimum Wage and Poverty

Feb. 13 Test #1

IV. LABOR MARKET EQUILIBRIUM

A. Static

Borjas, Ch. 6

Feb. 20: Corporal Punishment in 19th Century Factories

Feb. 27: The Value of Saving a Life

B. Dynamic

Borjas, Ch. 1 (pp. 5 – 7); Ch. 9 (pp. 351 – 360)

V. HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Borjas, Ch. 7; Ch. 8

Mar. 6: The 1968 French Student Riots and the Return to Higher Education

Mar. 9 - 13: No Class – Spring Break

VI. DISCRIMINATION

Borjas, Ch. 10

Mar. 20: Customer Discrimination in the NBA

VII. UNIONS

Borjas, Ch.11

Mar. 27: Globalization, Technological Change, and Unionization

Apr. 3: Test #2

VIII. THE STRUCTURE OF COMPENSATION

Borjas, Ch. 12 (pp. 453 – 472)

Apr. 10: Incentive Pay in the Auto Glass Installation Industry

Apr. 17: The Compensation Structure of Gangs

IX. UNEMPLOYMENT

Borjas, Ch. 13 (omit sec. 13-8)

Apr. 24: Labor-Market Flows and Unemployment

May 4: Final Exam, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.