Course Goals

The goal of Human Resources and Labor Markets is to enable students to use economic reasoning and analysis to understand wage and employment determination in labor markets. This goal can be achieved through reading, study, writing, critical thinking, and class lecture/discussion. The course examines theory, evidence, and policy related to labor supply and demand, human capital, technological change, wage differentials, earnings inequality, compensation policies, job mobility and migration, discrimination, unemployment, and unions.

Required Text and Readings


Support material for the Borjas text is at [http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073523208/student_view0/](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073523208/student_view0/)

Readings other than the text are posted at [http://unionstats.gsu.edu/8220](http://unionstats.gsu.edu/8220). Journal and news articles with * are required. Others are optional. Additional readings may be added during the semester. Regular reading of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or other quality news sources will enhance the value of the course.


You may find it helpful to examine government statistics on the labor market. A wide array of government labor statistics and data are available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)) and the Bureau of the Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The NBER also maintains a useful data site ([www.nber.org](http://www.nber.org)). Sources for economic data and other useful links are summarized in *Resources for Economists* ([rfe.org](http://rfe.org)).

Grading and Exams/Assignment Dates

Final grades are based on a weighted average of a midterm (30%), a statistical analysis assignment on earnings equations (25%), a comprehensive final exam (35%), and paper summaries and class/seminar participation (10%). Students must complete all work as scheduled. Regular attendance is essential.

Midterm: Tuesday, February 23

Spring Break: Tuesday, March 15

Take-home Essays (due date): Tuesday, March 29 (to be handed out March 8)

Final exam: Tuesday, April 26, 7:00-9:30 p.m. [Not May 3, as listed in GSU exam schedule]

Academic Honesty:

Students are required to know and abide by Georgia State’s Policy on Academic Honesty. The Policy prohibits dishonesty in academic work. You are expected to behave with integrity and not tolerate dishonesty by others.
ECON 8220, Human Resources and Labor Markets, Course Outline and Required Readings (those with *)


* Borjas – Chs. 1 (including appendix), 4 (pp. 147-155)

[1/19, 1/26] 2. Labor Supply, Time Use, and Family Economics

* Borjas – Ch. 2
* C. Bialik, “Measuring How Births Swell the Population Isn’t Child’s Play,” WSJ, 12/7/2012.

[2/2, 2/9a] 3. Demand for Labor, Minimum Wages, and Nonwage Benefits


* Borjas – Ch. 6

Midterm: Tuesday, February 23 (Sections 1-4)
5. Economics of Discrimination and Wage Differentials by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

*Borjas – Ch. 9

Hirsch Handouts: “Oaxaca Decompositions” and “Log vs. Percentage Differentials”


M. Fletcher, “Black jobless rate is twice that of whites,” *Washington Post*, 12/14/12.


6. Compensating Wage Differentials, Worker Mobility, Immigration, and Job Search

*Borjas – Ch. 4 (pp.167-185), 5, 8


7. Wage Inequality, Skill Biased Technological Change (SBTC), and the Demand-Supply Race

*Borjas – Ch. 7


T. Edsall, “Is the American Middle Class Losing Out to China and India?” *NY Times*, 4/1/2014.


8. Economic Analysis of Labor Unions

*Borjas – Ch. 10
*S. Greenhouse, “Union Membership in U.S. Fell to a 70-Year Low Last Year,” *NY Times*, 1/21/2011.
*S. Greenhouse, “Volkswagen Vote is Defeat for Labor in the South,” *NY Times*, 2/14/2014.

9. Unemployment

*Borjas – Ch. 12
*B. Casselman, “Unemployment Scars Likely to Last for Years,” *WSJ*, 1/9/2012.

Personnel Economics, Pay Policies, and Internal Labor Markets (if time permits)


Final Exam:  Tuesday, April 26, 7:00-9:30 p.m.