

## ECON 325: Urban Economics (Spring 2025)

College of William & Mary  
Department of Economics

Professor: Tate Twinam  
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Office: Chancellors Hall 250

Course Meetings: MWF 9:00-9:50am  
Room: Chancellors Hall 123  
Office Hours: W 3:30-4:30pm

### Course Description:

This course explores the origins and development of cities from an economic perspective. We will utilize economic theory to study the location choices of individuals and firms. We will also discuss how physical, social, and economic forces affect the growth of cities and the welfare of their inhabitants, and how government policy can mitigate or magnify these effects. We will also study how different actors influence urban policymaking for their own gain. As we will see, the present-day circumstances of a city are inextricably tied to its past. For this reason, we will take both contemporary and historical perspectives as appropriate. This course is highly recommended for anyone with an interest in public policy at the local, state, or federal level.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 101.

### Tentative Schedule and Topic List:

Wednesday, January 22	Syllabus & class overview	
Friday, January 24	Economic rationales for cities	
Monday, January 27	Monocentric city model	Assignment 1 & 2 posted
Wednesday, January 29	Monocentric city model	
Friday, January 31	Monocentric city model extensions	
Monday, February 3	Persistence in urban spatial structure	
Wednesday, February 5	Persistence in urban spatial structure	
Friday, February 7	Externalities in cities	Assignment 2 due
Monday, February 10	Boundaries: Administrative and statistical	Assignment 3 posted
Wednesday, February 12	Land use regulation: History and law	
Friday, February 14	Land use regulation: Impacts	
Monday, February 17	Housing markets and price indices	
Wednesday, February 19	Housing costs and affordability	
Friday, February 21	Housing costs and affordability	Assignment 3 due
Monday, February 24	Midterm 1	
Wednesday, February 26	Supply elasticities: Constraints real & imagined	
Friday, February 28	Supply elasticities: Geography	
Monday, March 3	Supply elasticities: Regulation	
Wednesday, March 5	Zoning and the suburbs	
Friday, March 7	Affordable housing policies	

Monday, March 10	Spring Break	
Wednesday, March 12	Spring Break	
Friday, March 14	Spring Break	
Monday, March 17	New construction & affordability	Assignment 4 posted
Wednesday, March 19	New construction & affordability	
Friday, March 21	Public transportation	
Monday, March 24	Autocentricity: History	
Wednesday, March 26	Autocentricity: Trends and reforms	
Friday, March 28	Racial segregation	Assignment 4 due
Monday, March 31	Racial segregation	
Wednesday, April 2	Racial segregation	
Friday, April 4	Midterm 2	
Monday, April 7	Gentrification	Assignment 5 posted
Wednesday, April 9	Gentrification	
Friday, April 11	Crime: The Becker model	
Monday, April 14	Crime: Recent trends & (mis)explanations	
Wednesday, April 16	Crime: Recent trends & explanations	
Friday, April 18	Crime: Within & across neighborhoods	Assignment 5 due
Monday, April 21	Urban labor markets	Assignment 6 posted
Wednesday, April 23	Urban labor markets	
Friday, April 25	Urban labor markets	
Monday, April 28	Urban location & growth	
Wednesday, April 30	Urban location & growth	
Friday, May 2	Urban location & growth	Assignment 6 due

### Important Dates:

Friday, January 31	Last day to add/drop
Monday, March 24	Last day to withdraw/elect for pass/fail
Thursday, May 8	Final exam 10am-12pm, Assignment 1 due

### Evaluation Policy:

You are responsible for attending lectures, taking notes, and reviewing your notes after each class. If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from another student. Evaluations will be based on three exams and six assignments. Midterms 1 & 2 will each be worth 15% of your grade. The final exam will be worth 25% of your grade. Exams will be monitored and any student caught cheating will receive a failing grade. Each assignment will be worth 7.5% of your grade. Discussing the assignment with your peers is permitted and encouraged. However, each student must complete and turn in the assignment on their own.

Assignments will be due in class (in hard copy form) on the date specified on the assignment. A 30% grade penalty will apply to assignments not turned in before the Monday following the specified date. Assignments will not be accepted by email; late assignments can be put under the door to my office.

If you cannot attend an exam due to documented college business or religious observance, you must notify me and schedule a make-up exam at least two weeks in advance. All other make-up exams required for any reason will incur an automatic 20% grade penalty.

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following intervals:

A	[93-100]	C	[73-77)
A-	[90-93)	C-	[70-73)
B+	[86-90)	D+	[67-70)
B	[83-86)	D	[63-67)
B-	[80-83)	D-	[60-63)
C+	[77-80)	F	[0,60)

These are strict and apply to all students.

### **Syllabus Revisions:**

You are responsible for all materials, updates, and announcements covered during class sessions. The course schedule may change over time due to unforeseen circumstances. I expect you to monitor your William & Mary e-mail account regularly so that I can communicate with each of you electronically between classes.

### **Electronic Device Policy:**

Use of cell phones during class is prohibited. Use of laptops or tablets is permitted for note-taking only; do not access the internet during class unless encouraged to as part of a class activity. Casual web browsing, checking email, watching videos, etc. during class greatly inhibits the learning experience. It can also be very distracting for your fellow classmates.

### **Academic Integrity:**

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 ([www.wm.edu/studenthandbook](http://www.wm.edu/studenthandbook)) includes your responsibilities as a student. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. To read the Honor Code, see [www.wm.edu/honor](http://www.wm.edu/honor).

### **Student Accessibility Services:**

Your experience in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of William & Mary to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. 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](mailto:sas@wm.edu) to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see [www.wm.edu/sas](http://www.wm.edu/sas).

### **Respect for Diversity:**

Diverse backgrounds, embodiments, and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the heart of university education. In this classroom, students are expected to:

- Respect individual differences which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender identity/presentation, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status.
- Engage respectfully in discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations, and artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values.

### **Parenting Student Resources:**

Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources provided on campus; information about these resources can be found at [https://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/title\\_ix\\_coord/pregnancy/index.php](https://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/title_ix_coord/pregnancy/index.php). You are also welcome to confidentially discuss your pregnancy/parenting status with me if you feel it would help me to help you make the most of your time here.

### **For Our Veterans:**

If you are a student who has served in our nation's military forces, welcome home, and thank you for your service. I hope that you feel comfortable enough to confidentially self-identify yourself to me so that I can help you make a successful transition from the military to higher education. We at William & Mary understand that the transition into civilian life can be challenging for our veteran students, and we provide resources for any who may want to reach out for guidance or assistance in these matters. Please contact Veteran Services at [vabenefits@wm.edu](mailto:vabenefits@wm.edu).

### **Mandatory Reporting:**

William & Mary faculty are required by law to report any information they receive pertaining to sexual misconduct or assault. As a mandatory reporter, any disclosures to me of this nature will have to be further disclosed to the Title IX coordinator on campus. This is not to discourage you from discussing these issues with me; you are welcome to do so. However, if you have issues or concerns regarding yourself or someone else, and would like to share them confidentially, you are strongly encouraged to contact The Haven, a peer-based confidential resource center for those impacted by sexual violence and harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and other gender-based discrimination. They are located at Campus Center 166 and can be reached by email ([thehaven@wm.edu](mailto:thehaven@wm.edu)) or phone (757-221-2449). You can find more information at <https://www.wm.edu/offices/thehaven/index.php>.

### **Care Support Services:**

The Dean of Students Office provides Care Support Services to students in need. If you are facing challenges to your mental, physical, and/or social health, you are strongly encouraged to contact them by email ([care@wm.edu](mailto:care@wm.edu)) or phone (757-221-2511). If you are concerned that a fellow student may be facing physical, emotional, or academic difficulties, you can also contact CSS on their behalf (confidentially and anonymously if you wish). You can find more information at <https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/caresupportservices/index.php>.

### **Inclement Weather:**

Note that the campus may be closed due to weather. Information on suspension of operations will be made public and available through the media. Students can learn of campus operations status from the website. You may also sign up with an alert system through Banner that will contact you via email or text message if classes are canceled. Class activities will be rescheduled as needed.

### **Additional Support Services:**

- Campus Libraries: <https://www.wm.edu/academics/libraries/>.
- Tribe TutorZone: <https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/academicenrichment/tutors/>.
- Cohen Career Center: <https://www.wm.edu/offices/career/>, 757-221-3231.
- Student Counseling Services: <https://www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/counselingcenter/index.php>, 757-221-3620.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Dial 988.