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
(previously Pearson Publishers). Support materials are available at:
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), Wall Street Journal (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.

    Ehrenberg and Smith (ES) – Chs. 1-2
    B. Hirsch, “Facts and Features of the U.S. Labor Market” (slides), 2017
    B. Hirsch, “Employment Stats Calculations” (slides), July 2017

    ES – Ch. 3-4

[9/12, 9/19] 3. Labor Supply and Family Economics
    ES – Ch. 6
    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.

[9/26] Exam 1: Tuesday, September 26 (Sections 1-3)

    ES – Ch. 9

[10/17] 5. Compensating Wage Differentials and Earnings Inequality
    ES – Chs. 8, 15

[10/24] 6. Mobility, Immigration, and Job Search
    ES – Ch. 10
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.

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

8. Economic Analysis of Labor Unions in the Private and Public Sectors
ES – Ch. 13
S. Greenhouse, “Volkswagen Vote is Defeat for Labor in the South,” NY Times, 2/14/2014.

9. Unemployment
*ES – Ch. 14

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