

ECON 100: Introduction to Economics

Fall 2026*

Quick Reference Information

Meeting Times

1. **Section 05** MWF 11:00-11:50 KJ 102
2. **Section 06** MWF 1:00-1:50 KJ 101

My Name & Contact Information

Case Tatro
KJ 213
ctatro@hamilton.edu

Office/Student Hours and Zoom Link

In-person Student Hours:

Monday and Wednesday: 9:45am-10:45am
Tuesday: 10am-12:30pm¹

Zoom Link

<https://hamilton.zoom.us/j/4871402708>

Exam Dates (7pm-9pm, Room TBD)

- Exam 1: Monday, September 21
- Exam 2: Wednesday, October 14
- Exam 3: Wednesday, November 11
- Exam 4: Tuesday, December 15th 9am-12pm (Econ Common Exam)

*Syllabus is subject to change. Last updated: August 22, 2026.

¹Might be moved to Zoom depending on demand.

Grading

- Homeworks: 10% (Lowest 1 dropped)
- Quizzes: 10% (Lowest 2 dropped)
- Exams: 80%
 - Worst Exam: 15%
 - Second-Worst: 20%
 - Second-Best 20%
 - Best Exam: 25%

Required Textbooks

- Economics Matters: Principles of Economics (Free on Blackboard)

Optional YouTube Videos

www.YouTube.com/@InCaseofEconStruggles

Non-Blackboard Backup of Materials

<https://casetatro.github.io/courses/econ100/>

Overview of the Course

Welcome to Economics! The broad goal of this class is to introduce you to the way economists think about the world. You will acquire skills and learn to use tools that will help you think critically not just about economics issues, but also about government policies more broadly and your own life-decisions.

This course is a single-semester introduction to both microeconomics and macroeconomics. For the first part of the course, we will focus on microeconomics, or how firms and households make decisions. We will learn our first economic model, the supply and demand model.

We will then move to macroeconomics, where we will look at an entire economy. Specifically, we will discuss how a nation's level of output is determined, as well as prices, employment, and interest rates. We will extend the supply and demand diagram from microeconomics to help evaluate both fiscal and monetary policy.

There are no formal pre-requisites for this class. We will briefly review basic algebra and geometry skills, but I will assume your high school has prepared you for the math in this class. **Please note:** I do not allow any calculators on my exams (even four-function calculators). You should feel comfortable doing whole-number addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, as well as with using fractions.

Tentative Course Outline

Note that the schedule is tentative and subject to change.

1. Basic Economic Principles
2. Thinking About Tradeoffs: PPF and Trade
3. Our First Economic Model: Supply and Demand
4. **Exam 1**
5. Using Our Model to Evaluate Policy
6. Evaluating Assumptions of Our Model
7. **Exam 2**
8. Measuring the Macroeconomy
9. Modeling the Macroeconomy
10. **Exam 3**
11. Thinking About Macroeconomic Growth
12. Linking Microeconomics and Macroeconomics
13. **Exam 4**

Keys to Success and Studying Tips

This course may differ from other courses you have taken before in economics. I care about the degree to which you are able to understand the concepts in the course and apply them to a wide variety of situations. I want to test your ability to think like an economist using the tools/concepts from the course and my exam questions reflect this approach.

Instead of trying to memorize concepts or steps to solve a problem, when studying you should try to understand the concepts as well as you can. A good measure of how well you understand something is if you can teach it to someone else. While exams will be taken individually, I encourage you to work together on both homeworks and practice exams, and come see me in office hours if you get stuck or have questions.

Structure of the Course

Assessing your ability to apply economic concepts to situations means that my exam questions will not simply test your ability to regurgitate information from the slides and/or class notes, nor will I test your ability to answer a similar problem to a homework question or example from class with different numbers. It is for this reason that many students consider my exams challenging. I have structured this course in a way to provide opportunities for feedback and for you to attempt the types of problems I ask in a low-stakes environment before each exam. Each part of the course structure is described below.

1. I release the at-home slides or indicate which part of the textbook to read, which you will look over and take notes on before we go over the topic in class.
2. There will be a short at quiz at the start of almost every class to ensure you looked at/reviewed the pre-lecture material.

3. The first part of class I will cover any difficulties/confusion based on student feedback or quiz performance. The second part of class I will push the concept further with group-based practice questions and feedback.
4. I will issue approximately 1 homework per week. The homeworks are graded for correctness, but I will drop your lowest 1.² This also accounts for any missed homeworks during the semester (**Collaboration with classmates is both allowed and encouraged.**)
5. About a week before an exam, I will provide a practice exam. I will post solutions approximately 3 days before the exam.
6. There will be a review class during the class period right before each exam.

Pre-Lecture Reading

I will provide slides or which portions of the textbook to read at least 48 hours before we will cover a particular topic in class. I acknowledge that you all are capable of reading from slides or a book at any time, and it is not the best use of class time to go through material that you all can read at home. I would rather use class time to go over where you had trouble, and to spend time working on practice problems in groups where I can provide group and individual feedback. **Please note:** this means I will not be going through this assigned material in detail during lectures. You are welcome to bring any questions on the this material to office hours, or ask before/after class. The point of the pre-lecture material is to help you be prepared to learn/refer back to, not to memorize them!

Quizzes

I will give out approximately 1 Quiz each class period. During the first full week of classes, I will give feedback on quizzes as if they were graded but they will not count allow for the add/drop period. Each Quiz will be in-class, and consist of a single question that should take no longer than 2 minutes to answer. Quizzes will be graded out of 10 points, with a 10 for a completely correct answer, 5 for a half-correct answer, and 0 for no response or an incorrect answer. These are the only possible point-values for Quizzes.

I drop each person's 2 lowest quiz grades at the end of the semester.

Class "lectures"

I will not spend the entire class period lecturing. After the quiz, I will go over one potential 10-point answer before briefly reviewing the highlights from the pre-lecture material. I will then expand upon the pre-lecture material. This will include questions for you to work on in pairs/groups. I will walk around and provide feedback before we as a class discuss the answer and move on to the next topic or problem.

Homeworks

As noted above, I will give out approximately one homework each week. I will give you about 1 week to complete each homework, and that will generally include a weekend. Homeworks are due at the start of class. I prefer handwritten homeworks, but you may also submit on Blackboard. Please staple your homework if it is multiple pages and include your name on your homework! If

²I will also post one optional HW at the end of the semester. If you complete this homework, and missed 2 homeworks, this optional homework will replace the second 0. This optional homework can also replace your second lowest HW grade.

you submit on Blackboard, you must submit the files as a .pdf, .docx, or .doc so my computer can open it. You may also email me your homework if Blackboard is having issues. If you accidentally submit your homework electronically in an incorrect format, I will give you 24 hours to resubmit the homework in the appropriate homework or you may slip a handwritten copy under my door.

A simple way to convert your handwritten work to a PDF file is to use software that utilizes the camera on your smartphone to create a PDF file. Examples of such software are CamScanner and Adobe Scan (both available as free downloads). The Notes app on iPhones and iPads also creates PDF files using the device camera.

You absolutely may collaborate on homeworks with classmates. **Each person must write-out their own answers, and you must write the names of the other people you worked with.** While I cannot verify, homeworks will be less helpful if you are dividing a homework and each doing specific questions and simply copying other answers from the group. Homeworks follow the same general structure as my exams. If you correctly explain a false answer, I will give you a bonus point, up to a maximum score of a 100 on any given homework.

If an exam falls either the class-day before or the class-day of an exam, I will not grade the homework for correctness. Instead, I will assign a 100 for attempting the majority of the questions, a 50 for attempting about half of the questions, a 25 for attempting only a few questions, and a 0 for not attempting the homework. I will announce in advance which homeworks will be graded for completion rather than for correctness.

Practice exams & review class

I will post a practice exam approximately a week before an exam. The practice exam will be similar to the exam in terms of content, but the questions will be different. I will provide solutions approximately 3 days before the exam date. During the review class, the lecture right before the exam, I will answer any questions on the practice exam, homeworks, or general concepts.

Exams

My exams all follow the same format. I will ask you 5 true/false questions, 5 multiple choice questions, and approximately 5-6 short answer questions. (I count each part as a question, so if question 1 has parts (a), (b), and (c) I consider that 3 short answer questions). While our exams will be outside of class, I will write the exam such that the average student should be able to complete the exam in our usual 50-minute class period. The point of offering two-hours is to reduce the time-pressure and allow you to focus on carefully completing the problems on the exam (and allow time if you think you need to re-do one or more questions during the exam). **Note:** If you correctly explain a correct false answer on the True-False portion of the exam, I will give you a bonus point up to a 100% on any given exam.

Grading

I realize with any course, grades and grading are a source of stress/anxiety. I also realize test-anxiety hinders performance on exams, and that you as students have a lot going on. Here are some ways I attempt to reduce stress in my class:

1. You know what the exam format is from both homeworks and the practice exams.
2. Quizzes, in-class group problems, homeworks, and office hours are opportunities for you to receive feedback prior to an exam.

3. The weighting of the exams is lower for your worst exam and higher for your best exam.
4. 20% of your grade comes from completing homeworks and quizzes correctly, and the drops account for the fact that everyone needs to miss class/assignments sometimes.

Please note that I will not curve exams during the semester. Instead, I will assess average performance of the class as a whole and compare it to the average Econ-100 class at Hamilton. I may adjust grades upward if the average grade for this class is below the average ($\sim B$), but I will not adjust grades downward. I also do not have a fixed amount of each letter grade I will assign. **Therefore, you should aim for the highest grade on each exam you can, and you should work with others in the class.** Think of it not as competing within your class, but competing as a class to demonstrate to me your collective understanding of economics, and competing against how I think the average student would do on my exams.

Re-grading Policy

For homeworks and exams, I will post solutions and a point-breakdown for the short-answer questions. There is a grader for this class who will grade homeworks and exams. For exams only, you may request a re-grade by coming to see me in office hours within the first week after I hand exams back. You may also send me an email to indicate you would like a re-grade if you cannot make my office hours within the one-week window. **Please note:** I will regrade your entire exam, not just the question for which you think you should've received a higher number of points, and update your exam grade. This means requesting a re-grade may reduce, increase, or not change your exam grade from your original grade.

My Policies

Device Policy: No Devices Unless Written Exemption

The literature shows that students who write their notes down on paper tend to have better retention than students who type up their notes. Also, laptops can be distracting for both the student using laptops and those around students using laptops. Therefore, I do not allow students to use electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc) while in class. If you do really want to use a device to take notes (i.e. an iPad), send me an email explaining why you want an exemption and for which device. I will make each decision on a case-by-case basis.

Generative AI (e.g., Chat GPT)

You should do your own work rather than using Chat GPT to complete homework questions for you. Doing so may make you less prepared to answer quiz questions or exam questions correctly if you rely on Chat GPT to do the work. Chat GPT is extremely good at generating extra practice problems (e.g., changing numbers, providing an alternative framing, etc.). Chat GPT is okay at explaining textbook material or concepts from class. The way to view Chat GPT is as if Chat GPT or AI is a friend in the class with you. It wants to help you understand the material, but it can make mistakes or explain things incorrectly. You are responsible for your own knowledge/understanding of material in this class.

Using AI during quizzes or exams will be treated as cheating, so don't do it.

Attendance: Strive for Perfect Attendance

I work hard to make sure that class time is worth your time, and that the material in class will be engaging, useful, and helpful. While I do not directly grade attendance you should strive for perfect attendance! That being said life happens and sometimes you may have to miss class. I ask that you send me an email to let me know you will miss class, but I do not need any proof about why you are unable to make it to class. Use the slides and notes from a classmate to see what you can pick up. You can come to office hours to ask any remaining questions you have.

Caveat: Please do not come to class if you are sick. Simply send me an email that you are not able to make it beforehand.

Email & Communication Guidelines

If you need to send me an email, please include your name in the body of the email and “Econ 100” in the subject of the email. Also note that you are welcome to send me an email at anytime, but I only reply between 9am and 5pm during the week for most emails. If I get the same question from multiple people I will post the question & answer on Blackboard rather than answer individual emails. I will answer short questions via email, but if it would take more than 1-2 sentences to answer it will be better for all of us if you come in to ask those questions during office hours.

Student-Help/Office Hours

I have posted my office hours (and the times I am unavailable due to teaching) next to my door outside of my office. You may swing by my office at any time, and if the door is open I can guarantee at least a few minutes to answer questions. I may request you schedule a time if you would like to meet for longer, or come back during my regular office hours. You can always email me to set-up an appointment if my regular office hours do not work with your schedule. My email is ctatro@hamilton.edu.

Mental Well-Being

Many of us may feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed for various reasons. If at any point you feel unable to complete work for this class, please reach out and discuss with me. I also encourage you to make use of the resources available on campus to help and support you, such as Student Support Care Team (315-859-4463; studentsupport@hamilton.edu), the Counseling Center (315-859-4340), or an RA or Area Director in your residence hall. For academic matters, please contact the Associate Dean of Students for Academics, Adam Van Wynsberghe (avanwyns@hamilton.edu).

University/Department Policies

Students with Disabilities: Hamilton College will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation(s) and would like to make a formal request for this course, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. You will need to provide Allen Harrison, Assistant Dean for Accessibility Resources (aharriso@hamilton.edu) with appropriate documentation of your disability.

Final Exams: If the final exam in this class conflicts with other final exams, or makes it such that you would have 3 exams that begin within a 24-hour period, I ask you that you first see if you can reschedule the final exam for another class. Of course, if not, we will find an alternative time for you to take the final exam.

Honor Code: You have all signed the Honor Code. The Honor Code applies to all assignments and exams in this course.

Other Resources and Support Available to Students

Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (QSR) Center

The QSR center is a great additional resource for students for Econ 100. They offer dedicated drop-in tutoring for Econ 100 (in addition to other drop-in tutoring times) and facilitated study groups. Note that participating in a facilitated study group requires you to commit to a one-hour study session at the same time every week over the course of the semester.