

William & Mary
Spring 19

SYLLABUS

ECON 300 – 01. Urban Economics

M/W/F. 1:00 - 1:50PM. Tyler 133

Instructor: Thomas P. LaSalvia, PhD
Office Location: Tyler 230
Office Hours: M/W: 2:15 - 3:30, T: 11 – 12:30, appointments, walk-in
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*Replies within 24 hours (M – F), most of the time it will be within an hour or two, unless the email is received in the evening or on the weekend.

Course Description: Urban economics uses fundamental economic theory to model location decisions of utility maximizing households and profit maximizing firms. These models are then analyzed to gain a better understanding of why cities exist, what causes cities to grow or shrink, land-use patterns within a city, and the effect of public policy on the health of a city and its populace.

Course Objectives: Develop a working knowledge of the tools used by urban economists to evaluate the location decisions of households and firms, and how those decisions affect the outcomes of particular urban environments.

Students will have the opportunity to practice and hone their use of microeconomic fundamentals (economic reasoning, graphical modeling, game theory, etc.).

Students will have the opportunity to experience a collaborative working environment.

Prerequisite: Working knowledge of microeconomic fundamentals

Important Dates: Add/Drop: January 28th. Withdraw: March 15th

Course Structure and Assessment: This class combines lectures with in-class project based learning. Students will work in groups to provide an economic analysis of a chosen U.S. city. In-class lectures will provide the tools needed to perform the analysis. Exams will be used for individual level assessment.

The below descriptions, dates and totals are **approximates** and subject to minor adjustments.

<u>Assignment Type & Amount</u>	<u>Points (each)</u>
Midterm Exam (1)	30
Comprehensive Final Exam (1)	60
Project Presentation 1 (group)	15
Project Presentation 2 (group)	30
Project Executive Summary (1)	15
Participation/Hw	<u>20</u>
Total	180

Midterm Exam: Week 6 or 7

Final Exam: April 29th, 2pm

Participation/Hw: Between “workshop” classes you will do a small amount of individual research that you can discuss with me and your group. I’d like you to hand in a paragraph (or a few bullet points) of what you found.

Project Details: Each group will examine a particular US city using fundamental microeconomic tools. The examination of the city will be broken up into three parts

1. Early history (why does the city exist?), (what caused the city to grow?)
2. Recent history / current land-use patterns.
3. Future / where is the city going and what can be done to help resolve current ills.)

There will be a presentation during the first half of class quickly discussing the history. Late in the semester a second presentation will discuss the other two points. Additionally an “executive summary” of the presentations will be due late in the semester. (This is a high level overview of the main points in your presentations. The inclusion of maps and graphs will be helpful.

You will mostly be graded on your ability to use economic tools to explain the how and whys of your city (I want to see your ideas not just what others say), but I will also look for presentation skills and “excitement” you create regarding this presentation (why is this city interesting, what graphs and pictures and maps do you show.)

<u>Grading Scale:</u>	A = $\geq 94\%$	A- = 90% - < 94%
	B+ = 87% - < 90%	B = 83% - < 87%
	B- = 80% - < 83%	C+ = 77% - < 80%
	C = 73% - < 77%	C- = 70% - < 73%
	D+ = 67% - < 70%	D = 63% - < 67%
	D- = 60% - < 63%	F = < 60%

* grades are not rounded to the nearest percent

Grading (Nearly all questions are short answer): 0 – 5 scale.

- 0 = nothing,
- 1 = a thought, graph, and/or equation,
- 2 = an economic thought, graph, or equation,
- 3 = an economic thought, graph, and/or equation in the right direction,
- 4 = an economic thought, graph, or equation in the right direction with a small mistake,
- 5 = complete and correct economic thought, graph, and/or equation (full communication as an economist, based on in-class discussions)

**For partial credit, you are graded on how you answer the question. Did you call upon the proper fundamental concept and how close were you to having consistency of that concept with the required graph or mathematics.

Text: (Recommended) O’Sullivan, A. *Urban Economics* (any edition will do) This is a decent text, but mostly we will use readings and basic theory.

Supplemental Material:

Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier*. 1985. Oxford University Press

- Great read on the suburbanization of the US during most of the 20th century

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 1961. Random House

- Influential observations of a non-academic. Her thoughts still resonate with urban theorists today

Glaeser, Edward. *Triumph of the City*. 2011. The Penguin Press

- Contemporary king of Urban Economics

Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. 2002. Basic Books

- Urban Sociologist that adds useful elements that Glaeser often brushes aside

City-data.com

Census.gov

Citylab.com

<http://www.petergordonsblog.com/>

<http://economicshelp.org>

EconLit & The Economist

<https://libraries.wm.edu/databases/by-subject/411> (W&M library)

Writing Resources Center (WRC) - Communications Related

The Writing Resources Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. To make an appointment, visit the WRC webpage www.wm.edu/wrc.

Student Accessibility Services:

"William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please visit www.wm.edu/sas."

Course Policies:

You must be **respectful** to everyone.

Do not text

Do not talk while others are talking.

Do not use the web for non-relevant activities.

Do not be late.

Do not leave early.

Do not miss class.

Do not be a loud consumer of food or drink.

If you need to leave early or need to leave your phone on because of an expected important call, please tell me at the beginning of class.

I genuinely want to help all of you.

Be a kind and thoughtful human being

The William & Mary Pledge

"As a member of the William and Mary community, I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, or steal, either in my academic or personal life. I understand that such acts violate the Honor Code and undermine the community of trust, of which we are all stewards."