

# AEDECON 2001: PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS

## Spring 2020 Syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Zoë Plakias  
**E-mail:** plakias.2@osu.edu  
**Office:** 323 Agricultural Administration  
**Office hours:** M 4-5 PM, or by appointment

### TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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Nattanicha Chairassamee  
 E-mail: chairassamee.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu  
 Office hours: W 1-2 PM  
 Location: 317 Agricultural Administration

Angie Liu  
 Email: liu.6200@buckeyemail.osu.edu  
 Office hours: Th 2:15-3:15 PM  
 Location: 245 Stillman Hall

### COURSE DETAILS

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Time: 12:45-2:05 PM Tuesday and Thursday  
 Location: 100 Stillman Hall  
 Credits: 3

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

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This course is intended to provide you with an introduction to the basic tools of economics, with applications to food, agriculture, the environment and natural resources. Even if you never take another economics class, I hope this course will help you interpret things you observe or read about, recognize economic phenomena in the world and in your life, and make more informed decisions. By the end of this course, I expect you will be able to:

- Describe the behavior of consumers and producers using economic terminology, math, and graphs
- Describe the motivations and impacts of government policies using economic terminology, math, and graphs
- Recognize, differentiate, and define key economic concepts
- Create and interpret graphs describing key economic relationships
- Recognize and analyze economic principles and thinking in the world around you

### GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT

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AEDECON 2001 is a Social Sciences GE course (Human, Natural, and Economic Resources category).

#### *Goals for GE Courses in Social Sciences:*

Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

#### *Expected Learning Outcomes for GE Courses in the Human, Natural and Economic Resources Category:*

- Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources.
- Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts.
- Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

This course will provide students with an introduction to the theories and methods of microeconomics, with an application to food and resource contexts. More specifically, students will learn about the basic economic models of consumer, producer and government decision-making; the trade-offs faced by society as the result of these decisions; and the implications of these decisions for various types of sustainability.

### PREREQUISITES

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This course has no prerequisites. It is not open to students with credit for AEDE 2001H or ECON 2001.

### (HIGHLY) RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

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The textbook for this course is *Principles of Microeconomics* by Gregory Mankiw. The 6th, 7th, or 8th (most recent) edition are all quite similar in terms of the main content and organization and will help you to understand the concepts in this course. Note: The end-of-chapter questions, case studies, and examples are the mostly likely to be different in these editions. The older editions are available online for as little as \$20. Several copies of the textbook are on two-hour reserve at the Thompson Library and the FAES library in the Agricultural Administration Building. Info about course reserves for this class can be found here: <https://guides.osu.edu/c.php?g=699458>. Cengage, the company that publishes the textbook, also offers some alternative versions of the textbook and some study tools associated with the book. Here is the link to these additional options: <http://services.cengagebrain.com/course/site.html?id=3707403>. Please note that “instructor-selected course material” just means this is the course textbook I selected; it does not mean I expect you to get the specific versions or editions of the textbook at the Cengage link.

### REQUIRED ONLINE PLATFORMS

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You are required to use two online platforms this term: Carmen and TopHat.

- **Carmen:** I make significant use of Carmen in this class. I will post the syllabus, lecture slides, problem sets, problem set answer keys, exam answer keys and optional supplementary materials on Carmen, and you have the option to turn in problem sets on Carmen if you would like. The TAs and I will also keep the grade book updated so you can see your progress in the class, and I will use Carmen to make important class announcements. Please make sure you are checking Carmen on a regular basis and set your Carmen notifications so you will be alerted when an announcement is posted.
- **TopHat:** I will make use of TopHat in class throughout the term. You can access TopHat via text, Android or iOS app, or a web browser on your chosen device. Please bring a device with TopHat to every class, as you will need to use TopHat for attendance and to earn unannounced in-class bonus points. Instructions for setting up TopHat can be found here: <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/top-hat/using-top-hat-students#overview>.

### ASSIGNMENTS + ASSESSMENTS

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The graded assignments and assessments for this course will consist of a getting to know you assignment, problem sets, discussion board questions and answers, and exams. Bonus points can also be earned through participation in in-class activities. Here are more details of each type of assignment or assessment:

- **Problem sets:** There will be ten problem sets throughout the term. Problem sets are an important opportunity for you to practice the material. You are welcome and encouraged to work together on problem sets but you must always submit your own work written in your own words. These problem sets will be due at the beginning of class (12:45 PM) on the day they are due and can be submitted either on paper or via Carmen (pick one for each assignment—please do not submit the same assignment on paper and in Carmen). Scanned images or photos taken with your phone are acceptable for submission on Carmen as long as all your work is visible, legible, and oriented upright in the image. Please check the image before submitting! If the work is at all difficult to read, please retake before submitting. Problem sets will be provided one week in advance of their due date. Late problem sets will receive a zero, but your lowest problem set grade will be dropped, so you can miss one assignment. That said, skipping an assignment early in the term can backfire down the road if things happen in your life that weren't expecting (as they often do). If you're not quite finished with an assignment, or you're struggling with a problem, it's a good idea to submit what you have by the deadline so that you can receive partial credit!

- Discussion board questions and answers:** In a class this big it can be hard to have vibrant in-class discussions about the material. For this reason, we're going to take some of the discussion online. To do this we'll be using the Discussion Board feature in Carmen. My goals for using the Discussion Board are for us to have an opportunity to discuss the topics and issues that are of most interest to *you*, think about how course material relates to the world outside of class, and share our diverse perspectives on the topics we're studying. In order to receive your credit, you must post 1 Question and 2 Answers in each of the weeks listed on the syllabus. Discussion board assignments for the week are due by the start of class (12:45 PM) on the date listed on the syllabus but can be posted at any time in the previous week. The question can be on *anything* related to recent class material (something you heard on the news, something that sparked your interest in class that you want to keep talking about, something you've observed in your life, etc.). However, there are some elements that make a good question. For example, closed ended questions (with a yes or no answer), questions that can be answered by reviewing the slides (e.g., how do you calculate the slope of the demand curve?), and questions that are offensive are not acceptable. Your question must include a link to source material (e.g., a legitimate news source, a business website, an academic journal article, a related and appropriate YouTube clip). If your question doesn't meet these requirements, you'll get notified by the TAs and have one week to fix it for half credit. In addition, you'll have to respond to two questions written by your peers each week. Your responses do not have to include links. Given the class size, I will not be able to respond to all your questions and chime in online, but I will post a short video each week on Carmen highlighting excellent posts and correcting any misconceptions that I saw posted. We'll discuss what makes a good post and develop a list of community guidelines for our Discussion Board in the first week of class.
- Exams:** We will have four in-class exams to assess your progress this term—the last of which will be cumulative. Your lowest exam score will be dropped. If you miss one of the first three exams (for whatever reason), there will be no make-up exam, and the final exam will serve as your make-up exam. Make-up exams for the final will only be permitted in very rare situations on a case-by-case basis.
- Bonus points:** I will provide opportunities throughout the semester for you to earn bonus points by participating in in-class activities or by answering an extra question on exams.

**GRADING**

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The grading for this class will be broken down as follows:

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Who are you?                      | 1% total                                     |
| Problem Sets (x10—lowest dropped) | 36% total, or 4% per problem set             |
| Exams (x4—lowest dropped)         | 48% total, or 16% per exam                   |
| Discussion Board 1Q/2A (x10)      | 10% total, or 1% per 1Q/2As                  |
| Attendance (x25)                  | 5% total, or 0.2% per day (after 5 absences) |

The grading scale will be:

|    |           |    |           |
|----|-----------|----|-----------|
| A  | 93.0-100  | C  | 73.3-76.6 |
| A- | 90.0-92.9 | C- | 70.0-73.2 |
| B+ | 86.7-89.9 | D+ | 66.7-69.9 |
| B  | 83.3-86.6 | D  | 60.0-66.6 |
| B- | 80.0-83.2 | E  | <60.0     |
| C+ | 76.7-79.9 |    |           |

**ATTENDANCE**

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I will record attendance via TopHat every day in class. You are permitted five absences from class with no questions asked on my part. Think of these five days as personal days. They can be used for anything. If you are sick, have a family emergency, are participating in a sporting or other extracurricular event, or have something else you need/want to do, take the day off! After you have been absent for five days (which represents about 17% of our time together for the term), additional absences will cause you to lose points from your attendance score. Please note, these five absences are your only excused absences. I strongly discourage you from using them up early in the term to play hooky—you may want or need them for more serious reasons later in the term!

## OFFICE HOURS

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Come to them! These are a time set aside for you. There are three scheduled office hours available to you every week. Two of these hours (mine and Nattanicha's) will be in the Agricultural Administration Building. One of these hours (Angie's) will be in 245 Stillman Hall, located in our classroom building. You do not need to schedule an appointment to come to these office hours. If you can't make it to any of the scheduled office hours during the week, please e-mail me or one of the TAs to make an appointment outside of these times. Please make sure you have reviewed the relevant sections of the lecture notes and book *before* you come to office hours and try to come prepared with specific questions to make the most of your time with us.

## E-MAIL

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The TAs and I will try to respond quickly to your e-mails. You can expect a response within a day during the week and within two days over the weekend. That said, we are human and sometimes miss e-mails or forget to reply. If you don't hear from us within the time frame given above, please e-mail again to remind us! A few tips for e-mailing... First, if you have a logistical question, the answer is very likely on the syllabus or in Carmen—please check these resources for answers before e-mailing! Second, if you have a question about homework or class material, please review the relevant slides and book chapter (listed in the syllabus and on Carmen) before e-mailing! Finally, please make sure your e-mail is professional! Professional e-mails start with greetings such as: Dear Dr. Plakias, Dear Nattanicha or Dear Angie.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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As indicated previously, while collaboration is permitted and encouraged on problem sets, you must complete your own work written in your own words. On exams, getting help from any outside sources (saved on your phone, written on your hand, etc.) or any other people (for example, by looking over their shoulder) is not allowed.

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

## MENTAL HEALTH

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A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. These kinds of challenges affect college students, graduate students—and even professors!—in the course of the academic year. If you are experiencing any of these challenges, personal problems or situational crises during the semester, please don't hesitate to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Service (614-292-5766; [www.ccs.osu.edu](http://www.ccs.osu.edu)) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. I understand it can help for you to be seen sooner by the OSU Counseling and Consultation Service if you call them with a faculty member. If your mental health is affecting your ability to succeed in this class, you are welcome to set up an appointment with me outside

of office hours and we can call together to set up an appointment for you.

### **LAUREN'S PROMISE-I WILL LISTEN AND BELIEVE YOU IF SOMEONE IS THREATENING YOU.**

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah Campus. We must all take actions to ensure this never happens again.

Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at The Ohio State University.

In cases of sexual harassment or violence, Ohio State will:

- Respond promptly and effectively to sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking,
- Provide interim measures as necessary
- Provide confidential and non-confidential support resources,
- Conduct a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation,
- Provide remedies as necessary.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, you can take the following actions:

- If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- Report it to me, and I will connect you to resources.
- Seek confidential sources of support and help:
  - Counseling and Consultation Service Available 24/7 through the Office of Student Life, ccs.osu.edu, 614-292-5766
  - Medical services through the Office of Student Life Wilce Student Health Center, shs.osu.edu, 614-292-4321
  - Legal services through Student Legal Services, Studentlegal.osu.edu, 614.292-5853

OSU's Office of Institutional Equity has established procedures and resources for Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention. They are detailed here: [https://womensplace.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2018/04/Reporting-Resources\\_Brochure\\_Columbus.pdf](https://womensplace.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2018/04/Reporting-Resources_Brochure_Columbus.pdf).

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

If you feel that you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office of Student Life's Disability Services at 614-292-3307 or in Room 98 of Baker Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

**COURSE OUTLINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

| <b>Date</b>    | <b>Topic</b>                                     | <b>Chapter</b>    | <b>Homework Due</b> |
|----------------|--|-------------------|---------------------|
| T 1/7          | <i>Intro + Logistics</i>                         |                   |                     |
| Th 1/9         | <i>Introduction to Economics</i>                 | 1,2               | Who are you?        |
| T 1/14         | <i>Introduction to Economics + Graphing</i>      | 2 + Appendix      |                     |
| Th 1/16        | <i>Graphing</i>                                  | Appendix to Ch. 2 | DB 1: 1Q/2As        |
| T 1/21         | <i>Gains from Trade</i>                          | 3                 | PS 1                |
| Th 1/23        | <i>Demand + Elasticity of Demand</i>             | 4,5               | DB 2: 1Q/2As        |
| T 1/28         | <i>Supply + Elasticity of Supply</i>             | 4,5               | PS 2                |
| Th 1/30        | <i>Welfare + Efficiency of Markets</i>           | 7                 | DB 3: 1Q/2As        |
| T 2/4          | <i>Loose Ends + Exam Review</i>                  |                   | PS 3                |
| Th 2/6         | <b>Exam 1</b>                                    | 1-5, 7            |                     |
| T 2/11         | <i>Consumption + Demand</i>                      | 21                |                     |
| Th 2/13        | <i>Cost of Production + Supply</i>               | 13                | DB 4 : 1Q/2As       |
| T 2/18         | <i>Cost of Production + Supply</i>               | 13                | PS 4                |
| Th 2/20        | <i>Market Organization: Perfect Competition</i>  | 14                | DB 5: 1Q/2As        |
| T 2/25         | <i>Market Organization: Market Power</i>         | 15                | PS 5                |
| Th 2/27        | <i>Input Markets</i>                             | 18                | DB 6: 1Q/2As        |
| T 3/3          | <i>Loose Ends + Exam Review</i>                  |                   | PS 6                |
| Th 3/5         | <b>Exam 2</b>                                    | 13-15,18,21       |                     |
| T 3/10         | Spring Break - No Class or Office Hours          |                   |                     |
| Th 3/12        | Spring Break - No Class or Office Hours          |                   |                     |
| T 3/17         | <i>Environment + Resources: Externalities</i>    | 10                |                     |
| Th 3/19        | <i>Environment + Resources: Public Goods</i>     | 11                | DB 7: 1Q/2As        |
| T 3/24         | <i>Environment + Resources: Climate Change</i>   | 10-11             | PS 7                |
| Th 3/26        | <i>Ag + Food: International Trade</i>            | 9                 | DB 8: 1Q/2As        |
| T 3/31         | <i>Ag + Food: Local Food Systems</i>             | 9                 | PS 8                |
| Th 4/2         | <i>Income + Taxes: Income Inequality</i>         | 20                | DB 9: 1Q/2As        |
| T 4/7          | <i>Income + Taxes: Taxes + Price Controls</i>    | 6                 | PS 9                |
| Th 4/9         | <i>Income + Taxes: Taxes + the US Tax System</i> | 8,12              | DB 10: 1Q/2As       |
| T 4/14         | <i>Wrap-up + Exam Review</i>                     |                   | PS 10               |
| Th 4/16        | <b>Exam 3</b>                                    | 6,8-12,20         |                     |
| T 4/21         | Reading Day - No Class                           |                   |                     |
| Th 4/23 (2 PM) | <b>Final Exam</b>                                | 1-15,18,20,21     |                     |