Course Goals

The goal of Human Resources and Labor Markets is to enable students to use economic reasoning and analysis to understand wage and employment determination in labor markets. This goal is attained through reading, study, writing, critical thinking, and class lecture/discussion. The course examines theory, evidence, and policy related to labor supply and demand, human capital, technological change, wage differentials, earnings inequality, compensation policies, job mobility and migration, discrimination, unemployment, and unions.

Required Text and Readings


Support material for text can be subscribed at [http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/007802188x/student_view0/index.html](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/007802188x/student_view0/index.html)

Readings other than the text are posted at [http://unionstats.gsu.edu/8220](http://unionstats.gsu.edu/8220). Journal and news articles designated * are required. Others are optional. Additional readings may be added during the semester. Regular reading of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or other quality news sources will enhance the value of the course.

Important articles in labor economics are published in leading general interest and labor journals. The *Journal of Economic Perspectives* provides readable articles in labor and other areas of economics. Leading labor journals include the *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Journal of Human Resources*, and *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*. Current working papers can be found at the Institute for the Study of Labor ([www.iza.org](http://www.iza.org)), the National Bureau of Economic Research ([www.nber.org](http://www.nber.org)), Social Science Research Network ([www.ssrn.com](http://www.ssrn.com)), and Research Papers in Economics ([www.repec.org](http://www.repec.org)).

You may find it helpful to examine government statistics on the labor market. A wide array of government labor statistics and data are available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)) and the Bureau of the Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The NBER also maintains a useful data site ([www.nber.org](http://www.nber.org)). Sources for economic data and other useful links are summarized in *Resources for Economists* ([rfe.org](http://rfe.org)).

Grading and Exams/Assignment Dates

Final grades are based on a weighted average of a midterm (30%), a statistical analysis assignment on earnings equations (25%), a comprehensive final exam (35%), and paper summaries and class/seminar participation (10%). Students must complete all work as scheduled. Regular attendance is essential.

Midterm: Tuesday, February 20
Spring Break: Tuesday, March 13
Take-home Essays (due date): Tuesday, March 27 (to be handed out March 6)
Final exam: Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-9:30 p.m. [Not May 1 as listed in GSU exam schedule]

Academic Honesty:

Students are required to know and abide by Georgia State’s Policy on Academic Honesty. The Policy prohibits dishonesty in academic work. You are expected to behave with integrity and not tolerate dishonesty by others.
1. Overview of the U.S. Labor Market and an Introduction to Labor Supply and Demand

Borjas – Chs. 1 (including appendix), 4 (pp. 144-152)

2. Labor Supply, Time Use, and Family Economics

Borjas – Ch. 2
National Vital Statistics Reports, United States Life Tables, 2012, Fig. 1-3, Tables 19-21, 11/28/2016.

3. Demand for Labor, Minimum Wages, and Nonwage Benefits

Borjas – Chs.3, 4 (pp. 152-162)

4. Human Capital Investment: Education, Job Training, and Earnings

Borjas – Ch. 6
Midterm: Tuesday, February 20 (Sections 1-4)

5. Economics of Discrimination and Wage Differentials by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity
   Borjas – Ch. 9
   Hirsch handouts: “Oaxaca Decompositions” and “Log vs. Percentage Differentials”
   M. Betrand, C. Goldin, and L. Katz, “Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the
   J. Heckman, "The American Family in Black and White: A Post-Racial Strategy for Improving Skills
   S. Mullainathan, “Ban the Box? An Effort to Stop Discrimination May Actually Increase It,” NYT, Aug
   19, 2016.

6. Compensating Wage Differentials, Worker Mobility, Immigration, and Job Search
   Borjas – Ch. 4 (pp. 163-177), 5, 8
   D. Card, “Good Jobs: The Importance of Who You Work For,” Focus, Spring/Summer 2013
   R. Molloy, C. Smith, and A. Wozniak, “Internal Migration in the United States,” Journal of Economic
   Perspectives, Summer 2011.

7. Wage Inequality, Skill Biased Technological Change (SBTC), and the Demand-Supply Race
   Borjas – Ch. 7
   F. Alvaredo, A. Atkinson, T. Piketty, and E. Saez, “The Top 1 Percent in International and Historical
   D. Autor and D. Dorn, “How Technology Wrecks the Middle Class,” NY Times, 8/24/2013.
8. Economic Analysis of Labor Unions

Borjas – Ch. 10
S. Greenhouse, “Volkswagen Vote is Defeat for Labor in the South,” NY Times, 2/14/2014.

9. Unemployment

Borjas – Ch. 12
B. Casselman, “Unemployment Scars Likely to Last for Years,” WSJ, 1/9/2012.

Final Exam: Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Personnel Economics, Pay Policies, and Internal Labor Markets (will not cover, for your information)

Borjas – Ch. 11