ECON 335: Labor Economics, Fall 2014

Class meetings: 106 Hegeman, 11:50-1:10pm, Monday and Wednesday

Instructor: James Green-Armytage   e-mail: armytage@bard.edu

Office: 213 Albee   Hours: Weds 1:20-2:20; Tues & Thurs 3-4; by appointment

Course web site: inside.bard.edu/~armytage/teaching.html

Text

Ronald Ehrenberg and Robert Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*, 11th edition

Exam schedule

First test: Wednesday, October 1

Second test: Wednesday, November 12

Third test: Wednesday, December 17 (last day of class)

Assignments

• **Problem sets**: about five or six, scattered through the semester

These will help you practice the mathematical modeling aspects of the course. They will cover models developed in class, and will be similar to some exam problems.

• **Reflection papers: about four or five, scattered through the semester**

These will be a mixture of looser, free-form questions and more specific questions that will help you focus on specific concepts from the text. The latter will be similar to some exam problems.

• **Statistical analysis assignment: Due Monday, November 24th**

Details to be announced. My intention is for this to be a relatively straightforward assignment that gives you an opportunity to work with statistical processing software (most likely Stata) and labor econ-relevant data.

• **Lit review: Part one due Monday, October 27th; part two due Wednesday, December 24th**

This assignment asks you to pick a topic within labor economics and examine some of the papers published in academic journals that address that topic. For part one, I'd like you to have a topic, a preliminary list of articles (e.g. about five), and a short summary for each article. For part two, I'd like you to find more articles (e.g. ten or more, total), deepen your summaries, and say something about how the papers fit together and inform us as a whole.

• **Labor economics manifesto: Due Wednesday, December 24th**

A free form assignment. Write about a labor econ topic that interests you. Try to make it interesting and informative. You can use mathematical modeling, analysis of empirical data, case studies, philosophical argument, etc. Try to write something that is interesting to read, based on a rigorous epistemological framework of some kind, and which contributes to the existing body of knowledge in some way. The topic can be related to your lit review, but it doesn't have to be.

Approximate grading scheme

Tests: 18% for each exam (54% total)

Problem sets and statistical analysis assignment: 10%

Attendance, participation, and reflection papers: 18%

Lit review and labor econ manifesto: 18%

Additional remarks

• We'll go through the chapters in the Ehrenberg and Smith text in order, and cover all of them.

• The tests are a mixture of calculation, graphing, and written responses. They are cumulative, with an emphasis on recent material. The problem sets and reflections will help you to prepare for the tests.

• To make exam scores into exam grades, I first express each score as a fraction of the total number of points possible to get the raw score, and then raise the raw score to a fractional power to get the curved score. I calibrate the fractional power according to the difficulty of the exam. Then, scores from 0.9 to 1.0 are As, scores from 0.8 to 0.9 are Bs, etc. For example, a score of 36 points out of a possible 48 on an exam would be a raw score of 75%, and then a curved score of approximately 87% if I raised 0.75 to the power 0.5.A curved score of 87% is near the boundary between B and B+.