



# Labor & Human Resource Economics

## Course Syllabus

### Course Information

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Class Location: | Chem Sci 101  |
| Class Time:     | Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM  |
| Textbook:       | <i>Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy</i> , 13 <sup>th</sup> Edition by Ehrenberg & Smith. 13 <sup>th</sup> edition. Rutledge, 2017. (Recommended)<br>*The 12 <sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook is also fine. |
| Course Website: | Canvas -- assignments, grades, lecture materials, due dates, etc. Please check Canvas announcements regularly for changes and information.  |

### Office Hours & Contact Information

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|---------------|---|
| Instructor:   | Dr. Laura Connolly  |
| Office:       | 125 Academic Office Building (first floor)  |
| Office Hours: | Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 AM (F2F) & by appointment<br>*Please request office hours appointment (F2F or virtual) at least 24 hours in advance. |
| E-mail:       | <a href="mailto:leconn@mtu.edu">leconn@mtu.edu</a> -- <b>PLEASE INCLUDE "EC 4710" IN SUBJECT LINE</b>   |
| Office Phone: | (906) 487-2809  |

### Email & Instructor Availability

I check email between 9 AM – 6 PM each weekday. I do my best to respond to messages within one business day (often a few hours). I will respond to messages received outside of these hours once I am back online. I appreciate your patience. Please plan ahead before deadlines.

### 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, etc. are subject to change at the discretion of the professor. All changes will be communicated via Canvas and in class.

### Course Learning Objectives

The purpose of this class is to learn the theory of labor market behavior and to analyze public policies and current labor market conditions. How do firms determine the number of workers to hire and what wage to pay each worker? How do workers respond to changes in labor policies? We will dive into current issues that affect workers in today's labor market including: immigration, minimum wages, occupational safety standards, education and worker training, unions, technological change, discrimination, and wage differentials.

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

- (1) Determine market wages using the interaction of labor supply and labor demand.
- (2) Describe how various labor institutions and the government influence labor markets.
- (3) Analyze the impact of imperfections, frictions, and public policies on labor market outcomes, including wages and incentives to work.
- (4) Engage in substantive discussions to make informed recommendations about the causes, implications, and possible policy responses to various labor market phenomena.

### Responsibilities & Expectations

| What I Expect of You:  | What You Should Expect of Me:  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend class, participate, &amp; ask questions</li> <li>• Come to class prepared (complete before class assignments and check ins)</li> <li>• Engage with content and others in class (take notes, work examples, contribute to group activities, etc.)</li> <li>• Regularly check Canvas for resources, grades, assignments, information, etc.</li> <li>• Respect everyone and their ideas</li> <li>• Ask for help when you need it</li> <li>• Complete your work honestly</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared for class every day</li> <li>• Bring current events into class discussions and assignments</li> <li>• Respect you, your ideas, and your time</li> <li>• Clearly communicate expectations, assignments, grading, and course changes</li> <li>• Post grades to Canvas in a timely manner (within one week)</li> <li>• Be available to help you via email, during office hours, and other meeting times.</li> <li>• Be open to feedback on course content and structure</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |

### Grading Policies

Your course grade will be based on several categories: Homework Assignments (20%), Essay/Paper (20%), Before Class Check Ins (20%), Group Presentation (10%), Journal Article Reviews (10%), and Participation, Preparation, & Professionalism (20%). 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> 62 – 66.99 |
| <b>AB</b> 87-92.99 | <b>BC</b> 77 – 82.99 | <b>CD</b> 67 – 72.99 | <b>F</b> 0 – 61.99  |

I will regularly post grades to Canvas. If you feel that you were not fairly graded on something, please request a regrade within one week from the date grades are posted for that assignment (email is fine). Requesting a re-grade does not guarantee additional points, but I make mistakes from time to time and I 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 course content or your grades, or have any related concerns, please meet with me during office hours or set up an alternative meeting time by email. I am available to help you throughout the semester. Please let me know if you have questions, need help, or have a problem – please do not let an issue build up or wait until the end of the semester to ask for help.

## **Homework**

There will be regular homework assignments throughout the semester to help you better understand the course content. Homework assignments and due dates will be announced in class at least one week prior to the deadline. Homework assignments will be graded based on your effort and completion (50%) and the accuracy of your answers (50%).

## **Essay/Paper**

There will be one essay/paper assignment that requires you to use concepts learned in class to analyze a current topic in labor economics. There will be at least one check in assignment to help you outline your essay before the final essay is due. More information about the essay assignment and grading rubric will be provided in class later this semester.

## **Before Class Check Ins**

You will regularly listen to podcasts and read short articles throughout the semester (~at least one per week). Many podcasts and articles will have a check in assignment on Canvas (questions related to think about and answer before class). Similarly, some in class examples or exercises may need to be finished outside of class -- a before class check in will be posted to Canvas for you to upload your completed example/work. I will drop your lowest before class check in at the end of the semester (i.e. you get one free pass).

## **Group Presentations/Discussions**

The last week of class will be dedicated to group presentations/group-led discussions related to current topics in labor economics. More information about the group presentations and grading rubric will be provided later this semester.

## **Journal Article Reviews**

There will be two journal article review assignments that require you to read a peer-reviewed journal article, synthesize the information, and write a brief review of the article (I will provide a few choices, or you can choose your own article subject to my approval). These articles and reviews will expose you to research related to labor economics and provide more context for labor market issues in the real world.

## **Participation, Preparation, and Professionalism (PPP)**

The small class format is rooted in everyone contributing to a positive learning environment both in and out of the classroom. This is captured through your participation, preparation, and professionalism throughout the semester.

*Participation* reflects your engagement with me, your peers, and the course material in the classroom. There are many ways to participate: attend class, ask/answer questions, take part in class discussions, try to work through in class examples/exercises, engage with classmates/group members, etc. Please note that it is difficult to participate if you are often absent.

*Preparation* reflects your completion of assignments outside of class and related contributions in class. Individual students or groups may be asked to share their perspective on articles, podcasts, and before class check ins that should be completed and synthesized prior to class. Preparedness is not the delivery of right versus wrong answers, but the ability to contribute to the class discussion. Each student has one pass that may be used on the day of your choice if you are unprepared; additional instances of unpreparedness will be reflected in your grade.

*Professionalism* reflects the respectfulness of your behavior, comments, and communications in and outside of the classroom. Arrive to class on time, communicate absences in advance, and respect others and their ideas. This doesn't mean we will agree on all labor market issues and policies, but we can express disagreement in a respectful manner. Professional behavior also includes using electronics for class purposes. If you or your use of electronics becomes distracting to others, you may be asked to sit at the back of the classroom or leave class for the day.

### **Absences & Late Assignments**

While I expect you to attend class regularly, illness, family emergencies, etc. are unfortunately a part of life, and you may need to miss a class or two. If you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19, please stay home. If you miss class, please get missed material from a classmate, read the appropriate sections in the textbook, or check out resources posted to Canvas. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and material presented in class and on Canvas (even if you are absent). I highly recommend exchanging contact information with at least one other student in the class.

Please send all documentation for excused absences, 3+ consecutive days or if your absence conflicts with a major graded assignment, to the Dean of Students Office. If your excused absence impacts your ability to complete coursework on time, please reach out to me directly (email is easiest) to discuss alternative arrangements/deadlines.

*Late Assignments:* Each student may submit one late assignment (unexcused) within 48 hours of the deadline without penalty. Any additional unexcused late assignments will be subject to a 10% deduction per day (ex: 0-24 hours late = 10%; 24-48 hours late = 20%, etc.). If you are only excused for the date an assignment is due, you are still expected to submit the assignment on time.

### **Academic Integrity**

Ethical behavior is a pillar of the business world and academic dishonesty is not tolerated in the College of Business. Any violation of [Michigan Tech's Academic Integrity Policies](#) will be subject to disciplinary action. Academic misconduct cases will be handled in accordance with the University's policies. The first offense will result in a score of zero for that assignment and possible referral to the Office of Academic and Community Conduct. Any additional offense will result in a failing grade for the entire course and referral to the Office of Academic and Community Conduct. We all have bad days, but the consequences of cheating aren't worth it in the long run -- please don't do it.

You are encouraged to work with classmates in and outside of class to better understand course material and learn how to complete assignments. All individual answers submitted in your name must be your own (i.e. you can explain and provide appropriate work for how you reached that answer). Please make sure to appropriately cite any authorized resources used on assignments. You should refrain from using artificial intelligence (AI) to generate text or responses to graded assignments (unless permitted in the assignment instructions).

## University Policies

Student work products may be used for university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification. Student work products may be used to assess University Learning Goal #8: Social Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning with this rubric: <https://www.mtu.edu/assessment/documents/university-goals/goal-8-rubric.pdf>

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, contact Counseling Services at 906-487-2538 or visit the [Counseling Services website](#) for help or to find additional resources.

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](#). Please provide me with notification of needed accommodations no later than five business days prior to the use of the accommodations.

## Course Outline

The tentative course outline is below. More details on the course schedule will be provided throughout the semester. Please note that course content, assignments, deadlines, etc. will all be communicated in class and on Canvas. Any course changes will be also communicated to students both in class and via Canvas.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Topic 1: Labor Demand                    | Weeks 1 - 2   |
| Topic 2: Labor Supply                    | Weeks 3 - 4   |
| Topic 3: Compensating Wage Differentials | Weeks 5 - 6   |
| Topic 4: Human Capital                   | Weeks 6 - 7   |
| Topic 5: Worker Mobility                 | Weeks 8 - 9   |
| Topic 6: Pay and Productivity            | Weeks 9 - 10  |
| Topic 7: Wage Differences & Inequality   | Weeks 10 - 11 |
| Topic 8: Unions                          | Weeks 11 - 12 |
| Topic 9: Unemployment                    | Weeks 12 - 13 |
| Group Presentations                      | Week 14       |

Note: It is assumed that students understand basic supply and demand concepts learned in EC 2001. Additional topics will be covered if time permits.