

General Course Information

Instructor:	Jiangnan Zeng
Email	jiangnan@uoguelph.ca
Office Location	743 McKn
Office Hours	Wed: 10:00-12:00 am (other time by appointment via email)
Department/School	Department of Economics and Finance
Class Schedule:	Mon, Wed: 2:30 pm - 3:50 pm (MCKN 223)
Pre-requisites:	Prerequisite(s): ECON 2310
TA	TBA

Course Description

This course focuses on the role that cities and municipalities play in the modern economy. It is an elective in economics designed for juniors and seniors with strong interests in urban issues and economic policy. You are expected to attend all lectures, and contribute in a meaningful way to our discussions inside the classroom.

Even if you do not become an economic policy maker, you will be better equipped to evaluate the decisions made by local governments and help business executives understand and address economic challenges that arise in urban environments. Economic policy and business decisions are made through discussion and debate. Effectively communicating the rationale for economic and business decisions is essential for implementation.

In class, you are expected to be an active participant.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, you will have:

- Understand important theories in Urban Economics;
- Apply the theories to explain real-life phenomena;
- Critique the relevance and usefulness of these theories;
- Formulate statistical hypotheses to test the theories with real-life data;
- Interpret and assess the results within the context of the theories.
- Evaluate the decisions made by local governments and help business executives understand and address economic challenges that arise in urban environments.

Summary of Course Content and Materials

(This is a preliminary schedule of course contents and activities. The actual schedule will be subject to the final version.)

Week of	Topic	Due
1.6	An Introduction to Urban Economics	
1.13	Empirical Methods I: Correlation, Causality, and Regression Analysis	Assignment 1 (due on 1.19)
1.20	Foundations of Urban Economics and Fiscal Policy: (a) The Economic Rationale of Cities, Chapter 2. (b) The Principle of Fiscal Federalism, Chapter 3.	
1.27	The Provision of Local Public Goods and Services in Cities (a) The Efficient Provision of Local Public Goods and Services, Chapter 4. (b) Voluntary Provision of Local Public Goods and Services, Chapter 5.	Assignment 2 (due on 2.2)
2.3	The Political Economy of State and Local Governments 1 : (a) Voting over the Provision of Local Public Goods: Chapters 6 and 7. (b) Mobility and Fiscal Competition: Chapter 8.	Quiz (in class)
2.10	The Political Economy of State and Local Governments 2: (c) Inequality and Intergovernmental Transfers: Chapter 9. (d) Rent Seeking, Corruption, and Weak Political Institutions: Chapter 10.	
2.17	Winter break	
2.24	Empirical Methods II: Social Experiments, A5-A7.	Midterm
3.3	Taxation and the Practice of Urban Fiscal Policies: (a) Property Taxation: Chapter 12 (b) Business Taxation: Chapter 13 (c) The Practice of Urban Fiscal Policies: Chapters 14 - 16 (if time permits).	Assignment 3 (due on 3.9)
3.10	Managing Urban Challenges 1: (a) Urban Poverty and Welfare, Chapter 17. (b) Reforming Urban Schools, Chapter 18. (c) Crime and Public Safety, Chapter 19.	
3.17	Managing Urban Challenges 2: (d) Urban Environmental Challenges, Chapter 20. (e) Cities in Developing Countries: Chapter 21 (if time permits)	Quiz (in class)
3.24	Urban Labor, Land, and Housing Markets: (a) Transportation and the Internal Structure of Cities, Chapter 22. (b) Local Land and Housing Markets, Chapters 23. (c) Local Labor Markets: Chapters 24 (d) Real Estate Finance: Chapter 25.	
3.31	Group project presentation	
4.7		Final project due on Apr. 13th

Course Assessment

			Due Date/ location
Assessment 1:	15%	Quiz	In class
Assessment 2:	30%	Assignments	On Courselink, due at 11:59pm
Assessment 3:	30%	Midterm Exam	In class
Assessment 4:	25%	Final project	Due on Apr. 13th
Total	100		

Teaching and Learning Practices

Office hours

Office hours will be in person, but if the situation necessitates, they could also be conducted by zoom, but they will not be recorded.

Course requirements

Be sure to stay up to date on assignments. Participate in class actively.

Communication and Office Hours

All course announcements will be sent out via email and be posted on Courselink. It is your responsibility to check your email for announcements.

If you have a question about the course in general, or about the course material, please post it on the online discussion board. Indicate the theme of the question (or the question itself, if short) in the subject line. If you have a question, it is likely that other students wonder about this, too. If you post the question, everyone can see the answer. I will answer to a posted question within 24-48 hours and during standard working times and days. If you know the answer to a posted question, do not hesitate to answer it before I do. This will be very helpful to your fellow students.

If you have a personal questions or concerns, please email me, please directly email me. DO NOT message me on Courselink, as I will never see your message and you will get no response. You can expect replies within 24 hours during the workweek (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm). DO NOT expect an immediate reply if you email me on a weekend or between 5pm and 9am, even if I have previously responded to an email during those times. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, assume that I missed your email and send a follow-up. Please use personal and professional courtesy in your emails.

If you have a time conflict with my office hours, please email me and we can see if we can set up an appointment and a different time.

Course Resources

Required Text: Sieg, H. (2020), *Urban Economics and Fiscal Policy*, Princeton University Press.

The price of the hardcopy in our book store is \$147.25.

The electronic version is very affordable. It is available on Amazon or directly from PUP.

(<https://press.princeton.edu/books/ebook/9780691199979/urban-economics-and-fiscal-policy-pdf#buy>)

We will cover approximately one chapter of the textbook per lecture. I will highlight some of the key concepts of the chapters during the lectures and provide additional explanations of the main results. To have meaningful discussions in class and to keep up with the pace of the course, you need to read the assigned chapter before each lecture.

Note: Several copies will be placed on reserve in the library. You may also buy a second-hand copy from Amazon.

Course Website: The course website is on courselink. On the website, you will also find all necessary information regarding the course, as well as all announcements made throughout the course and additional online materials (such as solutions to midterm exams). Grades will be posted there as well. The online discussion board for students provides a valuable means of communications between you and your classmates.

Students are required to visit the course website regularly: Announcements will only be posted there and not sent by email. Students are expected to be aware of all announcements made on the website.

Course Policies

Lectures

Please make sure you always attend the lecture you are registered for. It cannot be guaranteed that lectures in different sections will cover materials at the same time.

Grading Policies

Unless you have discussed an extension well ahead of the due date with the instructor, late penalties of **1%** of the total grade earned per day (including weekends) will be assigned to any assessment (i.e. deducted from the total mark). Extensions will only be granted on the basis of valid medical or personal reasons, and need to be requested via email to the instructor as soon as possible. Late assignments will not be accepted once graded assignments have been returned officially to the class at large, unless circumstances permit and alternative arrangements have been made.

Students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadlines or the criteria expected because of medical or personal reasons, should review the regulations on academic consideration in the

Academic Calendar and discuss their situation with the instructor, program counselor or other academic counselor as appropriate.

Missed Assignments: A grade of zero will be assigned if you fail to submit an assignment, unless you are ill or have other compassionate reasons. Please read your Undergraduate Calendar for the regulations regarding illness and compassionate grounds. Please note, vacation travel, moving house, or outside work commitments will not be accepted as valid reasons for missing deadlines.

Missed Exams and Time Conflicts

Students with time conflicts with the final exam cannot register for this course. If the final exam is missed, the course is not completed.

If you have a medical or compassionate reason for missing a midterm, you will have an opportunity to write a make-up exam at a given date and time (there will be only one make-up per midterm), or you may choose to transfer the weight to the final exam. If you fail to write the make-up exam, the weight of the midterm will be transferred to the final exam. If you miss a midterm without a legitimate excuse, your grade for the midterm will be 0%.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of a time conflict with a midterm exam within the first two weeks of the course and to discuss how this time conflict will be handled. After this period, it is in the instructor's discretion to decide how the time conflict will be handled. Students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadlines or the criteria expected because of medical or personal reasons, should review the regulations on academic consideration in the Academic Calendar and discuss their situation with the instructor, program counselor or other academic counselor as appropriate.
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-grds.shtml>

Make-up midterm: TBA

If you have religious observances which conflict with the course schedule or if you are registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact the course instructor in order to make arrangements for your assessment if appropriate.

Electronic Devices and Recording of Lectures

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

University Policies

Academic Consideration

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:

<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-misconduct/>

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email sas@uoguelph.ca or see the website: <https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/>

Course Evaluation Information

Please refer to the [Blue by Explorance system](#).

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday April 4, 2025**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Academic Calendar:

<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

At the Lang School of Business and Economics, we are committed to developing leaders with a social conscience, an environmental sensibility, and a commitment to their communities. A core tenet within this vision is that diversity is a strength with which we can experience greater connection and understanding.

As such, we affirm the importance and shared responsibility of our students, faculty, and staff creating and promoting equity and inclusion within our learning spaces. Creating these kinds of learning cultures is a process, not a destination; it requires ongoing willingness on the part of each person to thoughtfully and critically listen, unlearn, learn, and engage as they are exposed to a multitude of perspectives and lived experiences. We encourage dialogues between students and instructors to address and advance opportunities for fostering greater diversity and inclusion in the learning environment. Openness to conversations with each other enables us to reflect and grow as we learn from one another respectfully and holistically.

As a department that is training the professionals of the future, we expect our learning spaces to abide by all institutional policies and guidelines, in particular those outlined by the Office of Diversity and Human Rights and the [University of Guelph Human Rights Policy](#). Discrimination and harassment, as defined by our policies, will not be tolerated. Individuals should inform the appropriate party as per University policies if they experience any such behaviours.