

GENERAL INFORMATION

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Section Information

- **ECON 490 E3 (70384)**: meeting times on 11:00 am - 12:20 pm Monday and Wednesdays in 1090 Lincoln Hall

3 credit hours

Instructor(s): [Dr. José J. Vazquez](#)

Course Description and Goal

The course is designed to inspect some fundamental questions in the world economy:

- What are the primary factors driving the per capita GDP growth of any particular country?
- What explains the convergence or divergence patterns of growth rates across nations?

Firstly, we look at the data of economic growth. Then we proceed to offer a theoretical explanation of those facts and patterns. Our focus is divided into three parts: 1) factor accumulation, 2) productivity and 3) growth fundamentals. The objective of the course is to enable students to apply the knowledge of macroeconomic theory and mathematical tools to address issues in growth.

My Teaching Style and Philosophy

I believe:

Students ARE human = I believe students are human, rational thinkers. Therefore, I tend to give them the benefit of doubt when designing my course. For instance, if I know most students don't like to read the textbook before coming to class, then I don't assume they are lazy. Rather, students are behaving as normal humans, and reading text is not the best way to transfer

complicated information to humans. When we read, our brain is assimilating information through only one main channel: the eyes. This is very hard, specially when we have to go from one page of a textbook to another page to make sense of the information.

In contrast, consider how much better our brain can assimilate information through a lecture (either in a classroom or virtually); when the instructor talks and draws in the board (or makes hand gestures) at the same time. Now, our brain receives information through two channels: eyes and ears. So when students choose not to read the textbook before class, they are simply using their brains in the most effective way it was designed. Hence, I do not assign textbook readings before class.

Each student is unique = some students like to complete assignments very quickly, others tend to take a bit longer. Some students have to work while they attend college, others do not. Some students like to work in groups, others prefer to do it individually. Therefore, I do not design the course for just ONE student, but rather try to give students AUTONOMY in completing the assignments. This is the reason I only use 4 due dates for the complete course. Further, I do not use hard deadlines in my courses, but rather charge students a small daily penalty if they miss a deadline.

A motivated student WILL learn = I believe learning is a self-regulated event. In other words, I believe in order to learn anything, a student must WANT to learn it. I simply can't force any student to learn, by pouring information into her brain.

Yet, when a student WANT to learn, there is very little I (or anyone else, for that matter) can do to prevent that student from learning. Therefore, I consider my main job not to MAKE students learn, but rather to MOTIVATE them to learn on their own.

Some of this learning will take place during the semester, but also much of it will take place after the course is done. Therefore, I tend to focus my teaching on activities that spark's students internal motivation for learning. Three important internal motivations for learning are: curiosity, mastery, and autonomy. Therefore, I place those at the forefront of my teaching.

For instance, my classroom lecture is designed not to "explain" things from the front of the room, but rather to ASK students questions to spark their curiosity, and to encourage them to continue to ASK questions themselves.

In the same way, I tend to dislike using activities that rely on external rewards for learning, such as once-and-done (summative) exams, hard deadlines, and so forth.

Academic Integrity

At the University of Illinois, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of Academic Integrity. We believe that this is essential to the success of our Program in its mission to educate and train our students. In addition, maintaining high standards of academic integrity provides a foundation for responsible conduct in our students' lives after graduation. The following acts have been listed in the [Student Honor code as violations of academic integrity](#).

Students with Disability

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, which will require academic accommodations, please notify me within the first week of the class and I will strive to accommodate your needs. However, to obtain official disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must also contact the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail dtheisability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website. If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting "Sign-Up for an Academic Screening" at the bottom of the page.

Academic Assistance

Students are encouraged to utilize the many resources we have throughout campus to assist with academics. We recommend that you seek them out starting early in the semester, not just in times of academic need, in order to develop good study habits and submit work which represents your full academic potential. Many resources are found on the [Economics Website](#) including details about the Economics Tutoring Center, Academic Advising, and other academic support options:

Community of Care

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the [Student Assistance Center](#) (217-333-0050). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. Further, we understand the impact that struggles with mental health can have on your experience at Illinois. Significant stress, strained relationships, anxiety, excessive worry, alcohol/drug problems, a loss of motivation, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can all interfere with optimal academic performance. We encourage all students to reach out to talk with someone, and we want to make sure you are aware that you can access mental health support at the [Counseling Center](#) or [McKinley Health Center](#).

For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or walk into the Counseling Center, no appointment needed.

Disruptive Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action.

Emergency Response Recommendations

Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website:

<http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/>. I encourage you to review this website and the [campus building floor plans website](#) within the first 10 days of class.

Religious Observances

The Religious Observance Accommodation Request form is available at [here](#). Submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students (helpdean@illinois.edu) by the end of the second week of the course; in the case of exams or assignments scheduled after this period, students should submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <http://registrar.illinois.edu/ferpa> for more information on FERPA. Student information and records will not be released to anyone other than the student unless the student has provided written approval or as required by law.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found [here](#).

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: <http://wecare.illinois.edu/>.

Student Support

The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. Please visit their website to find valuable resources and services:

<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>.

Counseling Center Information: 217-333-3704

Location: Room 206, Student Services Building (610 East John Street, Champaign IL)

McKinley Mental Health Information: 217-333-2705

Location: 3rd Floor McKinley Health Center 1109 South Lincoln, Urbana, IL

Emergency Dean: The Emergency Dean may be reached at (217) 333-0050 and supports students who are experiencing an emergency situation after 5 pm, in which an immediate University response is needed and which cannot wait until the next business day. The Emergency Dean is not a substitute for trained emergency personnel such as 911, Police or Fire. If you are experiencing a life threatening emergency, call 911. Please review the Emergency Dean procedures: <http://odos.illinois.edu/emergency/>

COURSE MATERIALS AND WEBSITES

Required Materials

Course Workbook

- All students are required to bring a Course Workbook with them to lecture. You can purchase the Course Workbook at the Bookstore for \$37.

HOW I WILL CALCULATE YOUR GRADE?

Course Activities

Below are all the activities you are required to complete in the course, along with the weight each of them has towards your final grade.

Course Activity	Weight (out of 100%)
Class Work	5
Lecture Quizzes	10
Problem Sets	20
Exams	45
Final Exam	20

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned only at the end of the semester based on the overall score for the course. There is no curve in this class.

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A+	97.00–100	C+	77.00 - 79.99
A	93.00–96.99	C	72.00 - 76.99
A–	90.00–92.99	C-	70.00 - 71.99
B+	87.00–89.99	D+	67.00 - 69.99
B	82.00–86.99	D	62.00 - 66.99
B–	80.00–81.99	D-	60.00 - 61.99
		F	0 - 59.99

COURSE ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

Class Work

What are they? This is the work that you do during class; mostly answering questions in teams or individually. All the classwork is done in your Course Workbooks; so make sure that you bring your Course Workbook to every class.

How is Class Work Graded? I will mark your work based on effort and completion; not accuracy.

What happens if I miss a class? You are free to miss up to 4 classes without any penalty. You DO NOT have to contact me if you are going to miss class. I will automatically give all students 4 “free” class days.

When Are They Due? They are due at the end of the class.

Lecture Quizzes (LQs)

What are they? These are short quizzes you will complete online before or after the lecture.

How are they graded? LQs are graded entirely on completion and not on accuracy.

When Are They Due? There are just three deadlines in this course. Please see the [Deadlines](#) section of the Course Syllabus for a more detailed description of the three deadlines in this course.

Problem Sets

What are they? The Problem Sets are a collection of longer, usually graph, numerical, and/or essay problems.

How are Problem Sets graded? Problem Sets are graded on completion and effort; not correctness. We will simply mark them “complete/not completed”. If you turn in a Problem Set and receive a “not completed” grade, you have the opportunity to revise and resubmit up until the deadline below.

I encourage you to work in these Problem Sets collaboratively, along with other students in the class. Yet, remember that when you sit down to write down your submission, you must do so on your own. I will definitely mark/review your submission under the assumption it is yours alone.

Can I get the answer keys? Yes, the answer key to each problem set question is available as soon as you get marked “complete” for that question.

When Are They Due? There are just three deadlines in this course. Please see the [Deadlines](#) section of the Course Syllabus for a more detailed description of the three deadlines in this course.

Exams

All the exams are completely online!

What are they? The Exams are a collection of questions similar to those you do in your problem sets, as well as some multiple-choice questions. Each Exam contains comprehensive material up to that point in the course. *Notice that there is still going to be 3 Exams and one Final Exam, even though Exam 3 and the Final Exam cover basically the same content.*

Are exams open book/notes? Yes. Exams in this class are open notes/book, AS LONG AS THERE ARE HARD COPIES! You are not allowed to collaborate with other students, but you can consult any hard copy material during the exam.

Again: you are only allowed to use hard copies; nothing digital. So, for instance, if you take digital notes during class, and you want to refer to them during the exam, ***you need to print them and use them as hard copies.***

Are there any practice exams available? YES! There is a practice exam available in Moodle for each of the three exams. You will have THREE attempts to complete each practice exam.

Are Exams in this class timed? Yes, Exams in this class are timed. Once you begin the exam you will have 3 hours to complete it. But, remember: you must complete the Exam BEFORE is due, regardless of how much remaining time, you have left to complete it.

Are exams in this class proctored? No! You can take the exams on your own.

When are the exams due? Please see the [Deadlines](#) section of the Course Syllabus for a more detailed description of the three deadlines in this course.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must complete the exam INSIDE the exam window in order to receive full credit. This means if you begin the Exam at 11:58pm on Saturday, you will only have 1 minute to complete the exam without a penalty.

What happens if I have a conflict with any of those exam dates/times? Since you have three days to complete each Exam, we do not offer conflict time for any of the exams. Please see the below for our policy on missing exams.

What happens if you missed an Exam? If you missed an exam, **for any reason**, you can use your grade in the Final Exam to replace the missed exam score. We actually do this automatically, so you do not need to contact us if you plan to miss an Exam, for any reason. **YOU CAN ONLY DO THIS FOR JUST ONE EXAM AND ONLY IF YOU MISS THAT EXAM.** You can not replace the score of an exam you have already taken. You can not replace more than ONE exam with your score in the final exam.

Final Exam

The final exam is completely online!

What is it? The main purpose of the Final Exam is to meet the College's Identity Verification Requirement. To complete it you must answer a series of multiple-choice questions in a time limit of 3 hours. *The exam is designed so that it will reflect accurately the work you have done, and the skills you have acquired, in the course up to that point.*

How is it graded? The final exam is graded by accuracy. You will be able to see your score as soon as you submit your exam. You will be able to see all the answers one minute after the end of the exam window.

Is the Final Exam open book/notes? Yes. Exams in this class are open notes/book. You can use any reference material, as long as it is HARD COPY material. You can not use any digital material.

Do we need to proctor the final exam? Yes. But we have two convenient ways for you to proctor the exam (see below).

How do we proctor the exam? I offer you the option of taking the Final Exam remotely using [ProctorU Record +](#) . You are free to take the exam remotely, **anytime during the Final Exam week!** Again, this is completely free of charge.

Further, you do not need to schedule your session with ProctorU; simply click on the Final Exam link when you want to take the exam. But, you do need to consult [the following set of guidelines](#) for using [ProctorU Record +](#) a few days before you plan to take the final exam.

What do I do if I miss the final exam (or know that I will have to miss the final exam)?

Sometimes unforeseen events take place that make it impossible for a student to complete the final exam. Fortunately, the [University already has a process in place for such situations](#), and we adhere strictly to that process.

b. Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students must obtain the approval of the dean of their college to defer a final examination. Undergraduate students who must miss a scheduled final examination should report this fact to the dean of their college as soon as possible and before the final examination period.

For satisfactory reasons, students may be “excused” by the dean of their college and examined later by their instructor. Absence from a final examination for any other cause is reported as a final grade of “absent” (ABS) in the course and counts as a failure. (See § 3-103.)

Upon completion of the process above, a student can complete a final exam for this course on the date of Exam 1 the following semester.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Course Outline

Unit #	Module Title
1	A Framework for Analysis
2	Physical Capital
3	Population
4	Human Capital
5	Productivity
6	Technology
7	Government

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Week 1	Mo., Jan 15 We., Jan 17	Unit 0: Introduction to Economic Growth Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis
Week 2	Mo., Jan 22 We., Jan 24	Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis
Week 3	Mo., Jan 29 We., Jan 31	Chapter 3: Physical Capital Chapter 3: Physical Capital
Week 4	Mo., Feb 5 We., Feb 7	Chapter 3: Physical Capital Chapter 3: Physical Capital
Week 5	Mo., Feb 12 We., Feb 14	Chapter 4: Population Chapter 4: Population
Week 6	Mo., Feb 19 We., Feb 21	Chapter 4: Population NO CLASS (Exam 1 due at 11:59pm)
Week 7	Mo., Feb 26 We., Feb 28	Chapter 6: Human Capital Chapter 6: Human Capital
Week 8	Mo., Mar 4 We., Mar 6	Chapter 6: Human Capital Chapter 6: Human Capital
Week 9	Mo., Mar 11 We., Mar 13	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
Week 10	Mo., Mar 18 We., Mar 20	Chapter 7: Productivity Chapter 7: Productivity
Week 11	Mo., Mar 25 We., Mar 27	Chapter 7: Productivity NO CLASS (Exam 2 due at 11:59pm)
Week 12	Mo., Apr 1 We., Apr 3	Chapter 8: Technology Chapter 8: Technology
Week 13	Mo., Apr 8 We., Apr 10	Chapter 8: Technology Chapter 8: Technology
Week 14	Mo., Apr 15 We., Apr 17	Chapter 11 Government Chapter 11 Government
Week 15	Mo., Apr 22 We., Apr 24	Chapter 11 Government NO CLASS (Exam 3 due at 11:59pm)
Week 16	Mo., Apr 29 We., May 1	Final Exam 3 Review Final Exam 3 Review

Due Dates

Due Date (11:59 PM)	Which Lecture Quizzes are due?	Which Problem Set is due?	Which Exam is due?
February 21st	1, 2, 3, and 4	Problem Set 1	Exam 1
March 27th	6 and 7	Problem Set 2	Exam 2
April 24th	8, 9 and 11	Problem Set 3	Exam 3

***Exams open 72 hours before the deadline

Policy on Technical Difficulties

Since we offer students such a long window to complete all assignments, WE DO NOT ACCEPT TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES AS AN EXCUSE TO MISS DEADLINES. By starting an assignment close to the deadline, you are assuming the risk of not being able to turn in the assignment due to some unexpected technical difficulties.

Policy on Missing Deadlines

We do not accept any assignments after their due dates. If you miss any deadline, and you feel you have a justifiable excuse to make up the work, you have the right to apply for a grade of I (Incomplete). According to university policy, only the dean of the student's academic college may authorize an I for our undergraduate students.

COMMUNICATION AND GETTING COURSE SUPPORT

Weekly Announcements

I will send a weekly announcement every Monday by 5pm at the latest. The Weekly announcement will have, at the minimum, the following:

- Short introduction to the material I included in the weekly lectures
- Reminders of what is due that week (if anything is due).
- Answers to some common questions I see in the Q and A Forum

Students can always read all Weekly Announcements in the course by visiting the *Announcements* forum located at the top of the page.

Discussion Forum

This will be the most effective way to get quick answers to your questions since my teaching staff and I will monitor the Forum regularly and post answers to most questions within a 24hr period. So I encourage you to visit the Forum regularly and participate, even answering the questions posted by your fellow students.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Main Instructor: Dr. José J. Vazquez

Office: DKH 102

Email Address: vazquezj@illinois.edu

Office Hours: 8:00 - 9:00 am on Monday and Wednesdays, or by appointment



Short Bio

I teach economics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), where I teach one of the largest face to face sections of Microeconomics in the nation; 950 students. I am also the Coordinator of e-Learning for the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS), as well as the Director of LAS Teaching Academy. During my tenure at Illinois I have received several teaching awards, including The Outstanding Teacher of Freshmen Award , a campus-wide award given every year by the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society. I have also been included in the List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent for several consecutive years. Before returning to Illinois, I was the Associate Director of the Teaching and Learning and Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio. I specialize in developing technologies that can be used in large enrollment courses, particularly classroom simulation games and web-based assessments/activities. I have published this work in several academic journals including the International Journal of Economic Education, and has presented at numerous academic conferences. I have a new Principles of Economics textbook, co-authored with Eric Chiang of Florida Atlantic University, that will be published by Worth Publishers in 2015.

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