

# Course Syllabus for EC 4710 (Spring 2021)

## Labor & Human Resource Economics

Dr. Laura Connolly

### Office Hours & Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Laura Connolly

Office: 125 Academic Office Building (first floor)

Office Hours: F2F: Tues/Thurs, 3:30 – 4:15 PM & by appointment (virtual if remote only)

Zoom: Tues/Thurs, 4:15 – 5 PM & by appointment (Zoom link [here](#) & on Canvas)

\*I am available to meet outside of office hours; please email me to set up a time to meet.

E-mail: [leconn@mtu.edu](mailto:leconn@mtu.edu)

\*I do my best to respond to emails within one business day, often much sooner if your email is sent during regular working hours (weekdays 8 AM – 5 PM). I appreciate your patience.

Office Phone: (906) 487-2809

### Course Information

Course Number: EC4710-0A

Course Location: FISHER 101

Class Times: TR 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Prerequisites: EC 2001

Course Website: Canvas

HASS Learning Goal: #8 - Social Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning ([Rubric](#))

### Course Description (MTU Course Catalog)

Economic analysis of labor markets and human resources. Topics include the supply and demand for labor, wage determination, human capital theory, returns to education and training, causes of wage differentials, and economic effects of discrimination. Note: Course content, assignments, syllabus, deadlines, etc. are subject to change at the discretion of the professor. All changes will be communicated via Canvas.

### Course Learning Objectives

The purpose of this class is to learn the modern theory of labor market behavior and how this theory is applied to analyze public policies. This course presents the concepts and models for understanding labor supply and labor demand. Then, the course develops these concepts in order to analyze topics of special interest in labor economics. These topics include: pay and productivity, labor discrimination, collective bargaining, unemployment, earnings inequality, and the effects of COVID-19 on the labor market.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Explain the market process of wage determination through the interaction of labor supply and labor demand.
- (2) Describe how various labor institutions and the government influence the operation of labor markets.
- (3) Analyze the impact of labor market imperfections and various public policies on wages and incentives to work.
- (4) Engage in substantive discussions of labor economics to make informed judgements about the causes, implications, and possible policy responses to various labor market phenomena.

I hope that you will work hard, actively participate, ask questions, and perform to the best of your ability. Active participation makes the lectures more enjoyable for all of us. This course requires you to engage with the material outside of class. However, the purpose of this course is to teach you something about labor economics, not to destroy your GPA.

## **Pandemic Objectives**

This semester will look a little different than what we are used to in the classroom. As we navigate the semester, it is important for us to keep this in mind and be sure to:

- (1) Be patient and kind with ourselves and each other.
- (2) Do our best, knowing that this will probably look different than other terms.
- (3) Communicate openly and clearly. Tell me what you need; I'll tell you how I can help.
- (4) Be flexible. We're all a bit anxious. Circumstances will likely change over the semester.  
Let's work together to make this the best class possible, recognizing this may be a moving target.

## **Required Texts**

*Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*. 13<sup>th</sup> Edition by Ehrenberg, R. & Smith, R.,  
Published by Routledge, 2017 (ISBN-13: 978-1-138-21815-4)      \*You may also use the 12<sup>th</sup> edition

## **Course Outline**

- Topic 1: Introduction
- Topic 2: Labor Demand
- Topic 3: Labor Supply
- Topic 4: Human Capital
- Topic 5: Worker Mobility
- Topic 6: Pay and Productivity
- Topic 7: Wage Differences & Inequality
- Topic 8: Unemployment
- Topic 9: Special Topics

\* Additional topics will be covered if time permits.

## Homework

There will be regular homework assignments throughout the semester to help you achieve the mastery level necessary for exams. Homework assignments and due dates will be announced in class at least one week prior to the deadline. They will be graded based on your effort and completion using the Homework Rubric, which will be posted to the Canvas home page.

## Essay

There will be one essay assignment requiring students to use concepts learned in class to analyze current topics in labor economics. More information about the essay assignment will be provided in class at the appropriate time.

## Exams

Exams are necessary to assess your mastery of course material. There will be two exams in this course; your highest exam score will count towards 25% of your final grade, and the other exam will count towards 20% of the final grade. More information on exams will be provided at the appropriate time. Exam dates are as follows:

**Exam 1:** Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Exam 2:** TBD – scheduled by the university during the week of April 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>

## Debates

There will be two “mini” in-class debates during the semester on current topics in labor economics. You will be graded on your preparation and participation in each debate -- once as a debate participant and once as an audience participant. More information on the debates, including debate topics, will be provided later in the semester. The format and structure of the debates will depend on the number of students enrolled in the course and the modality of instruction required at that time. The tentative date for debates is Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism

If you become ill, suspect that you have been exposed or have a known exposure to COVID-19, please stay home to protect others from infection. While in class F2F, you are expected to wear a mask at all times, arrive on time, participate in class discussions and assignments, and ask questions. We are likely to experience disruptions this semester and you will likely miss a few classes – you can get any missed material from one of your classmates and/or from the appropriate sections in the textbook. **Please send all documentation for excused absences (more than 3 consecutive days or if you missed a major assignment or exam) to the Dean of Students Office.** I will communicate regularly with you all through Canvas, primarily via announcements. Please note that you are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and

material presented in class and on Canvas. While there is no attendance policy, excessive absences will affect your class participation/professionalism grade. Email me your favorite book by the first Friday of the semester for one extra credit point on your final grade.

It is expected that you will respect your classmates and the instructor while in class. We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and where both they and their ideas are treated with respect.

## Grading Policy

Evaluation for this course will be based upon the following categories:

- Exams – 45%
- Homework Assignments – 20%
- Essay – 15%
- Debates – 10%
- Participation/Professionalism – 10%

I will regularly post grades to Canvas. **If you feel that you were not fairly graded on something, please submit a written request (feel free to email me) for a re-grade within one week from the date grades are posted for that assignment.** Requesting a re-grade does not guarantee additional points, but I make mistakes from time to time and am happy to correct them when you bring them to my attention.

If you are having difficulty with any of the course material, have questions regarding your performance in the course, or have any related concerns, please meet with me during office hours or set up an alternative meeting time by email. Please do not let a problem build up or wait until the end of the semester to ask for help. I have weekly office hours so please take advantage of them.

The grading scale used in the course is outlined below.

<b>A</b> 93 – 100	<b>B</b> 83 – 86.99	<b>C</b> 73 – 76.99	<b>D</b> 60 – 66.99
<b>AB</b> 87-92.99	<b>BC</b> 77 – 82.99	<b>CD</b> 67 – 72.99	<b>F</b> 0 – 59.99

## Policies on Missed Exams & Coursework

You must take the exams when scheduled. I do my best to forewarn you well in advance of the exam dates and I hope that you will schedule your time accordingly and make arrangements for other potential conflicts. If you must miss an exam for a university sanctioned reason, please contact me at least one week prior to the exam unless it is an emergency/unexpected reason. In this event (including COVID), please contact me as soon as possible prior to the start of the

exam. ***In order to take a makeup exam, you must provide proper documentation from the Dean of Students Office for your absence.***

All assignments and activities must be submitted before the deadline. However, I also understand that life happens sometimes. Therefore, you may submit ONE late assignment within 48 hours of the deadline for 75% partial credit or within 72 hours for 50% partial credit. Any additional late assignments earn zero points. ***Please note that an excused absence for only the due date of an assignment does NOT excuse you from submitting the assignment on time.*** The assignments are posted well in advance of the deadline and can all be completed early.

## **Technology Policy**

Electronics should be used for class-related activities. **If you prefer to spend your time in class checking email, texting, updating your fantasy football team, online shopping, etc. please sit in the back of the classroom to minimize distraction to other students.** While we all like to think we are good multi-taskers, research shows that we can only focus on one thing at a time.

We will frequently use a calculator in class. You will need a calculator that can do basic power functions. Please note that you may not use your cell phone as a calculator on exams.

Technology is a big part of our world today and can be very convenient. For example, email makes it easy for us to communicate with each other. I do ask for your patience if I have not yet responded to your email.

## **Academic Integrity**

You are encouraged to work together with other students to study course material and learn how to complete assignments. **However, you are responsible for all answers submitted in your name on any graded assignment.** You may work with other students to learn how to do these assignments, but the answers you submit for graded assignments must be your own.

**You are also responsible for all answers you submit on exams.** You are expected to complete each exam individually with no help from anyone else. You may not communicate with anyone else, either inside or outside of the classroom during exams. This includes any means of communication such as cell phones, smart watches, or any other wireless device.

Any violation of these, and other reasonable standards of conduct, will be subject to disciplinary action. The first offense will result in a score of zero for that exam or assignment. Any additional offense will result in a failing grade for the entire course and I will file a report with the Dean of Students Office. We all have bad days and I understand that it is frustrating to not achieve your desired grade. However, the consequences of cheating will only make both of our days worse and simply aren't worth it in the long run. One bad test grade will not ruin your grade for the entire semester (I promise).

Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic misconduct cases will be handled in accordance with the University's policies. For more details on academic integrity, please review [Michigan Tech's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

## Disability Services

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in any class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor or Disability Services at 906-487-1494 as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Students requiring accommodations due to a documented disability must provide me with notification of needed accommodations no later than five business days prior to the use of the accommodations. In situations where fewer than five days' notice is given, the instructor is encouraged, but not obligated, to provide accommodations. The instructor will determine, in consultation with the Testing Center in the Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning, whether these accommodations can be met.

Students who have an accommodation for extended time allowed on tests shall not be required to spend more than six hours per calendar day in final examinations. For a student with an accommodation for extended time, this may reduce the limit on examinations per day to less than the normal limit of three. To resolve time conflicts between two overlapping exams (either regular exams or final examinations), the current practices of the University shall be followed. If you have an exam scheduling conflict, please contact me **at least one week in advance of the original exam date in order to schedule a makeup exam.**

## University Policies

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help or to find additional resources, contact Counseling Services at 906-487-2538 or visit the [Counseling Services website](#).

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

For more information about reasonable accommodations or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office at 906-487-2212. More information is also available from the [Syllabi Policies webpage](#).

## **COVID-19**

All students are expected to comply with University protocols in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19, which include wearing a face covering indoors at all times and maintaining six-foot social distancing whenever possible.

Students not in compliance with the face covering protocol may be asked to leave class until they are able to comply. Students unable to medically tolerate a face covering should contact [Student Disability Services](#) to explore possible accommodations. Chronically noncompliant or disruptive students may be reported to the [Office of Academic and Community Conduct](#).