

Course Syllabus: Introduction to Urban Economics

Instructor:
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School of Economics, Peking University

Email:
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Course Meeting Time and Location:
Tuesdays 13:30 to 15:20,
History Bldg. 113

Office Hours Time and Location:
Thursday 16:00 to 17:00,
#322 School of Economics Bldg.

Course Website:
<http://www.tonyjhowell.com/teaching/urban-economics>

1. Course Description

Urban economics is the study of cities and regions, and the economic activities therein. As a discipline, urban economics lies at the intersection of geography and economics introducing the role of space into economic considerations. Students will be exposed to the theories and concepts that help to explain the existence, growth and impact of cities, as well as gain a deeper understanding about the role of public and private policies that impact the urban form, structure and economy. Course discussion will be geared towards addressing the following questions. What explains the explosive growth of cities and the rate of urbanization over the last 100 years? How do firms and individuals decide where to locate? How is the price of land determined? How can we address current urban problems like crime, poverty, traffic congestion, sprawl, gentrification and pollution?

2. Recommended Course Text

Any required readings will be provided to students when appropriate and will cover a broad set of topics drawing from various texts, articles and media reports. The recommended, although not required, text for the course is

- O'Sullivan, A. (2014) Urban Economics, 8th Edition (McGraw Hill/Irwin).

The following texts also provide a good overview of urban and regional economics.

- Brueckner. Lectures on Urban Economics.
- [The Web book of Regional Science](#). Regional Research Institute. West Virginia University.

3. Course Requirements and Grading

- **Assigned Group Readings (5%):** Students are expected to read and comprehend assigned group readings for in-class discussion and write a brief group summary of the assigned readings. Group leader will rotate and facilitate group discussion each week.
- **In-Class Participation (15%):** Students are encouraged to attend every class and are expected to participate in all group activities. Repeated absences from class, surfing the web or watching shows, failure to actively and regularly participate, or disruptive behavior will result in lower or no credit in this category. Evaluation will be based, in part, by group peers' assessment at the end of the semester, along with the instructor's own evaluation.
- **Examination (25%):** Two quizzes will be administered to test students' understanding of course lectures and readings
- **Mini-Projects (25%):** The course will have 3 assignments, i.e. News Analysis with Wordclouds, Agglomeration Cluster Map, and Urban Snapshots Project, that will allow students to work independently or in collaboration with one another on a related theme or concept from class. Students will present each assignment using the Prezi software. Note: Assignment sheet will be passed around class.
- **Final Group Project (30%):** The group will compare and contrast the creation, characteristics, functions, growth, and perhaps decline, of two clusters or cities (preferably from different regions), implementing key concepts and theories from class in a research report, and provide a brief presentation.

4. Policy for Late Work

Assignments turned in late will be subject to a 5% grade reduction for each day that the assignment is past due. After 10 late days, students may still turn in any assignment and receive a 50% grade reduction.

5. Integrity

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will result in no credit being awarded for the course.

6. Course Topics, Student Presentations and Assignments

Note: The link to your Prezi, along with any other component of the assignment, must be emailed to the instructor (tonyjames@ucla.edu) on or before the indicated due date.

<i>Week (Date)</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Week 1 (03/03)	Introduction to Urban Economics and Cities		Assignment 1: Prezi Self-Bio and News Article Comparison	Sunday, 3/15
Week 2 (03/10)	Why do Cities Exist?	O'Sullivan Ch. 2		
Week 3 (03/17)	Why do Firms Cluster ?	O'Sullivan Ch. 3		
Week 4 (03/24)	Agglomeration Economies		Assignment 2: Prezi Agglomeration Cluster Map with Partner	Sunday, 4/12
Week 5 (03/31)	City Size	O'Sullivan Ch. 4		
Week 6 (04/07)	Urban Growth and (Uneven) Development	O'Sullivan Ch. 5	Review for Quiz 1	
Week 7 (04/14)	Regional Innovation and Competitiveness		Quiz 1 (In-Class)	
Week 8 (04/21)	Land Use Patterns and "Urban Sprawl"	O'Sullivan Ch. 7	Make Groups and Plan for Final Project: Proposal Topic	Sunday, 4/26
Week 9 (04/28)	Education and Human Capital	O'Sullivan Ch. 12	Group Planning for Final Project: Proposal Outline	Sunday, 5/17
Week 10 (05/05)	Urban Crime, Poverty and Inequality	O'Sullivan Ch. 13	Assignment 3: Urban Snapshots Project with Partner	Sunday, 05/24
Week 11 (05/12)	Urban Environmental Issues			
Week 12 (05/19)	Housing Policy	O'Sullivan Chs. 14 & 15	Group Planning for Final Project: Rough Draft	Sunday, 06/07
Week 13 (05/26)	The Role of Local Government	O'Sullivan Ch. 16	Review Quiz 2	
Week 14 (06/02)	Local Government Revenue Collection	O'Sullivan Ch. 17	Quiz 2 (In-Class)	
Week 15 (06/09)	Group Presentations (1)			
Week 16 (06/16)	Group Presentations (2)		Group Final Project	TBA

Disclaimer: Subsequent changes may be made to any aspect or detail of this syllabus if and when necessary. Any changes will be announced in class as soon as possible.