Economics 4011 - Intermediate Microeconomic Theory

Professor: Jonathan Weinstein
Seigle 382
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Fall 2019
Lectures MW 1:00-2:20 PM, McDonnell 162. Recitation (optional) F 1-2:20, TBA.
Class Website: on Canvas

Books:
Textbook: Varian, “Intermediate Microeconomics,” 9th edition, or “Intermediate Microeconomics with Calculus,” 1st edition. (These are 95% equivalent.) All course material will be covered in lecture; about 75% is also covered in Varian, so it makes a very useful supplement.
Supplemental Reading: Harford, “The Undercover Economist.” We will occasionally discuss excerpts from this book.

Quarter-term (45 minutes): In class, Wednesday, September 18.
Midterm (80 minutes): In class, Wednesday, October 9.
Final (120 minutes): Period XXIII.

Office Hours
Tuesdays, 1:30 – 3 PM, Seigle Hall 382. Please email me to set up an appointment if you cannot meet at that time.

Assistants and Office Hours
TBA

Grading
Exams 70%=15%+25%+30%, Homework 28%, Participation 2%. Usually about half the class receives A grades, and about 40% of the class B grades. This is, of course, subject to change. Participation consists of loading the MobLab application for mobile
device or laptop and participating in at least half the questions and activities during the term. The lowest homework score will be dropped.

Material

In the first week or two, we will review standard supply and demand diagrams and their use to analyze the impact of taxes and externalities, as well as the contrast between monopolies and competitive markets. This is roughly Chapters 1, 16, 25 and 35 in Varian.

In the next 5-6 weeks, we will cover “Choice Theory,” also called the “Theory of Demand,” following fairly closely (but not exhaustively) Chapters 2-9 of Varian. Individual choice, or optimization, is the cornerstone of economic theory. This will prepare us to study Exchange (Ch. 32), the theory of the fundamentals of mutually beneficial trade. This will take us to the midterm.

After the midterm we will cover game theory and its many applications, including the Prisoner’s Dilemma, auctions, oligopoly, bargaining, and the obstacles to trade posed by asymmetric information. Some (but not all) of these lectures are covered in Chapters 28-30 in the book.

The lectures and homework problems are the overriding guide defining the knowledge and skills expected in the class. The textbook is a useful supplement.