

Economics 23950  
 Course Basics  
 Economic Policy Analysis  
 Fall Quarter 2021

Refer to the full syllabus for detailed policies and resources.

**Course Description**

This course will use the theoretical, numerical, and empirical methods from the core sequence to analyze macroeconomic policies. Rather than diving deep into a single policy topic, we will take a helicopter-tour approach across taxation, government debt, unemployment, and monetary policy to highlight how applications may differ (or not!) across topics. You will write three policy analysis briefs, two selected from provided prompts and one on a fiscal or monetary policy of your choosing. You should check news sources discussing current economic policies to help with this selection. Examples include, but are not limited to, Wall Street Journal, the Economist, and NPR's Planet Money podcast. You may also use international policies (and news sources) as long as they are credible!

**Additional Resources**

See the "Resources" document posted to Canvas for Course, Department, Campus, and Technology Resources. These are also listed in the Syllabus.

**Additional Policies**

This document is not complete. See the Syllabus posted to Canvas for a full description of Course Policies.

**Primary Textbooks:**

- (DLS) Matthias Doepke, Andreas Lehnert, & Andrew W. Sellgren, *Macroeconomics*. Free online download.
- (GLS) Julio Garín, Robert Lester, & Eric Sims, *Intermediate Macroeconomics*. Free online download.

Schedule	Econ 23950-2	Econ 23950-3
Class	MW 2:00-3:20pm	MW, 3:30pm-4:50pm
Discussion	Fri, 2:30pm-3:20pm	Fri, 3:30pm-4:20pm

**Course Organization**

I write all slides, handouts, prompts, and questions. In class, I will discuss application of the course material and solve/derive a few properties, skipping math steps I assume you are comfortable with after the Econ core sequence. Homework assignments will revisit these problems, or variations thereof, requiring that you revisit some necessary steps. During Discussion section, TAs will revisit the problems to show you the math steps in greater detail. Discussion section will review the problems, with a focus on homework applications.

I have an "open-floor" policy but expect you to be respectful of everyone in the classroom and ask you to engage in professional behavior. Please stop me and ask questions at any time if you cannot keep up with the material presented. When I ask you to form a group to check/discuss your answers with others, please do so: I am helping you improve your communication skills and improve your understanding.

Assume that if you do not tell or ask me directly, I am unaware of issues or questions you may have.

**Course Grade Calculation**

Your Homework and QRE are added together for a *timed* component worth 50 points. Your three paper scores and highest four feedback-on-feedback scores are added together for an *untimed component* worth 190 points. Your aggregated individual score ( $S_i$ ) is calculated from the combination of the graded components.

$$S_i = \text{Timed Component} + \text{Untimed Component}$$

Your aggregate score is compared to the cutoffs below (Based out of a total 240 points). These cutoffs may be lowered as part of an overall course curve.

Cutoff	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D
Points	220.8	216	211.2	196.8	192	187.2	172.8	168	163.2	144
(%)	92%	90%	88%	82%	80%	78%	72%	70%	68%	60%

PROFESSOR		TEACHING ASSISTANTS		
Dr. G.C. Pieters gcpeters@uchicago.edu		Manuel Veras mveras@uchicago.edu	Eliot Weinstein eliotw@uchicago.edu	
OFFICE HOURS (ON ZOOM, SEE CANVAS)				
Mon	11:00am – Noon	9:50-10:50am	12:30pm-1:30pm	
Tues	1:00pm-3:00pm	-	-	
Wed	-	-	-	
Thu	-	-	6:30pm-7:30pm	
Fri	10:00-11:00am	12:10pm-1:10pm	-	
PREFERRED SALUTATION				
Dr. Pieters or Prof. Pieters She/Her/Hers		Manuel He/Him/His	Eliot He/Him/His	

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The following represents an outline of the due dates. As the course progresses, the Lecture Topics associated with each class will be updated to reflect what was covered. If material changes, the date of assessments will **NOT** change, but content will be altered.

Week	Date	DLS	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due
1	M, Sep 27	-	The Role of Theory and Data	
	W, Sep 29	12, 13	Steady State Analysis: Lump Sum Taxation	
	Fri, Oct. 1		<i>Discussion: Review</i>	Review HW (Morning, Not graded)
2	M, Oct 4	12, 13	Transition Analysis: Lump Sum Taxation	
	W, Oct 6	13	Proportional Taxation	
	F, Oct 8		<i>Discussion: HW1</i>	
3	M, Oct 11	14	Optimal Taxation	HW1
	W, Oct 13	14	Optimal Government Debt	
	F, Oct 15		<i>Discussion: HW2</i>	
4	M Oct 18	12	Government Spending	HW2
	W, Oct 20	12, 13	Social Security & Redistribution	
	F, Oct 22		Fiscal Paper Peer Feedback/FoF (Pieters)	FP Draft (Morning)
5	M, Oct 25	-	Taxation Behavior	FP Peer Feedback
	W, Oct 27	10	Unemployment Insurance	Fiscal Paper/ FoF
	F, Oct 29		<i>Discussion: HW3</i>	
6	M, Nov 1	4	Money as a Medium of Exchange	HW3
	W, Nov 3	8	Money as a Storage Vehicle	
	F, Nov 5		<i>Discussion: HW4</i>	
7	M, Nov 8	8	Money as a Unit of Account	HW4
	W, Nov 10	19	Price Misperceptions	
	F, Nov 12		<i>Discussion: HW5</i>	
8	M, Nov 15	18	Seigniorage and Government Debt	HW5
	W, Nov 17	15	Gold Standard and Exchange Rates	
	F, Nov 19		<i>Discussion Cancelled</i>	MP Draft (Sunday)
-	M, Nov 22		<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
	W, Nov 24		<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
	F, Nov 26		<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
9	M, Nov 29	18, 19	Monetary Policy and Interest Rates	MP Peer Reviews
	W, Dec 1	19	Central Bank Commitment Problem	Monetary Paper / FoF
	F, Dec 3*, **		<i>Discussion: HW6</i>	
<b>Finals</b>	F, Dec 10***		Final Paper	HW6, Final Paper

<sup>§</sup> The chapter numbers serve only as reference in the core textbook. You should also review the material posted to Canvas (the class slides and the supplementary papers, articles, and reference chapters from other textbooks). \*Last day to Withdraw. See "Other Course Grades" in full syllabus for details. \*\*Dec 4<sup>th</sup> is grade deadline for graduating seniors. \*\*\*Pass/Fail must be declared via email **by the start** of the final exam's slot time. Dec 15<sup>th</sup> is grade deadline for non-graduating student.