SYLLABUS

PUBLIC POLICY 602
MICROECONOMICS FOR PUBLIC POLICY
FALL 2025

INSTRUCTOR

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Pronouns: he/him/his
Office hours: Mondays, 10 – 11 am, or by appointment

All office hours are virtual (Zoom Meeting ID: 945 503 3539).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course provides an analytic framework for policy analysis with a focus on understanding economic markets and mitigating market failures. At the end of the course students will be able to:

- Apply economic theory to policy problems
- Use economic efficiency as one criterion for evaluating government interventions
- Identify sources of market failure and appropriate government interventions
- Identify governance problems that limit government interventions in markets

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Textbook: Pindyck, Robert S., and Daniel L. Rubinfeld. *Microeconomics* (any edition)
2. Blackboard: Problem sets, lecture slides, readings, and other course materials will be posted on the course page in Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Problem sets (6 x 8 points each; lowest score will be dropped):** Problem sets will guide students through exercises that apply microeconomic theory to real-world problems. Some problem sets will require students to respond to open-ended questions.
2. **Midterm and final exams (2 x 30 points each):** The exams will test mastery of microeconomic theory and ability to apply this theory to real-world problems.

PROBLEM SET RULES

Due dates for problem sets are listed in the table at the end of this syllabus. Problem sets are always due at the beginning of class. ***Late submissions are not allowed*** because the answers to problem set questions will be discussed in class on the day the problem set is due.

Students are encouraged to work on problem sets collaboratively, under the following ground rules:

1. Collaboration means discussing the problems together. However, the actual writing must be done individually. Each collaborator must hand in their own problem set; you cannot hand in a single set as the work of several people.

2. When collaborating, every student must work on every problem. You may not divide the problems up among yourselves.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an important value at UMBC. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. These principles and policies apply in both face-to-face and online classes. Resources for students about academic integrity at UMBC are available at
https://academicconduct.umbc.edu/resources-for-students/.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ASSISTANTS

The School of Public Policy currently does not have an official policy on the use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) for course assessments. Understanding how and when to use these tools is quickly emerging as an important skill for future professions. To that end, *in this course*, you are allowed to use generative AI tools as long as it aligns with the learning outcomes or goals associated with assignments.

You are fully responsible for the information you submit based on a generative AI query. Your submissions may not violate academic honesty standards, intellectual property laws, or standards of research you are conducting through coursework. You are responsible for fact checking statements composed by AI language models as well as any mathematical calculations performed by AI assistants.

The same statistical analysis can often be performed in slightly different ways. *Problem sets and exams will be graded based on use of methods and approaches (e.g., formulas, mathematical conventions, Stata commands) that are presented in class.* I may deduct points on a question if the student relies on an AI tool that took a different approach to answer the question, and thus arrived at an answer that is different from what they would have obtained using methods and approaches presented in class.

Finally, your use of generative AI tools must be properly documented and cited for any work submitted in this course.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGY

Diminished mental health can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with other parts of your life can also contribute to decreased academic performance. UMBC provides cost-free and confidential mental health services through Retriever Integrated Health to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being. Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do—for yourself and for those who care about you. Retriever Integrated Health is located in The Center for Well-Being (between Chesapeake and Susquehanna Halls). Phone: 410-455-2542. Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS, GUIDANCE, AND RESOURCES

Accommodations for students with disabilities are provided for all students with a qualified disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA & ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC

department designated to coordinate accommodations that creates equal access for students when barriers to participation exist in University courses, programs, or activities.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations in your courses, please refer to the SDS website at https://sds.umbc.edu for registration information and office procedures.

SDS email: disAbility@umbc.edu

SDS phone: 410-455-2459

If you will be using SDS approved accommodations in this class, please contact the instructor to discuss implementation of the accommodations. During remote instruction requirements due to COVID, communication and flexibility will be essential for success.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

UMBC Policy in addition to federal and state law (to include Title IX) prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in University programs and activities. Any student who is impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, gender discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, gender-based harassment, or related retaliation should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator to make a report and/or access support and resources. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at titleixcoordinator@umbc.edu or 410-455-1717.

You can access support and resources even if you do not want to take any further action. You will not be forced to file a formal complaint or police report. Please be aware that the University may take action on its own if essential to protect the safety of the community.

If you are interested in making a report, please use the Online Reporting/Referral Form. Please note that, if you report anonymously, the University's ability to respond will be limited.

Notice that Faculty are Responsible Employees with Mandatory Reporting Obligations:

All faculty members and teaching assistants are considered *Responsible Employees*, per UMBC's Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, and Gender Discrimination. Faculty and teaching assistants therefore required to report all known information regarding alleged conduct that may be a violation of the Policy to the Title IX Coordinator, even if a student discloses an experience that occurred before attending UMBC and/or an incident that only involves people not affiliated with UMBC. Reports are required regardless of the amount of detail provided and even in instances where support has already been offered or received.

While faculty members want to encourage you to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, students should understand that faculty are required to report past and present sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, stalking, and gender discrimination that is shared with them to the Title IX Coordinator so that the University can inform students of their rights, resources, and support. While you are encouraged to do so, you are not obligated to respond to outreach conducted as a result of a report to the Title IX Coordinator.

If you need to speak with someone in confidence, who does not have an obligation to report to the Title IX Coordinator, UMBC has a number of Confidential Resources available to support you:

- Retriever Integrated Health (Main Campus): 410-455-2472; Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm; for after-hours support, call 988.

- Center for Counseling and Well-Being (Shady Grove Campus): 301-738-6273; Monday-Thursday 10:00 am – 7:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm (virtual) Online Appointment Request Form
- Pastoral Counseling via The Gathering Space for Spiritual Well-Being: 410-455-6795; i3b@umbc.edu; Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 10:00 pm

Other Resources:

- Women's Center (for students of all genders): 410-455-2714; womenscenter@umbc.edu. Monday – Thursday 9:30 am – 5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
- Shady Grove Student Resources, Maryland Resources, National Resources.

Child Abuse and Neglect:

Please note that Maryland law and UMBC policy require that faculty report all disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services and/or the police even if the person who experienced the abuse or neglect is now over 18.

Lauren's Promise:

I promise to (a) listen and believe you if someone is threatening you; (b) represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking; (c) change campus culture that responds poorly to dating violence and stalking.

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

UMBC's Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination expressly prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, including pregnancy. Resources for pregnant, parenting and breastfeeding students are available through the University's Office of Equity and Civil Rights. Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator to discuss plans and ensure ongoing access to their academic program with respect to a leave of absence— returning following leave, or any other accommodation that may be needed related to pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, breastfeeding, and/or the early months of parenting.

In addition, students who are pregnant and have an impairment related to their pregnancy that qualifies as disability under the ADA may be entitled to accommodations through the Office of Student Disability Services.

DISCLAIMER

This syllabus may need to be updated throughout the semester for many reasons. Policies, deadlines, and assignments may change. I will clearly communicate all such changes to you and the most up-to-date syllabus will always be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, & DUE DATES

Week #	Date	Topics	Readings	Due
1	September 8	Prices and markets	• P&R, Chapter 1: All • P&R, Chapter 2: All	
2	September 15	Demand theory	• P&R, Chapter 3: All • P&R, Chapter 4: Skip Appendix	
3	September 22	Producer theory	• P&R, Chapter 6: All • P&R, Chapter 7: Introduction; Sections 1 – 4	*Problem Set #1*
4	September 29	Profit maximization and competitive market supply	• P&R, Chapter 8: All	*Problem Set #3*
5	October 6	Competitive equilibrium and government policy	• P&R, Chapter 9: All	*Problem Set #2*
6	October 13	NO CLASS – TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM		
7	October 20	Non-competitive markets	• P&R, Chapter 10: All • P&R, Chapter 11: Introduction; Sections 1 – 2 • P&R, Chapter 11: Introduction; Sections 1 – 3	
8	October 27	Efficiency and trade	• P&R, Chapter 16: All	*Problem Set #4*
9	November 3	Equity and endowments	• Readings (available on Blackboard) • Video 1 • Video 2	
10	November 10	Externalities	• P&R, Chapter 18: Introduction; Sections 1 – 4	*Problem Set #5*

11	November 17	Public goods and common property resources	• P&R, Chapter 18: Sections 5 – 6	
12	November 24	**NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING WEEK – WATCH VIDEOS**		
		Examples of market failure	• [Video 1](#) • [Video 2](#) • [Video 3](#) • [Video 4](#)	
13	December 1	Uncertainty and risk, asymmetric information	• P&R, Chapter 5: Introduction; Sections 1 – 2 • P&R, Chapter 17: Introduction; Sections 1 – 4	***Problem Set #6***
14	December 8	**NO CLASS – TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM**		