

# ECON 3332: Intermediate Microeconomics

## Fall 2020 Course Syllabus

Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00-2:30pm

---

Instructor: **Professor Aimee Chin** (best way to contact me is by email: [achin@uh.edu](mailto:achin@uh.edu); some info about me here: [www.uh.edu/~achin](http://www.uh.edu/~achin))  
Office: McElhinney Room 221B (but we will not hold meetings in my office this semester)  
Office hours: Open office hours Fridays 1:00-1:30pm (use our usual Teams meeting link); meetings at other times must be arranged in advance by email

### Description

In this course, we will explore the foundations of microeconomic theory, focusing on the behavior of individuals and firms, and the interaction of these agents in the market. We will also examine the effects of government policies, market power and externalities on market efficiency.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will attain, through lectures, readings and problem sets, knowledge of the building blocks of economic analysis.
- Students will develop, through lectures, readings and problem sets, some tools to analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
- Problem sets and exams will enable students to apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving and technical proficiency in economics.

### Summary Table of the Digital Tools for our Course

The digital tool	How we will use it
Microsoft Teams (part of UH Office 365)  Use the same Teams meeting link for all our class meetings unless I inform you otherwise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To hold our online class meetings during our scheduled class time</li><li>• Audio rules: The default will be to have everyone muted and select unmute only while speaking.</li><li>• Video rules: For class meetings with an exam, you must keep your video on during the exam to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration. Your video is optional for our other class meetings.</li></ul>
SaplingPlus course website; go to <a href="http://www.saplinglearning.com/login">www.saplinglearning.com/login</a> for access (see below for details)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To use our textbook</li><li>• To use digital resources that go with the textbook</li><li>• To do the graded problem sets</li><li>• To see the course announcements (e.g., regarding assignments and exams)</li><li>• To get lecture slides</li></ul>
Microsoft Word (part of UH Office 365)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To type your responses directly into Word file containing exam questions</li><li>• You will email saved Word file containing your responses to me to be graded</li></ul>

Notes: (1) We are *not* using Blackboard for this course.

(2) I do not regularly monitor voice/text messages sent to me via voicemail, SaplingPlus, Blackboard, or Teams. If you need to contact me, please send me an email ([achin@uh.edu](mailto:achin@uh.edu)).

## Textbook and Other Course Materials

- I have set up a SaplingPlus course website that contains our textbook (*Microeconomics*, Austan Goolsbee, Steven Levitt and Chad Syverson, Third Edition, 2020, Worth Publishers), problem sets, and other learning resources. This SaplingPlus digital product is REQUIRED for our ECON 3332 course. It costs \$99.99+tax, and is the only item you need to purchase for this course.
- STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS for accessing the SaplingPlus digital product:
  1. Go to [www.saplinglearning.com/login](http://www.saplinglearning.com/login) to create an account. If you already have a Macmillan Learning account, you can log in with your existing credentials and skip to step 3.
  2. How to create an account: Create your password. For the “Primary School or Institution” name field, select “University of Houston” in the drop-down menu. Set all three security questions, accept the terms of use and then click “Create Account”. Check your email for the confirmation link to complete your registration and return to the login page.
  3. How to enroll in this course: Under “Enroll in a New Course”, you should see “Courses at University of Houston”. Click to expand this list and see courses arranged by subject. Click on “Intermediate Microeconomics” to expand the menu further, then click on “Semester 1”. Once the menus are fully expanded, you’ll see a link to our specific course “**University of Houston - ECON 3332 - Fall20 - CHIN**”. Click on the link with instructor Aimee Chin to enroll in this course. You can either pay immediately or enter this course for 14 days free.
  4. Once you enter our SaplingPlus course site, you will see our eTextbook in the right sidebar (clicking on the image of the book cover will give you access to our textbook), and you will see our assignments in the center panel. Please note I do not list all assignments for the entire course at once; instead, the assignments will appear in SaplingPlus as we go along.

## Prerequisites

All students should have completed ECON 2304. Additionally, you must have a good command of high school algebra and graphical analysis; if you do not meet this prerequisite and you choose to take this course, then it is your responsibility to work on your math skills in order to be able to follow the materials taught in this course.

## Requirements and Grading

Each student’s cumulative score for this course will be based on class attendance and performance on problem sets and exams with the weights given in the grading table below. This cumulative score will then be mapped into a letter grade at end of the course.

1) Problem Sets	11 problem sets, with the lowest <i>two</i> scores dropped	27%
2) Exam 1	Wednesday, September 30, 1:00-2:30pm	18%
3) Exam 2	Wednesday, November 4, 1:00-2:30pm	18%
4) Final Exam	Monday, December 14, 2:00-5:00pm	30%
5) Attendance	Attendance in lecture throughout semester	7%
		<hr/> <hr/> 100%

**Problem Sets:** Problem sets will be assigned and submitted through the SaplingPlus course site. Assignments labeled “Graded Problem Set” are what you must submit to receive credit for problem sets. You are allowed and encouraged to work on problem sets with classmates. You may work on problem

sets any time prior to the deadline, either in a single session or multiple sessions—just remember to save your answer as you do each question so that when you return to that problem set later, your answers from previous sessions will appear. Your answers must be submitted before the deadline for you to receive credit. Solutions to graded problem sets are available immediately after the deadline. You should examine the solutions after the deadline to review any areas of confusion or questions marked incorrect. Note I cannot give deadline extensions for the problem sets; however, I do drop the lowest two problem set grades, which gives you some flexibility in handling unexpected events.

***Exams:*** Exams will draw on material from lectures, problem sets and the textbook. They will be open-book exams, and the specific resources you are allowed to use during the exam are your notes and our SaplingPlus course site. No other resources, online or offline, are allowed. Your exam responses must be your own individual work; you are not allowed to work on exams with others in any way, and this includes but is not limited to helping others, receiving help from others, working together and sharing responses. Note that each exam will be administered during a Teams class meeting, and you must keep your video on with your face visible during the entire exam to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration. Additionally, students must sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of exams for this course: “I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the University of Houston Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy. I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston.” If you are not prepared to keep your video on during exams, or sign this honor code statement, or abide by our university’s academic honesty policy described below, then you should not enroll in this course.

Generally, you get a score of zero when you miss an exam, but in certain situations a make-up exam is possible; email me immediately if you expect to miss an exam or have missed an exam and a brief reason for missing it, and I will respond.

***Attendance:*** Students are expected to attend every lecture and participate in lecture activities, subject to the Excused Absence Policy described below. Note that the lectures contain the material you are expected to know, and the textbook is not a perfect substitute for the lectures.

To prepare for possible disruptions to student schedules due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I plan to record our Monday and Wednesday lectures. A link to each lecture’s video will be available in Microsoft Teams under the team name for our class (“ECON 3332 Chin Fall 2020”; clicking on the link will take you to a Microsoft Stream video). In the case of a missed lecture, the student is advised to review the lecture slides, video recording and textbook readings associated with the missed lecture.

I will check attendance by downloading the participant list during each of our Teams class meetings, which gives the name, arrival time and leaving time for each participant. To give you some flexibility in handling unexpected events: (1) excused absences occurring under the UH Excused Absence Policy described below will not be counted against the attendance part of your grade; (2) you are allowed to miss up to 4 lectures (on top of the aforementioned excused absences) without a penalty to the attendance part of your grade. If you have more than 4 unexcused absences, or you regularly arrive late or leave early, then the attendance part of your grade will be reduced from the full 7%. Regardless of whether your absences are excused or unexcused, or expected to receive a grade penalty or not, it is your responsibility to review the material from missed lectures.

## General Policies

- *Our Class Meetings:* We will meet every Monday and Wednesday between August 24 and (Thanksgiving break). Lectures will begin at 1:00pm and end at 2:20pm. I will usually join our Teams video conference by 12:55pm and stay on until 2:30pm.
- *Academic Honesty:* To cultivate an environment of academic integrity, the University of Houston expects students to abide by the University's Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy, found in the Undergraduate Catalog (<http://www.uh.edu/academic-honesty-undergraduate> ).
- *Student Code of Conduct:* Students are expected to abide by the University of Houston's Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>).
- *Sexual Misconduct Policy:* In accordance with the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. More information can be found on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/> .
- *Students with Disabilities:* The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to students who request them. Students seeking accommodation must register with the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](https://uh.edu/csd/) (<https://uh.edu/csd/> ) and present approved documentation to me as soon as possible. I can make accommodations only if given advance notice.
- *Counseling and Psychological Services:* Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS; [www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) is available for students having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or somebody you know is in crisis. The "Let's Talk" program provides a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus (<https://uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets-talk/index.php#hours> ).
- *Excused Absence Policy:* Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).
- *Interim Undergraduate Grading Policy:* Due to the unique and unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Houston has implemented an [Interim Undergraduate Grade Policy](#) (<https://uh.edu/provost/policies-resources/covid19/> ) for undergraduate grades which applies to all undergraduate students in courses offered in all sessions during fall 2020. Under this policy, students have the option of converting final assigned letter grades to S (Satisfactory, applicable to any letter grade from A to D-) or NCR (No Credit

Reported COVID-19, applicable to grades of F) on their transcripts. Please visit [FAQs](#) for additional information.

- *Recording of Class*: Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](https://uh.edu/csd/) (<https://uh.edu/csd/>). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.
- *Syllabus Changes*: Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email and announcement on our SaplingPlus course site.

## Course Outline and Schedule *(subject to minor changes)*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Corresponding Textbook Chapters</i>	<i>Problem Set Due End of Week (Sat.)?</i>	
1	8/24	Lecture 1	Introduction	1 & 2		
	8/26	Lecture 2	Overview of the Supply and Demand Model	2	No	
2	8/31	Lecture 3	Consumer Theory: Preferences	4		
	9/2	Lecture 4	Consumer Theory: Budget Constraint	4	PS1 due 9/5	
3	9/7	<i>No lecture, Labor Day</i>				
	9/9	Lecture 5	Consumer Theory: Optimal Choice	4	PS2 due 9/12	
4	9/14	Lecture 6	Consumer Theory: Individual Demand	5		
	9/16	Lecture 7	Consumer Theory: Market Demand	5	PS3 due 9/19	
5	9/21	Lecture 8	Consumer Theory: Extensions 1	Parts of 14, 13.2		
	9/23	Lecture 9	Consumer Theory: Extensions 2	Parts of 14, 13.2	PS4 due 9/26	
6	9/28	Lecture 10	Consumer Theory: Extensions 3	Parts of 14, 13.2		
	<b>9/30</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>			No	
7	10/5	Lecture 11	Producer Theory: Technology	6		
	10/7	Lecture 12	Producer Theory: Costs	6	PS5 due 10/10	
8	10/12	Lecture 13	Producer Theory: Cost Minimization	6, 7		
	10/14	Lecture 14	Producer Theory: Profit Maximization 1	7, 8	PS6 due 10/17	
9	10/19	Lecture 15	Producer Theory: Profit Maximization 2	8		
	10/21	Lecture 16	Competitive Market Equilibrium: Properties	3, 15	PS7 due 10/24	
10	10/26	Lecture 17	Comp Mkt Eqbm: Policy Interventions 1	3		
	10/28	Lecture 18	Comp Mkt Eqbm: Policy Interventions 2	3	PS8 due 10/31	
11	11/2	Lecture 19	Imperfect Competition 1	9		
	<b>11/4</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>			No	
12	11/9	Lecture 20	Imperfect Competition 2	9		
	11/11	Lecture 21	Imperfect Competition 3	10	PS9 due 11/14	
13	11/16	Lecture 22	Asymmetric Information	16		
	11/18	Lecture 23	Externalities 1	17	PS10 due 11/21	
14	11/23	Lecture 24	Externalities 2	17		
	11/25	<i>No lecture, Thanksgiving break</i>			No	
15	11/30	Lecture 25	Public Goods	17		
	12/2	Lecture 26	Review		PS11 due 12/5	
<b>***</b>	<b>12/14</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM on Monday December 14 from 2:00-5:00pm</b> Our time slot for the final exam is assigned by the University of Houston.				