

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Economics

ECNG 263 Labor Economics
Course Syllabus

Professor Alper
Spring 2007

Course Description: To introduce the concepts and issues related to the labor market, a market that you will all spend a significant portion of your life participating in, that is unless you are lucky enough to win the “Megabucks” lottery. This will be accomplished by examining and analyzing the operations of the labor market and its results from a theoretical and an empirical perspective.

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Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:30 and Wednesday 10:00 – 11:30 and by appointment.

Course Requirements: There will be two or three short empirical papers (5+ pages each) with class presentations (30% of your grade); two in class exams (30% of your grade) and a comprehensive final exam (40% of your grade).

Policies:

1. Attendance is optional at the student's risk.
2. No make-up exams are given without a legitimate (instructor determined), documented excuse.
3. An 'I' grade will only be given for a legitimate reason with a signed "contract" specifying completion arrangements. The legitimacy is determined by the instructor.
4. Cheating of any type, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Students found cheating will receive an 'F' for the course and will be referred to the Department's Graduate Admission and Academic Standing Committee for appropriate action.
5. Correct English, i.e., spelling and correct grammar, will be considered in grading exams and papers.

Text: Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*, 9th edition, Addison Wesley, 2006. [ES].

Other Readings: Additional readings will be assigned throughout the term.

Schedule of Classes
(Subject to change with one week's notice)

Jan. 8 - 24	Introduction, Overview of the Labor market ES, chs. 1+2 Readings: Z. Eckstein and E. Nagypal, "The Evolution of U.S. Earnings Inequality: 1961-2002," (www.mpls.frb.org/research/qr/QR2822.pdf) T. Piketty and E. Saez, "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913 -1998," <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , Feb. 2003. R. Freeman, "War of the Models: Which Labour Market Institutions for the 21 st Century," <i>Labour Economics</i> , March 1998.
Jan. 31 – Feb. 14	Labor Demand ES, chs. 3 - 5 Readings: K. Couch and David Wittenburg, "The Response of Hours of Work to Increases in the Minimum Wage," <i>Southern Economic Journal</i> , 2001. R. Burkhauser, A Couch and D. Wittenburg, "A Reassessment of the New Economics of the Minimum Wage Literature with Monthly Data from the Current Population Survey," <i>Journal of Labor Economics</i> , 2000. B. Weinberg, "Computer Use and the Demand for Female Workers," <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i> , Jan. 2000.
February 21	Exam I
Feb. 21 – March 21 (March 7, no class)	Labor Supply: Participation and Hours ES, chs. 6+7 Readings: TBA Labor Supply: Investments in Human ES, ch. 9 Readings: J. Mincer, "The Production of Human Capital and the Life Cycle of Earnings: Variations on a Theme," <i>Journal of Labor Economics</i> , Jan. 1997. (JSTOR) Labor Supply: Mobility - (Im)Migration, Turnover ES, ch. 10 Readings: TBA

March 28

Exam II

March 28-April 18

Labor Markets
ES, chs. 8 + 11
Readings: TBA

Unions; and Earnings Inequalities

ES, chs. 12-14

Readings:

W. Darity and P. Mason, "Evidence on Discrimination in
Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender," *Journal of
Economic Perspectives*, Spring 1998. *Journal of Economic
Perspectives*, "Symposia on Intergenerational Mobility,"
Summer 2002.

April 25

Final Exam