

## Syllabus – Economics of Work and Pay

ECON 4960, Fall 2017

Tue 1:00-3:30, Classroom South 101

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### Required Text and Readings

R. Ehrenberg and R. Smith [ES], *Modern Labor Economics*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed., 2015, Routledge/Taylor & Francis (previously Pearson Publishers). Support materials are available at:

<http://www.routledgegettextbooks.com/textbooks/9780133462784/student.php>

[http://wps.aw.com/bp\\_ehrensmit\\_mlaborecon\\_12/243/62400/15974613.cw/index.html](http://wps.aw.com/bp_ehrensmit_mlaborecon_12/243/62400/15974613.cw/index.html)

For each chapter, the site contains chapter basics, slides, review questions and problems, and practice quizzes.

All readings other than the text will be posted at <http://unionstats.gsu.edu/4960>. Newspaper and journal articles with \* are required. Other articles are optional. Additional required articles may be added during the semester.

Regular reading of the *New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)), *Wall Street Journal* ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)), or other high quality news sources is recommended. Current events will be discussed in class as time allows.

### Course Goals

The goal of *Economics of Work and Pay* is to enable you to use economic analysis and reasoning to understand wage and employment determination in U.S. labor markets. This goal can be achieved through careful reading, class lecture and discussion, the use of critical thinking, study, and writing. The course will expose you to important theoretical and applied topics in such areas as labor demand and supply, human capital (education and training), technological change, globalization, wage differentials, job mobility and migration, discrimination, earnings inequality, unemployment, labor unions, and public policy.

[Prerequisite, ECON 2106]

### Grading

Final grades are based on a weighted average of two in-class exams (27% each; 54% total), a comprehensive final exam (36%), and class “queries” (10%). Regular attendance is necessary for a good grade. Students must complete all work as scheduled. If an emergency requires that an exam be moved to an earlier or later time, you must contact me by e-mail prior to the scheduled exam and receive permission for a new exam time.

### Academic Honesty and Special Services:

Students are required to know and abide by the GSU’s Policy on Academic Honesty, which prohibits dishonesty in academic work. You are expected to behave with integrity and not tolerate dishonesty by others. If you require special accommodations for exams, you must provide documentation from GSU Disability Services and make arrangements with me prior to the exam dates.

### Exam Schedule

Exam 1 – Tuesday, September 26 (Sections 1-3)

Exam 2 – Tuesday, November 7 (Sections 4-7)

Final Exam – Tuesday, December 5, 10:45-1:15

## ECON 4960 (Economics of Work and Pay): Course Outline and Reading List \*

Expected class dates are in brackets. The course syllabus provides a plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. All readings other than the text are posted at <http://unionstats.gsu.edu/4960>. All listed readings are required.

- [8/22] 1. Overview of the U.S. Labor Market and an Introduction to Labor Supply and Demand  
Ehrenberg and Smith (ES) – Chs. 1-2  
B. Hirsch, "[Facts and Features of the U.S. Labor Market](#)" (slides), 2017  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [The Employment Situation, July 2017](#)  
B. Hirsch, "[Employment Stats Calculations](#)" (slides), July 2017
- [8/29, 9/5] 2. Demand for Labor, Minimum Wages, Benefits, and Productivity Growth  
ES – Ch. 3-4  
A. Krueger, "[The Minimum Wage: How Much is Too Much?](#)" *NY Times*, Oct 9, 2015.  
R. Gordon, "[Can Clinton or Trump Recapture Robust American Growth?](#)" *NY Times*, Aug 8, 2016.  
L. Weber, "[The End of Employees.](#)" *WSJ*, 2/3/2017.  
B. Appelbaum, "[The Jobs Americans Do, Introduction.](#)" *NY Times*, 2/25/2017.
- [9/12, 9/19] 3. Labor Supply and Family Economics  
ES – Ch. 6  
U.S. Census Bureau, "[Population Aging in the United States: A Global Perspective.](#)" July 2017.  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [American Time Use Survey, 2016, Table 1-3](#), 6/27/2017.  
National Vital Statistics Reports, [United States Life Tables, 2012](#), Fig. 1-3, Tables 19-21, 11/28/2016.  
P. Cohen and R. Lieber, "[It's Summer, but Where are the Teenage Workers?](#)" *NY Times*, July 3, 2015.  
C. Miller and Q. Bui, "[Marriage Equality Grows, and So Does Class Divide.](#)" *NY Times*, Feb 27, 2016.  
A. Cox, "[The Rise of Men Who Don't Work – and What They Do Instead.](#)" *NY Times*, Dec 11, 2014.
- [9/26] Exam 1: Tuesday, September 26 (Sections 1-3)
- [10/3, 10/10] 4. Human Capital Investment: Education, Job Training, and Earnings  
ES – Ch. 9  
T. Tritch, "[Does College Pay?](#)" *NY Times*, 5/9/2014.  
S. Stainburn, "[Following the Money.](#)" *NY Times*, 8/2/2013.  
S. Lohr, "[For Today's Graduate, Just One Word: Statistics.](#)" *NY Times*, 8/6/2009.  
J. Heckman, "[Lifelines for Poor Children.](#)" *NY Times*, 9/14/2013.  
N. Kristof, "[Do Politicians Love Kids?](#)" [discussion with James Heckman] *NY Times*, Nov 19, 2014.
- [10/17] 5. Compensating Wage Differentials and Earnings Inequality  
ES – Chs. 8, 15  
B. Hirsch, "[Earnings Inequality: Stylized Facts, Underlying Causes, and Policy](#)" (slides), Dec 2014.  
S. Lohr, "[Automation Will Change Jobs More Than Kill Them.](#)" *NY Times*, Nov 6, 2015.  
G. Ip, "[Behind Rising Inequality: More Unequal Companies.](#)" *WSJ*, Nov 4, 2015.  
N. Schwartz, "[Middle-Income Jobs Finally Show Signs of a Rebound.](#)" *NY Times*, Aug 18, 2016.
- [10/24] 6. Mobility, Immigration, and Job Search  
ES – Ch. 10  
A. Gonzales-Barrera, "[More Mexicans Leaving Than Coming to the U.S.](#)" *Pew Research Center*, Nov 19, 2015.  
E. Porter, "[Nafta May Have Saved Many Autoworkers' Jobs.](#)" *NY Times*, 3/29/2016.  
E. Porter, "[The Crumbling Case for a Mexican Border Wall.](#)" *NY Times*, 9/16/2016.  
J. Preston, "[Immigrants Aren't Taking Americans' Jobs, New Study Finds.](#)" *NY Times*, 9/21/2016.  
W. Galston, "[How the Vise on U.S. Wages Tightened.](#)" *WSJ*, 3/31/2015.  
B. Appelbaum, "[Simmering for Decades, Anger About Trade Boils Over in '16 Election.](#)" *NY Times*, 3/29/2016.

- [10/31] 7. Economics of Discrimination and Wage Differentials by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity  
 ES – Ch. 12  
 C. Bialik, "[Not All Differences in Earnings are Created Equal](#)," *WSJ*, 4/10/2010.  
 N. Folbre, "[Why Girly Jobs Don't Pay Well](#)," *NY Times*, 8/16/2010.  
 M. Luo, "[In Job Hunt, College Degree Can't Close Racial Gap](#)," *NY Times*, 12/1/2009.  
 S. Mullainathan, "[Ban the Box? An Effort to Stop Discrimination May Actually Increase It](#)," *NY Times*, Aug 19, 2016.  
 J. Heckman, "[The American Family in Black and White: A Post-Racial Strategy for Improving Skills to Promote Equality](#)," IZA D.P. 5495, February 2011.
- [11/7] Exam 2: Tuesday, November 7 (Sections 4-7)
- [11/14] 8. Economic Analysis of Labor Unions in the Private and Public Sectors  
 ES – Ch. 13  
 B. Hirsch, "[Unions: Membership, Wages, Competition, and Performance in the Private and Public Sectors](#)" (slides), 2017.  
 S. Greenhouse, "[Volkswagen Vote is Defeat for Labor in the South](#)," *NY Times*, 2/14/2014.  
 R. Knutson, "[Unions Lose Sway Over Verizon as Landline Business Shrinks](#)," *WSJ*, May 1, 2016.  
 L. Saad, "[Americans' Support for Labor Unions Continues to Recover](#)," Gallup, Aug 17, 2015.
- [11/28] 9. Unemployment  
 \*ES – Ch. 14  
 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "[Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey \(JOLTS\) Highlights](#)," June 2017.  
 B. Appelbaum, "[The Vanishing Male Worker: How America Fell Behind](#)," *NY Times*, 12/11/2014.  
 B. Leubsdorf, "[The Recession's Economic Trauma Has Left Enduring Scars](#)," *WSJ*, 5/9/2016.  
 N. Schwartz, "[Economy Needs Workers, but Drug Tests Take a Toll](#)," *NY Times*, 7/24/2017.
- [12/5] Final Exam: Tuesday, December 5, 10:45-1:15