Course Syllabus

ECON 7510–Labor Economics I

Instructor:  Dr. Mark F. Owens  
Class:  W 2:40-5:40 PM, BAS S337  
Office and Hours:  BAS N32 MWF 8:30-10:10AM, W 1:00-2:30PM, and by appointment  
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Mission of the Jones College of Business:  
The mission of the Jones College of Business is to:

- Foster student success in a large business school with a small school feeling created by caring, professional faculty and staff interacting with students as individuals, in small classes, through proactive student organizations, and in a broad range of other settings, with students’ needs constantly of prime consideration;
- Provide career opportunities to our students by capitalizing on our extensive alumni network—82 percent of Jones College graduates live and work in Middle Tennessee; and
- Cultivate an international perspective among students that enables them to contribute to and succeed in the global marketplace.

We will produce graduates from our bachelor, master, doctoral, and executive and continuing education programs who are prepared for challenges and advancements in their chosen careers.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:  
Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the Disability & Access Center (DAC) website www.mtsu.edu/dac and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu.  ADA accommodation requests (temporary or permanent) are determined only by the DAC.  Students are responsible for contacting the DAC to obtain ADA accommodations and for providing the instructor with the Accommodation Letter from the DAC.
Course Description: This course covers a broad range of topics in the field of Labor Economics including: human capital formation, wage determination, labor market mobility and job search, changes in wage structure, youth behavior and outcomes, shifts in labor demand, compensating wage differentials, and discrimination. The focus of the course is to introduce students to current economic research methods and modern econometric techniques in preparation for conducting independent research. It will also cover empirical issues and other limitations involved with identifying and testing different theoretical hypotheses.

Goal: After completing this course you should have a broad understanding of many current topics in labor economics, and start to formulate an interesting research question that you will pursue in the future.

Course Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal and its presentation in class</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam (October 7)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (Wednesday December 9, 2:40-5:40)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Research Proposal: One requirement for this course is a research proposal. In general, you should formulate a clear research question, and begin to think carefully about how you plan to answer that question. My personal experience is that this takes more time and effort than one might expect. Plan to discuss your ideas frequently with your classmates and instructor. Further details about my expectations and the specifics of this assignment will be provided.

Attendance:
I assume that by virtue of being enrolled in a Ph.D. course you are grown adults capable of weighing the costs and benefits of attending class. You can miss one class without penalty, but starting with the second missed class, each additional miss will reduce your overall grade by two steps. Therefore with the second miss an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B-, a B becomes a C+ etc.

Academic Conduct:
Middle Tennessee State University takes a strong stance against academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication.

1. Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution. This includes self-plagiarism, which occurs when an author submits material or research from a previous academic exercise to satisfy the requirements of another exercise and uses it without proper citation of its reuse.
2. Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination.
3. Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In these instances, the faculty member has the authority to assign an appropriate grade for the exercise or examination, or to assign an F in the course, as is proportional to the nature and extent of academic misconduct.
Optional Text: Cahuc and Zylberberg, *Labor Economics*

**Reading List**

1. **Human Capital Acquisition**


*The Schooling-Earnings Relationship*


Using instrumental variables and proxies


Estimation using twins or siblings


Estimation of the Effects of School Quality


*Is a Degree a Signal or an Actual Human Capital Improvement?*


*Experience and Earnings*


2. Job Mobility and Search

*Theory:*


*Testing the theories:*

3. Issues Beyond the Neoclassical Models

Inequality and the Wage Gap


Card, David “Is the New Immigration Really So Bad?” 2005, NBER working paper.


**Determinants of Youth Behavior and Outcomes**


**Neighborhood and Peer Effects**


**4. Shifts in Labor Demand**


Juhn, Chinhui; Murphy, Kevin M.; Pierce, Brooks “Wage Inequality and the Rise in Returns to Skill” Journal of Political Economy, June 1993, v. 101, iss. 3, pp. 410-42


Other Factors in Wage Determination


