

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY  
Department of Economics

Economics 2a  
Introduction to Economics

Mr. Coiner  
Fall, 2009

Syllabus

This course is an introduction to the field of Economics. It will:  
give you an idea of the range of behaviors that economists investigate  
introduce you to the basic tools that we use to analyze the economy  
apply these tools to public policy issues.

Perhaps most important, this course will introduce you to the “economic way of thinking,” an approach to decision making that applies to personal decisions, to the decisions of businesses, labor unions and other organizations, and to the larger choices that society faces.

This course satisfies the School of Social Science distribution requirement and the Quantitative Reasoning component of the General University Requirements. It is also the first course for any student considering a concentration or minor in Economics.

Class Meetings

In addition to the lectures on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, the teaching staff offers an additional treatment of the material on Tuesday nights from 6:30-8:30. These sessions are highly recommended. The sessions, led by the teaching assistants, will give you an additional opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the material.

Exams

Two Tuesday night sessions of the semester will require mandatory attendance in order to administer exams. The dates of the exams are:

Exam # 1	Tuesday, October 6th
Exam # 2	Tuesday, November 3rd

The location for these exams will be announced later. There will also be a final exam during finals week at a time and a place determined by the Registrar.

Problem Sets

There will be two types of problem sets in this course. There will be one electronic problem set for each chapter of the text that we cover (about two dozen in all). There will also be 11 old-fashioned hard copy problem sets. More details about these problem sets are given below.

## Text

The required textbook and electronic problem sets for this class are available through Aplia (<http://www.aplia.com>). The textbook is N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Further information about how to sign up for Aplia is found on the last two pages of this syllabus. As you will see there, you have the option of purchasing a physical textbook or using a digital textbook.

## Grading Policy

Your grade is based on 3 exams and on both types of problem sets. There will be 11 hard-copy problem sets. Four of these problem sets arrive just before an exam. These four specific problem sets do not have to be turned in. Of the remaining 7 problem sets, you may omit turning in one of your choosing. Thus, in order to get full credit for the hard-copy problem sets, you will have to turn in 6 of the 7 required problem sets. The hard-copy problem sets will constitute 10% of your grade.

There will be approximately two dozen electronic problem sets. Aplia will record automatically your scores on these problem sets. The lowest three scores during the term will be thrown out. Your score on the remaining electronic problem sets will constitute 10% of your grade.

Whichever midterm you score higher on will count for 30% of your grade. The other midterm will count for 20% of your grade. The final exam will count for 30% of your grade. The remaining 20% of your grade will be based on the problem sets (as described above).

## Contact Information

My office is Sachar 4. My extension is 6-2239. My Brandeis email address is [coiner@brandeis.edu](mailto:coiner@brandeis.edu). It is OK to try to contact me through my home email, which is [m.coiner@verizon.net](mailto:m.coiner@verizon.net), and you may call me at home at 1-508-485-7732. Office hours will be announced shortly.

## Information Dissemination

In Economics 2a we will maintain a course website through the University's Latte system. You will be responsible for checking the website frequently as most of the problem sets, answer keys, etc will be posted there and available for you to download. The website can be accessed from [webct.brandeis.edu](http://webct.brandeis.edu). Most documents from the course website will be found as PDF files. To read such files you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. All computers in the computer labs on campus come equipped with the Reader.

## Doing Your Best

Here are some suggestions that may help you to do well in Economics 2a:

Do the assigned reading before class to get a preview of the material to be covered and to prepare any questions you have about this material.

Take the problem sets seriously, because they are the best indication of whether you understand the material and they are the best preparation for the exams.

Keep up with the work.

## Special Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis University and if you wish to request a reasonable accommodation for this class, please see me right away. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

## Academic Honesty

You are expected to be honest in your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 4 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask. Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be rigorously prosecuted.

## Course Outline

Thursday 8/27	Introduction to the course	Chapters 1,2
Monday 8/31	The Gains from Trade	Chapter 3
Wednesday 9/2	Supply and Demand	Chapter 4
Thursday 9/3	Market Equilibrium	Chapter 4
Wednesday 9/9	Elasticity of Demand & Supply	Chapter 5
Thursday 9/10	Price Controls	Chapter 6
Monday 9/14	Market Efficiency	Chapter 7
Wednesday 9/16	Effects of Taxes/Deadweight Loss	Chapters 6, 8
Thursday 9/17	Externalities	Chapter 10

Monday 9/21	Policy Responses to Externalities	Chapter 10
Wednesday 9/23	Public Goods & Common Resources	Chapter 11
Thursday 9/24	The Costs of Production	Chapter 13
Tuesday 9/29	Costs of Production/Competitive Markets	Chapters 13, 14
Wednesday 9/30	A Competitive Firm's Supply Curve	Chapter 14
Thursday 10/1	Competitive Industry Supply	Chapter 14
TUESDAY 10/6	MIDTERM EXAM #1 6:30-8:30 PM	
Wednesday 10/7	Monopoly	Chapter 15
Thursday 10/8	Oligopoly	Chapter 16
Monday 10/12	Monopolistic Competition	Chapter 17
Wednesday 10/14	The Demand for and Supply of Labor	Chapter 18
Thursday 10/15	Labor Market Equilibrium	Chapter 18
Monday 10/19	Measuring the Nation's Total Output	Chapter 23
Wednesday 10/21	Measuring the Overall Price Level	Chapter 24
Thursday 10/22	Economic Growth & Productivity	Chapter 25
Monday 10/26	Policy toward Growth	Chapter 25
Wednesday 10/28	Financial Institutions	Chapter 26
Thursday 10/29	The Market for Loanable Funds	Chapter 26
Monday 11/2	Measuring Unemployment	Chapter 28
TUESDAY 11/3	MIDTERM EXAM #2 6:30-8:30 PM	
Wednesday 11/4	The Natural Rate of Unemployment	Chapter 28
Thursday 11/5	The Meaning of Money	Chapter 29
Monday 11/9	The Fed, Banks & The Money Supply	Chapter 29
Wednesday 11/11	The Theory of Inflation	Chapter 30
Thursday 11/12	The Costs of Inflation	Chapter 30
Monday 11/16	Exchange Rates, Exports & Imports	Lecture Notes
Wednesday 11/18	Aggregate Demand (AD)	Chapter 33
Thursday 11/19	Aggregate Supply (AS)	Chapter 33
Monday 11/23	Shifts in AD & AS	Chapter 33
Wednesday 11/25	Liquidity Preference	Chapter 34
Monday 11/30	How Monetary & Fiscal Policy Work	Chapter 34
Wednesday 12/2	How Policies Work (cont'd)	Chapter 34

## APLIA AND THE COURSE TEXT

The required text for this course is N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (South-Western College Publishers, 2008). There are several ways to access the text.

1. Your Aplia registration fee allows you to use an online copy of the text. The cost is \$70. The online text is available anywhere you have Internet access and can be printed.

Note: You **MUST** register with Aplia in order to complete the electronic homework assignments. Having the text and homework bundled together reduces your textbook costs.

2. If you want a print copy of the text you can do one of the following. Options (a) and (c) are the least expensive.
  - a. Buy a copy from Aplia. Total cost is \$70 (sign up) + \$70 (print copy) + \$7.50 (shipping) = \$147.50.
  - b. Buy a copy (with Aplia code) from a bookstore. I don't have an exact list price, but it is much higher than for option (a).
  - c. Buy or borrow a copy of the text from a previous student. Total cost is \$70 (sign up) + ? (what you pay for the text)

Note: Aplia includes a course management system (the "course materials" page) similar to WebCT, Blackboard and LATTE. Because LATTE is easier to use, I will post supplementary content in LATTE rather than in Aplia.

What follows is the handout I received to help you get started with Aplia.



## Student Registration and Payment Instructions

**Course Name:** Coiner - Economics (Mankiw) - Fall 2009

**Start Date:** 08/24/2009

**Instructor:** Mike Coiner

**Course Key:** CLYX-74TJ-8PBX

**You can begin working on your homework as soon as you register!**

- In this course, you will use a textbook and Aplia's website.
- In most cases, you can save money if you buy Aplia and your textbook together. See payment options below.
- You will have access to a digital version of your textbook using Aplia.

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## Registration

### If you have **never** used Aplia before...

1. Connect to <http://www.aplia.com>.
2. Click the New Student link and enter your Course Key: **CLYX-74TJ-8PBX**. Continue following the instructions to complete your registration.

### If you **have used** Aplia before...

1. Connect to <http://www.aplia.com>.
2. Sign in with your usual e-mail address and password and enter your Course Key when prompted: **CLYX-74TJ-8PBX**. If you are not prompted for a new Course Key, click the Enter Course Key button to enroll in a new Aplia course. Enter your Course Key when you are prompted.

*\* You will have different payment options after you register for your course. If you choose to pay later, you can use Aplia without paying until 11:59 PM on 09/13/2009.*

## Payment

### Option 1: Digital Textbook with Aplia Access

- **From Aplia:** Purchase access to your course from Aplia's website for \$80.00 USD.
- **From Bookstore:** Purchase an Aplia Access Card from your campus bookstore.

### Option 2: Physical Textbook with Aplia Access (also includes digital textbook)

- **From Aplia:** Purchase access to your course for \$80.00 USD and a physical book for \$80.00 USD from Aplia's website.
- **From Bookstore:** Purchase an Aplia Access Card and a physical book together as a bundle from your campus bookstore.

*\* If you purchased an Aplia Access Card from a bookstore, enter the Access Card's payment code on Aplia's website as payment for your Aplia course.*

*\* You will have access to your digital textbook up until the end of this course.*