

Economics 180.351
Labor Economics
Spring 2008 Semester

- Instructor: Dr. Burt S. Barnow
Institute for Policy Studies
Wyman Building
Room 518
516-5388 (Phone)
516-8233 (Fax)
e-mail: barnow@jhu.edu
- Office Hours: Generally 10:00-12:00 Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but students should feel free to call for an appointment for any other time if more convenient.
- Teach. Assistant: Daniel Barth dbarth4@jhu.edu
- Textbook: Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith, Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy, Ninth Edition, Pearson Addison Wesley, 2006.
Useful review material is available on the book's web site
http://wps.aw.com/aw_ehrensmith_mlaborecon_8/0,6568,286364-,00.html
- Time of Class: 3:00-5:00 p.m. Tuesdays
- Location: Maryland 217
- Prerequisite: Intermediate microeconomics (180.301) and calculus or permission of instructor

Course Description:

This course will cover the important elements of labor economics. The course will begin with a discussion of what labor markets are and the determinants of the supply of and demand for labor. The course will then cover special topics of policy interest such as the existence of labor shortages, the effects of the minimum wage on employment, the effects of tax policy on labor supply and demand, investments in education and training, the effects of welfare policy on labor supply and demand, worker mobility, pay and productivity, the labor effects of outsourcing, the role of trade unions, unemployment, and income inequality. We will also discuss labor issues that arise during the semester such as proposed changes in trade, overtime, and immigration rules.

There will be two examinations and two papers. The examinations are a one-hour midterm examination on March 11 and a one-hour final exam during finals period. There are also two papers for the class. The first paper should be approximately 10 to 20 typed double spaced pages in length and is on a topic selected by the student and is due April 1. The second paper, no more than 15 pages long, is an analysis of a labor-related initiative proposed by the Bush Administration or Congress and is due April 29. Each of the tests and papers will count the same for the final grade. The lowest of the four grades will be dropped, and students who are satisfied with their first three grades can drop the final exam.

Lectures will focus on the topics covered by the text, but some additional material will be assigned and will be posted on the Internet at <http://www.econ.jhu.edu/people/Barnow>, or distributed directly to students. The course has been kept small to encourage discussion, and class participation is an important part of your grade. The tests and papers each count for 33% of your grade, but students with excellent class participation will have each test and paper count for 25% and participation will count for 25%.