

ECON 2302 – Principles of Microeconomics

Spring 2026 – University of Texas at Tyler

Instructor: Dr. Cecilia Cuellar

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Office Hours: Friday 10 am-1 pm (By appointment)

Class Meetings: Monday & Wednesday | 2:30-3:55 pm

Location: COB 103

Course Description

This course introduces the core principles of microeconomics, with an emphasis on how individuals, firms, and governments make decisions in the presence of scarcity. Students will learn how markets work, how prices coordinate economic activity, and how policy interventions affect efficiency and equity. The course is taught in person and combines economic theory with real-world applications, current events, and data-driven examples. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and applied activities.

Required Materials

Textbook:

The required textbook for the course is **Principles of Economics by Asarta and Butters (McGraw-Hill)**. You are required to purchase the “online course package,” which includes (i) an electronic version of the textbook and (ii) the Connect learning system. You will use the Connect learning system to access the textbook and complete the online assignments. For more information, go to the Getting Started section in Canvas.

Decode Econ (DEFF Program)

This course incorporates Decode Econ, an economics newsletter that connects economic theory to current events.

- Decode Econ is free for students.
- Students will use short applied readings to reinforce course concepts and engage in economic reasoning beyond the textbook.
- Decode Econ content may be used for in-class discussions, short reflections, or low-stakes assignments.

Link to subscribe: <https://www.decodeecon.com?r=75kxax>

Course Learning Outcomes

1. By the end of this course, students will be able to:
2. Explain scarcity, opportunity cost, and the fundamental economic problem.
3. Analyze supply and demand and determine market equilibrium.
4. Evaluate consumer and producer behavior in competitive markets.
5. Use elasticity and efficiency concepts to assess market outcomes.
6. Apply microeconomic tools to understand real-world policy issues and current events.

Course Structure and Expectations

This is an in-person course. Learning will take place through:

- Lectures and guided problem-solving
- In-class discussions and activities
- Reading the textbook and Decode Econ posts
- Online assignments through McGraw-Hill Connect

Students are expected to come to class prepared, having completed assigned readings and activities.

Grading

Component	Weight
Quizzes	25%
Homework	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Decode Econ Bonus	+1 pts (you can accumulate max 10 pts)

Standard Path Grading

Final grades under the Standard Path are based on the weighted average of quizzes, homework, the midterm exam, and the final exam, each worth 25 percent of the course grade.

Decode Econ Participation (Extra Credit)

Students may earn extra credit points by participating in class discussions related to assigned *Decode Econ* posts

- Each meaningful contribution earns +1 point.
- Students may accumulate up to 10 total extra credit points over the semester.
- Extra credit points are added to the final course score and do not replace or reweight any required assignment or exam.
- Participation is evaluated based on engagement and relevance, not on having a “correct” answer.
- Participation opportunities will be announced in advance, and not all class meetings will include extra credit opportunities.

Exams

There will be two in-person exams:

- Midterm Exam (non-cumulative)
- Final Exam (non-cumulative)

Exams emphasize economic intuition, graphical analysis, problem-solving, and applied reasoning aligned with in-class activities, homework, quizzes, and Decode Econ discussions.

Assignments

- Homework (McGraw-Hill Connect): Graded on completion and timeliness.
- Quizzes (McGraw-Hill Connect): Graded on accuracy and completion.

The Red Door Option

The **Red Door Option** offers students an alternative assessment pathway designed to explore different ways of demonstrating economic understanding beyond traditional exams. This option introduces choice and uncertainty, similar to the decisions individuals and firms face in real-world economic environments.

The Standard Path

Under the Standard Path, students complete both in-person exams (Midterm and Final), along with homework and quizzes. Final grades are calculated using the standard weighting outlined in this syllabus.

The Red Door Path

Students who choose the Red Door Option will permanently replace one exam (either the Midterm or the Final) with a faculty-designed applied project.

- The exam that is replaced is randomly assigned by the instructor.

- Once assigned, the exam replacement is final. Students will not take the replaced exam under any circumstances.
- The project evaluates the same core learning objectives as the exam, but through applied analysis, written reasoning, and economic interpretation rather than a timed test.
- Project details are revealed only after the student commits to the Red Door Option.

Choosing the Red Door Option involves risk. Students should select this path only if they are willing to accept uncertainty in both assessment format and outcomes.

Timing of the Red Door Project

The Red Door project is due during the same exam window as the exam it replaces.

- If the **Midterm Exam** is replaced, the project is due during the Midterm exam window.
- If the **Final Exam** is replaced, the project is due during the Final exam window.

The project is submitted instead of the replaced exam and before any exam grades are known. This ensures fairness and comparable evaluation across students.

Grading Under the Red Door Option (Two-Tier System)

The Red Door Option uses a two-tier grading system designed to be fair, transparent, and consistent with the learning goals of the course. The project can replace an exam, but how fully it replaces the exam depends on the quality of the project.

If you choose the Red Door Option, one exam (either the Midterm or the Final, randomly assigned) is permanently replaced by the project. Students do not take the replaced exam under any circumstances.

Tier 1: Full Replacement (High Project Performance)

- The project counts as 25% of the final course grade.
- The replaced exam counts as 0%.

Tier 2: Partial Replacement (Lower Project Performance)

- The project counts as 15% of the final course grade.
- The replaced exam contributes 10%, calculated using the score from the remaining exam taken by the student.
- The remaining exam, homework, and quizzes retain their original weights.

Important clarification:

- Students who select the Red Door Option do not take the replaced exam, regardless of project performance.
- In Tier 2, the exam component is calculated using the score from the exam that the student did complete.
- No make-up, retake, or alternative exam will be offered.

Project evaluation is based on a grading rubric shared in advance. Rubric scores determine Tier 1 or Tier 2 placement.

This structure ensures that:

- Students are not automatically advantaged by choosing the Red Door Option.
- Strong project work is rewarded.
- Students are protected from extreme grade outcomes without eliminating risk.

Decision Window

Students must indicate their choice by completing a Canvas survey.

- Decision window: **January 12 – January 18 (11:59 PM)**
- The survey must be completed even if the student remains on the Standard Path.

Rules, deadlines, project expectations, grading details, and examples will be reviewed after the decision window.

Grading Scale: Students will be evaluated based on the grading scale below.

A: 90% - 100%

B: 80% - 89.9%

C: 70% - 79.9%

D: 60% - 69.9%

F: ≤ 59.9%

Note: Final grades **will NOT be rounded or adjusted based on proximity to these cut-points.**

Tentative Schedule – Spring 2026

Week	Dates	Topics / Chapters	Assignments
1	Jan 12-16	Introduction and Economic Thinking	
2	Jan 19*-23	Fundamentals of Economic Analysis	Week 2: Assignments *Jan 19 (No class)
3	Jan 26-30	Supply, Demand, and Market Equilibrium	Week 3: Assignments
4	Feb 2-6	Elasticity and Market Efficiency	Week 4: Assignments
5	Feb 9-13	Consumer Choice	Week 5: Assignments
6	Feb 16-20	Midterm Exam	
7	Feb 23-27	Production and Costs	Week 7: Assignments
8	Mar 2-6	Perfect Competition	Week 8: Assignments
9	Mar 9-13	Spring Break Week – No Class	
10	Mar 16-20	Monopoly	Week 10: Assignments
11	Mar 23-27	Monopolistic Competition and Oligopoly	Week 11: Assignments
12	Mar 30-Apr 3	Resources, Prices, and Utilization	Week 12: Assignments
13	Apr 6-10	International Trade	Week 13: Assignments
14	Apr 13-17	Market Failures and Government Policy	Week 14: Assignments
15	Apr 20-24	Review and Applications	
16	Apr 27-May 1	Final Exam	TBD

The professor reserves the right to change the outline and any other aspect of this syllabus throughout the semester.

University Policies and Information

Withdrawing from Class

Students may [withdraw](#) (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal](#).

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your

academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. **CAUTION #1:** Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#). **CAUTION #2:** All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. **CAUTION #4:** All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with [Military and Veterans Affairs](#).

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade *only when **all** of the following conditions are met:* (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons before the

time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services,

please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military and Veterans

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated and veterans students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Affairs](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [UT Tyler's Policy 7.01: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to UT Tyler's [Excused Absence for Religious Holy Days](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.