

**Economics 9300 – Urban Economics Seminar
Spring 2017**

Instructor:

Dr. Carlianne Patrick

Office: 14 Marietta Street (Andrew Young School of Policy Studies), Room 427

Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 pm Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

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Course Meeting:

Tuesdays 4:30-7:00 pm, Langdale Hall 227

Course Content:

This course will primarily be focused on the study of *where* economic activity takes place and *why* economic agents (individuals, firms, and governments) choose to locate near each other and in certain areas. We will also study economic activity that is inherently place-based such as the housing market and local government policy. Urban economic theory tries to explain observed phenomena and, as such, evolves in response to empirical work. Empirical work relies heavily on theory to clarify mechanisms, generate specifications, draw attention to identification problems and solutions, and make testable predictions. The course will build a solid foundation in urban economic theory, while retaining a strong empirical orientation. Students will be introduced to the concepts upon which modern urban economics is built as well as topics on the field's current research frontier. Certain models and topics are left for the companion field course ECON 9330. The urban economics field is expansive and there is far too much to cover in one or two courses. Thus, the course(s) should not be considered a comprehensive survey of the field. The course will help students build the skills necessary to conduct research in the field and progress in their academic career.

Text:

Cities, Agglomeration and Spatial Equilibrium, Edward Glaeser (not required).

The primary texts for the course will be academic papers. The course reading list is available on iCollege. **Students will be responsible for locating copies of academic papers on the reading list.** Academic papers that appear as book chapters will be available on e-reserve whenever possible.

Prerequisites:

ECON 8100, Microeconomic Analysis

Important Dates:

2/21 – Deadline to meet with me regarding paper topic and review article

2/28 – Last day to withdraw

3/7 – Referee Report Due

3/14 – Spring Break, no classes

4/4 – Take-home exam (due by 7 p.m. via email or under office door)

4/11 & 4/18 – Original Research Presentations

6/16 – Term Paper Due by 5 p.m. (email or under office door)

Grading:

Students will initially be assigned an I, incomplete, for Spring 2017. After turning in their original research paper by June 16, 2017, students will be assigned a final letter grade from the University letter scale: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F. The final letter will replace the I. The final letter grade will be assigned based on student performance on assignments, and exams with the following weight:

10% Referee Report(s)

15% In-Class Discussion

15% Reading List Presentation and Discussant Comments

25% Take-home exam

35% Term Paper and Presentation

Referee Reports:

You must pick a recent working paper to referee. A good strategy is to pick a working paper related to your term paper topic. You are required to get pre-approval for your working paper. The expectation will be that students write a professional report that could be sent to a journal editor. The referee report will consist of a letter to the editor summarizing your report and recommendation (usually one page) as well as a separate report for the authors (usually two pages, but sometimes more). Your report should summarize what the paper does; describe whether and why the paper is interesting as well as the main contribution(s); provide constructive criticism and recommendations for improving the paper; and provide a publication recommendation to the editor.

In-Class Discussion:

Students are expected to fully participate in class discussions. Although there will be times when models and concepts are presented in a lecture, I prefer to have the class be an open discussion of the topics and papers on the syllabus. This requires students to read assigned papers before the class period they are discussed. If it becomes apparent that students will not participate in class, I reserve the right to create an incentive structure that will promote participation.

Reading List Presentations and Discussant Comments:

Students will be required to present an article listed on the syllabus. Presentations will be done in a “seminar” format, where students will prepare a presentation and the audience will prepare to ask questions about the research being presented. Presentations are meant to expose Ph.D. students to the seminar style of presentation and to build an intimate knowledge of a particular piece of research. Presentation times and topics will be discussed as the semester evolves. For each paper presented, a different student will be assigned as the “discussant” for the paper. The discussant will be responsible for giving comments and critiquing the paper.

Term Paper:

Students will be expected to write a research paper, due by **5 p.m. on June 16, 2017**. The paper should be an original research undertaking similar to those we discuss in class, with the understanding that time and data are potential constraints. The precise form of the paper will depend upon the on student’s interest in pursuing a dissertation topic in the field.

The paper should be a minimum of 10 typed pages and a maximum of 20 typed pages. Students are required to meet with me to discuss a potential topic before our February 21st class meeting. Students are required to make a presentation on their paper during the final two weeks of class. The presentation will describe the research question, the research design, the paper’s contribution and relationship to the extant literature on the topic, and summarize the data (if applicable).

Exam:

There will be a take-home exam on topics discussed in class. The take-home exam will be distributed in the morning and be due no later than **7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2017**.

Students who wish to request accommodations for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought.

Missed Assignments and Exams:

No make-up exams are given.

No make-up assignments are given.

Late assignments will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy:

Although attendance does not directly affect your grade, your participation in class discussions does. Attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for class participation.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for knowing and following the academic honesty policies of Georgia State University (See Policy on Academic Honesty (Section 409)). All in-class exams in the course are closed-notes, closed-books exams. It is each student's responsibility to avoid any activity that suggests cheating. Please refer to the Georgia State University Code of Conduct (available on-line at: (<http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>) for further explanation of the University policy. Note that any student suspected of academic dishonesty **WILL** be referred to the Dean's Office and prosecuted to the fullest extent of University policy.

All electronic communication devices are to be turned off and made inaccessible during lectures and exams. Video recording and picture taking are prohibited during class meetings and exams. Audio recording is allowed only with the permission of the professor and/or (student) presenter.

Course Evaluations:

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Course Outline

Introduction

January 10: Overview of Concepts and Theories

*Glaeser (2007)

January 17: Overview of Empirical Methods

- i. Experimentalist Approaches
*Angrist and Pishke (2010), Holmes (2010)
- ii. Spatial Approaches
*Gibbons and Overman (2012)

Spatial Equilibrium within Cities

January 24: Monocentric Cities

- i. Alonso-Mills-Muth Model
*Yinger (2006)

January 31: Monocentric Cities

- ii. Hedonics
*Rosen (1974)
- iii. Empirical Tests
●McMillen (1996)

February 7: Heterogeneous Households and Spatial Amenities

- Brueckner, Thisse, and Zenou (1999)
- Suburbanization and Transportation
- Baum-Snow (2007), Duranton and Turner (2012)

Agglomeration

February 14: Agglomeration Theory

*Duranton and Puga (2004)

February 21: Agglomeration Theory

*Ottaviano and Thisse (2004)

February 28: Agglomeration Empirics

*Combes and Gobillon (2015)

March 7: Agglomeration Empirics

●Ellison, Glaeser, and Kerr (2010), Bleakley and Lin (2012), Duranton and Jayet (2011)

Neighborhood Choice

March 11: Local Public Finance and Tiebout Sorting

- Banzhaf and Walsh (2008)

Topic in Urban Economics

March 28: TBD

April 4: Take-Home exam

April 11 and 18: Student Presentations

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.