

Course Syllabus

ECON 303

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory

Section 04

William & Mary

Spring 2025

Instructor: Andrew Dustan
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Office: Chancellors 248
Class meetings: Tu/Th 2:00-3:20pm, Chancellors 134

Overview and learning objectives

This course examines microeconomic models of consumer and producer behavior in market settings. Students successfully completing this course will be familiar with the fundamental models that underlie modern economics and be able to use them to analyze economic questions. This framework will facilitate further study at the undergraduate and graduate levels in theoretical and applied microeconomics (labor, health, development, etc.), and is also vital for modern macroeconomics, finance, and related fields.

Requirements

ECON 101 is a prerequisite for this course.

Calculus is not a prerequisite for this course, but we will need to use it regularly. No prior knowledge of calculus is assumed—I will teach the necessary content.

Office hours

Office hours are a time to ask questions about the course concepts, get help completing the problem sets, and discuss other concerns related to the course. I will hold office hours each week in at the following times and locations:

- Tuesday, 9-10am (Chancellors 248)
- Wednesday, 9-10am (Chancellors 121—not my office, a classroom on the ground floor)
- Friday, 9-10am (Chancellors 248)

I will announce any changes to this schedule in advance. Email me if you need to meet at another time.

Textbook

The textbook for this course is *Intermediate Microeconomics*, by Hal Varian. I have the 9th edition, but feel free to use any edition from 8 through 10. If you use a different edition from me, the chapter numbers may differ from what I use.

I may assign other readings via Blackboard.

Assignments and Grading

Grades will be determined by the following assignments (contribution to final grade in parentheses):

1. Midterm exam 1 (25%)
2. Midterm exam 2 (25%)
3. Final exam (40%)
4. Five problem sets (10%)

I will compute your overall percentage grade according to the weights given above, and then, without rounding your percentage grade, assign course letter grades accordingly:

Letter	Percentage	Letter	Percentage
A	93-100%	C	73-76.99%
A-	90-92.99%	C-	70-72.99%
B+	87-89.99%	D+	67-69.99%
B	83-86.99%	D	63-66.99%
B-	80-82.99%	D-	60-62.99%
C+	77-79.99%	F	< 60%

Exams

There will be two in-class midterm exams on Thursday, February 27, and Thursday, April 10.

The final exam is cumulative. The final exam period is (tentatively) scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, from 2-5pm.

I will announce the final exam location later.

If you have a scheduling conflict caused by a University-sanctioned event, please contact me at least two weeks in advance to discuss arrangements. In all other cases, there will be no make-up midterm exams. If you miss one midterm exam, I will replace the missing score with the score from your final exam (i.e., the final exam will count for 65% of your course grade). If you miss both midterm exams, the second midterm will receive a score of zero and will not be replaced.

The final exam is mandatory.

Problem Sets

There will be five problem sets. You will submit these at the beginning of class on the indicated due date. You are encouraged to collaborate with classmates if this helps you to better understand the material, but you need to submit your own individual problem set.

I will drop the lowest of the five problem set scores (including a zero score if you did not submit one) when computing the overall problem set score. That is, your four highest-scoring problem sets will each count 2.5% toward your final grade.

Late problem sets are not accepted. One purpose of dropping the lowest problem set score is to build in flexibility to miss one submission.

Re-grading policy

If you believe I have made an error in grading your problem set or midterm exam, you may request a re-grade. Re-grading requests for problem sets or midterm exams must be submitted within one week of the assignment being returned to you. Requests made after one week will not be considered. Attach a cover sheet to the assignment indicating the item(s) you want re-graded and give it to me in class or office hours. I will re-grade the item(s), **which may result in your score increasing or decreasing compared to the initial score**. This grade will be final.

Honor Code

William & Mary has had an honor code since at least 1779. Academic integrity is at the heart of the university, and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led honor system is responsible for resolving any suspected violations of the Honor Code, and I will report all suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the honor system. The Student Handbook (<https://www.wm.edu/studenthandbook>) includes your responsibilities as a student and the full Code. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. To read the Honor Code, see <https://www.wm.edu/honor>.

Accommodations

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2509 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see <https://www.wm.edu/sas>.

Outline of topics

This is a tentative outline of topics I plan to cover, along with the corresponding chapters in Varian (9th edition). Content is subject to change as class progress dictates. I will keep you updated.

1. Introduction and math primer
2. Consumer theory
 - Budget Constraint (Chapter 2)
 - Preferences (Chapter 3)
 - Utility (Chapter 4)
 - Choice (Chapter 5)
 - Demand (Chapter 6)
 - Income and Substitution Effects (Chapter 8)
3. Market Demand
 - Consumer Surplus (Chapter 14)
 - Market Demand (Chapter 15)
 - Equilibrium (Chapter 16)
4. Producer Theory
 - Technology (Chapter 19)
 - Profit Maximization (Chapter 20)
 - Cost Minimization (Chapter 21)

- Cost Curves (Chapter 22)
 - Firm Supply (Chapter 23)
 - Industry Supply (Chapter 24)
5. Market Imperfections
- Monopoly (Chapter 25)
 - Monopoly Behavior (Chapter 26)
 - Oligopoly (Chapter 28)
 - Externalities (Chapter 35)

Important dates

These dates are subject to change as needed. I will keep you apprised of any changes.

Date	Event	Location/time
Friday, 1/31	<i>Add/drop deadline</i>	
Thursday, 2/6	Problem Set 1 due	In class
Thursday, 2/20	Problem Set 2 due	In class
Thursday, 2/27	Midterm Exam 1	In class
Thursday, 3/20	Problem Set 3 due	In class
Monday, 3/24	<i>Withdrawal deadline</i>	
Thursday, 4/3	Problem Set 4 due	In class
Thursday, 4/10	Midterm Exam 2	In class
Thursday, 5/1	Problem Set 5 due	In class
Tuesday, 5/6	Final Exam	2-5pm, location TBD