

HKUST Business School – Department of Economics

ECON 2113 – Microeconomics (Fall 2019)

Section: L1, L2

Course Syllabusⁱ

Lecture:	L1: TuTh 12:00 – 13:20, Rm 2306 L2: TuTh 13:30 – 14:50, Rm 2306
Tutorial:	NO tutorials during the first week; subsequent tutorials will be announced as we go. Please attend the tutorial section that you registered for.
Course Website:	http://canvas.ust.hk
Instructor:	Fei DING
Office:	LSK 6084, Lee Shau Kee Business Building
Email / Phone:	feiding@ust.hk / 2358-7626
Office Hours:	Drop by or make appointment
Teaching Assistants:	Peter TSUI
Office:	LSK 6066, Lee Shau Kee Business Building
Email / Phone:	ecpeter@ust.hk / 3469-2668
Office Hours:	Monday 15:30 – 17:00 or by appointment

A. Course Description

Microeconomics is the study of

- allocation of limited resources under constraints;
- how individuals and companies control and organize the production and distribution of goods and services; and
- [TBD (to be determined)]

This is a core course for Business School students with prior experience in economics. The course intends to cover the fundamental concepts and tools that are used in microeconomic analysis. In this course, I will show you that economics provides a powerful way of thinking that can help you understand many human and social phenomena, and enrich you in a wide range of career choices.

I will use real world examples and cases as much as possible in order to enhance your understanding of course materials. Eventually, I would like all of you to come up with your own “definition” or “meaning” of economics and establish its applicability in your daily life (the “TBD” above).

B. Textbook

“*Microeconomics, Thirteenth edition*” written by Michael Parkin, published by Pearson.

Supplementary readings will be posted on the Course Website.

C. Learning Outcome – School Intended Learning Outcomes (“SILOs”)

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to

1. Understand the methodology of microeconomic analysis: key assumptions, how economics is different from the other social science disciplines, and strengths and limitations of this analytical framework (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2).
2. Understand the key concepts and tools of microeconomic analysis including: gain from trade and specialization, how price is determined in the free-market, how to measure efficiency, how market structure affects the determination of price and quantity transacted, and decision-making by buyers and producers under constraints (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2).
3. Understand the role of government and its interaction with the free-market: government policies and their impact on economic activities, the justifications of government intervention and participation, such as the provision of public goods (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2).
4. Understand the economic analysis on the theory of consumer choice (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2).
5. Understand asymmetric information and its impacts on decision making and the free-market system (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2).

Together with:

6. Through real world examples and cases, enhance students’ understanding of the course materials and build students’ ability to identify, analyze, and find possible explanations and solutions for real world issues through the application of economic tools and the economic ways of thinking (SILOs # 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4).

For the details of SILOs, please refer to:

<http://www.bm.ust.hk/sbmlern/eng/thirdcat.php?sid=5&thirdid=3>

D. Course Format / Teaching Approach

This course is delivered through lectures and tutorials.

Students attend two 80-minute lectures per week. Personal Response System (PRS) will be used during lectures to encourage class participation and exchange of ideas (further information regarding PRS can be found in Section F). Please try to attend all lectures and participate actively during class discussions.

Tutorials will be arranged as needed or used as extra office hours starting from the week of September 9. Tutorial topics will be announced in advance on the Course Website. Please note that lectures and tutorials are not “substitutes” but “complements” to each other. Do attend both lectures and tutorials for your own benefit.

Teaching & Learning Activities	Roles in the Course	SILO Addressed
Lectures	Explain key concepts and their applications; Cases and examples to build students’ critical and analytical ability.	1,2,3,4,5,6
In-class Q&A through PRS	Encourage class participation, critical thinking, and discussion.	1,2,3,4,5,6
Tutorials	Review with further illustration on	1,2,3,4,5,6

	important topics, problem-solving, encourage discussion and participation.	
Problem Sets	Enhance understanding of course materials and their applications through practice.	1,2,3,4,5,6

E. Course Website

Course materials and announcements will be posted on the CANVAS Website (<http://canvas.ust.hk>). It is YOUR responsibility to check constantly for the latest information.

F. Use of Personal Response System (PRS)

PRS will be used in lectures starting from Lecture 2. To download iPRS mobile app, please visit <https://itsc.ust.hk/services/academic-teaching-support/teaching-tools/prs/iprs>. The use of PRS is to encourage classroom participation, discussion, and exchange of ideas among students and with me. Questions will be asked during lectures and the PRS allows you to respond in real time. A summary of answers will be shown and shared. I will discuss your answers with you.

G. Examinations and Grades

Overall Grading for the Course

Your final course grade will be based on relative performance. Students from all my sections (L1-2) will be pooled together and evaluated with a single grade distribution.

Your overall score for the course will be computed based on the best outcome from the following two weighting schemes.

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2
6 out of 7 Problem Sets @ 1.5% each	9%	9%
Quizzes (8% each)	All five: 40%	Best three: 24%
Final Exam (cumulative)	51%	67%

Problem Sets

Problem sets will be assigned from previous year's quizzes & exams as well as the textbook. You **MUST** submit your problem sets online via the CANVAS website. NO hard copies, faxes, or emails will be accepted. Any late submission will result in ZERO mark, regardless of the reason. So please plan ahead and avoid last-minute submissions.

You can discuss with your classmates as you wish. But you must each turn in your own solution. Problem sets will not be graded. Your TAs will simply note whether you turned them in on time or not. This is your chance to 1) earn some "free" points in the course, 2) practise for the exams, and 3) run your solution ideas or mental blocks by your classmates for help.

Suggested answers will be posted on the CANVAS site after the deadline. If you have any questions about the problem sets, please seek help from the TA.

Quizzes

There will be SIX quizzes conducted via the CANVAS system throughout the course, among which five will be graded. The first quiz (Quiz 0) is a free trial to familiarize you with the online system and will not be counted.

Quizzes will cover lecture & tutorial materials, problem sets, and any assigned readings. A typical quiz will last 30 minutes, and mostly will be multiple-choice format. Sample practice questions will be available on the course website to help you with the preparation. All students must independently take the quiz at the pre-specified time slot, usually starting at 7:30 pm of a weekday night. The quiz will not be available at any other times. Thus, it is your responsibility to find a quiet & comfortable place with stable internet connection and minimal intervention during that period. There will be NO make-up quizzes for whatever reasons.

Collaboration or discussion while taking a quiz is strictly prohibited, as it is considered cheating and will be reported to the school. Although I do not ban books, notes, and cheat sheets, I strongly recommend that you treat quizzes as closed-book exams. Time will be quite constrained, and you will surely run out of time if you have to go back and check your class notes.

Final Exam

The final exam is CUMULATIVE. The date and time will be arranged by ARRO. I will NOT allow early exam. If you intend to travel at the end of the semester, please make your travel plans to avoid any potential schedule clash. Request for a change of final examination date will NOT be accommodated. Please plan your travel accordingly.

The final exam will be closed-book, closed-notes, and no electronic devices allowed. It will contain multiple-choice, true/false, and quantitative questions which require detailed explanations in words, graphs, and algebraic calculations. I will offer guidance on the format and preparation of the final exam toward the end of the semester.

Absence

You do NOT need to seek approval for absence from quizzes. If you miss one or two quizzes, Scheme II will be applied in calculating your final course grade. If you miss more than two quizzes for whatever reasons, you will automatically lose part of total course grade. It is therefore your responsibility to make sure of your availability for at least three of the five graded quizzes.

If, for any reason, you are unable to attend the final exam, you MUST seek approval of absence from TA and me BEFORE the exam. Your request should be supported by valid documents, such as a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner. Note that outside activities or more than one exam on the same day are not acceptable excuses for missing an exam. Please plan accordingly. Absence from the final exam without prior approval of absence would result in ZERO score.

For students who are absent from the final exam with prior approval, a make-up final exam will be arranged. The make-up exam will be scheduled as soon as possible and should be within one week after the official final exam date. It is your responsibility to ensure your availability. The make-up arrangement may take the form of a written-exam, an oral exam, or a research paper, etc. Please note that the instructor has the final discretion on all arrangements regarding the make-up final exam. Students who request the make-up final exam should comply with all the requirements as communicated by the instructor. Failing to meet any requirement may result in a ZERO score.

Grading Disputes

Please check your homework and quiz scores as soon as they are released. Any disagreement should be reported to the TA **within one week** from the grade release date. Late complaints will NOT be accommodated.

In case of a successful appeal, not just the discrepancy part but the entire exam will be reassessed for the whole class (all sections included). The reassessment may result in a grade higher or lower than the one previously given.

The TAs and I will do our best to help you succeed in the course. Please remember that, ultimately, it is YOU who EARN the grade. If you know what grade you want for graduation, scholarship, exchange opportunities, honors, etc., you need to make the corresponding effort to achieve your goal.

H. Academic Honesty and Integrity

Academic integrity and honesty are key values at HKUST. Please read the information on academic integrity carefully. It is your responsibility to be familiarized with the Academic Honor Code and all contents on the Academic Integrity website: <http://tl.ust.hk/integrity>.

The Code will be STRICTLY enforced. I will report any cases to the University WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS. Cheating will result in an automatic "F" for the course.

I. How to Get Help

The TAs and I hold regular office hours to answer questions and help you with your study. You are also welcome to make appointments with any of us. If you encounter any problems or feel under pressure, I urge you in the strongest possible terms, to get help immediately. We would be happy to talk with you and help you find appropriate solutions.

Emails are also quick and easy ways to communicate with us. Most messages will be answered within hours. Please address to both TA and me in your emails for quickest response.

Please note the following guidelines for an efficient communication with your TAs and the instructor.

1. Before you contact your TAs or me, please make sure that you have a) read the textbook and lecture notes, b) discussed with your classmates, and c) put sufficient effort to find the answers by yourself.
2. Try to ask questions during lectures. Do not hesitate to raise your hands.
3. Try to find me before and after the lectures. It is best to discuss topics right after I teach them.
4. Please DO NOT write me long emails with many questions. It is more efficient to come and talk to me face to face.
5. It is always better to discuss your questions first with your classmates and friends. Argue with your classmates, debate with them, persuade them, find some flaws in their or your own arguments, and find out the best way to deliver your ideas and thoughts. This will help you not only in this course, but also in your future job-hunting process.

6. If you have questions regarding problem sets and exams, course organization, and materials covered or to be covered, please check CANVAS website and the course syllabus first.

J. Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to be punctual for both lectures and tutorials; I will start and end the lecture on time. You are welcome to bring your laptop or other devices to lectures for learning purposes. Please respect others and do not disturb others with side conversations, Internet surfing, email-checking, or instant-messaging during class time. If you have any questions, please raise your hand, NO CHATTER. Please visit the following site for general guidelines on proper classroom behavior: http://tl.ust.hk/conduct/good_learning_experience.pps.

K. Continuous Teaching Evaluation

Student feedback is essential for course improvement. I encourage continuous teaching evaluation: At any time during the semester, you may verbally or anonymously (slip a note under my door or on the lecture table) give me your feedback on my teaching. This evaluation can include 1) things that you like; 2) things that you dislike; and 3) suggestions for improvement. I will take all comments seriously and confidentially.

L. Tentative Schedule (subject to modification as we go)

Part 1: Introduction

Problem set 1 covers Chap 1-2

Quiz 0

Part 2: How markets work

Problem set 2 covers Chap 3-4

Quiz 1

Problem set 3 covers Chap 5-6

Quiz 2

Part 3: Households' choices

Problem set 4 covers Chap 8-9

Quiz 3

Part 4: Firms and Markets

Problem set 5 covers Chap 10-11

Quiz 4

Problem set 6 covers Chap 12-13

Quiz 5

Part 5: Market failure

Problem set 7 covers Chap 15, (16) and 17

Final exam

ⁱ The instructor reserves the right to final interpretation of the course syllabus and the right to amend the syllabus, if necessary.