Microeconomics is one of the foundations of business: the economic theory of firm behavior. You may have to change the way you study if you are used to survey classes. Memorization techniques do not work well with a class that is more conceptual. You can memorize facts, but you can’t memorize ideas. To learn these, you must do things: homework, online practice problems, reading the textbook, and studying your notes.

–ADAPTING THIS COURSE TO CORONAVIRUS–

Because of coronavirus, the organization of this course has been dramatically altered. It was originally scheduled to be fully face-to-face, but is now a “blended” course that meets in person only one day per week, Friday, with the remainder of the material provided remotely. Furthermore, attendance at our Friday class meetings is optional. You may opt to take this class completely online if you wish. You need not request permission from me or anyone else in order to do this.

All lectures, homeworks, and tests are online on Blackboard. For each chapter that we cover, there is an online lecture, a set of optional practice problems that are fully worked by me in videos online, and a graded, (mostly) multiple choice homework on Blackboard that you can take twice (the higher score is kept). And there is one more thing. For each chapter, I ask you to complete one “engagement activity.” These engagement activities will not be lectures or homework reviews, but activities that show you how the course material applies to the real world. These activities will enhance your understanding of the material but will not show up directly on the tests.

Each week, you have a choice of three engagement activities. You can attend class in person on Fridays. You can attend a synchronous Zoom discussion online earlier in the week. Or you can complete what I call an “application” on Blackboard, in which you read a newspaper article, watch a short video about the economics in it, and take a brief quiz. Thus, you have the option of attending every scheduled Friday class meeting, just a few scheduled class meetings, or no class meetings at all. Engagement activities are graded on a completion basis: complete the activity and you receive full credit. Each will take about fifty minutes of your time. (There are no engagement activities or in-class meetings on test weeks. In the event classes are cancelled, all engagement activities will occur through Zoom or online.)

In addition, illness may prevent some of us from doing our schoolwork for a few weeks. My grading system allows everyone to miss three full class weeks, including a test week, without any grade penalty or makeup work whatsoever, no documentation required. I can make further adjustments for specific individuals if circumstances merit and appropriate documentation is provided.

As some students will do the engagement activities online, and our class meetings have been moved to a larger room, I expect in-room student density will be reduced. Also, I will strictly enforce the university’s mask-wearing policy. Let’s get through this as safely and successfully as we can.
This is a sophomore level class into which freshmen may enroll. Thus, though this class has no prerequisites, sometimes it’s advisable to postpone it until later. If you are a freshman who struggles in mathematics and who has had no other business classes, consider talking to me about whether to remain in this class.

After completing this course, the student will have learned the following:

1. The role of competition and prices in determining what goods are produced, how those goods are allocated, and how the benefits of trade are distributed to consumers, workers, and firm owners.

2. The workings and institutional features of the competitive market, and the way that the free operation of this market can achieve valuable social objectives.

3. The firm’s decision to supply goods to the market, in the context of profit maximization, and the role of opportunity costs in that decision.

4. How market characteristics influence firms’ supply, pricing, and investment.

Mankiw’s *Principles of Economics*. Any edition is fine, including old editions, and you are welcome to purchase a hard copy or an electronic edition. I do not teach right out of the book, but I present material in a similar order, so reading the text provides context, detail, and examples that help a lot—so please get the book and get it promptly. The calendar lists the readings for each unit, and I will periodically connect the lectures to the chapters.

As a Cengage Unlimited eTextbook, you can get access to this book and all Cengage textbooks for a single price of $70 per semester. If you use multiple Cengage books across several classes, this might be your best option—but it is not required for this class. Neither is MindTap or any sort of access code. You just need the book.

My office hours are listed above. You are also welcome to stop by my office anytime the door is open, to call my office, or to request an appointment. In addition, the College of Business Administration will provide ECON and BANA tutoring all semester long, in a manner that is to be determined. I will give you the details when I have them.

You can miss two engagement activities, two homeworks, and one test in this class without penalty, no documentation required. I am willing to provide make-ups for individuals who miss more than this amount of work, providing appropriate medical documentation is provided for **all** missed work. Do not miss coursework for no reason, counting on a make-up later if you get sick. You will not receive it.
---COURSE ORGANIZATION---

Schedule: This course is organized into four units, each of which lasts three or four weeks and ends with a test. Each week preceding the test, we will cover one chapter. During that week, you will be asked to read that chapter, watch an online lecture, review some ungraded “practice problems,” and submit a graded, mostly multiple-choice homework that you can take twice. On test weeks, there is nothing else to do but study for and take the test.

The full course schedule is available on Blackboard, under “Course Documents.” The schedule is very systematic, to help you organize your studying. Each week can be thought of as beginning on Monday and ending on Sunday night. Everything that is due is due at 11:55 pm on Sunday night.

Material: Each week’s material can be found under “Weekly Content.” The material is organized by Unit (1-4) and by Week (1-15). The Units and Weeks appear in sequential order and remain open after they appear, with successive weeks appearing above them. Thus, you can always go to the top week that is open under “Weekly Content” to see your assigned work for that week, and also go back to previous weeks to review that material should you wish.

---GRADING AND BEHAVIOR POLICIES---

Engagement: Each week that new material is covered, you are asked to complete one of three “engagement activities”: attendance at our Friday in-class meeting, participating in a Zoom discussion earlier in the week (at times to be determined), or completing an “application” on Blackboard, in which you read a newspaper article, watch a short video about the article, and take an eight-question quiz.

Engagement is graded on a completion basis. You must get five questions correct on the application quiz to receive completion credit. Class attendance and Zoom participation will receive full credit unless you arrive late, leave early, or engage in problem behaviors (e.g., sleeping, texting, mask issues). In order to fully participate in the Zoom discussions, please have your camera on so we can see you. If you have a reason that you wish to be exempted from this requirement, please contact me.

Begraded: You have four tests and a final exam, each of which is taken on Blackboard.

Your Four Best Tests, 17% each: 68%
Your Eight Best Homeworks, 2% each: 16%
Eight “Engagement Activities,” 2% each: 16%

100%

This means you can miss one test, two homeworks, and two engagement activities without penalty. If you are happy with all four tests, you can skip the final exam.
**Boring but Effective.** I can’t stress enough: hitting the ground running and utilizing good study habits are the keys to doing well in this class. You will be much more likely to succeed in this class if you do these things and much less likely if you don’t.

---OTHER POLICIES---

**E-Mail:** E-Mail is an acceptable form of communication for all class matters. I will send out course e-mails via the Blackboard system. You can have your SHSU e-mails forwarded to the destination of your choice. Please do so if you wish, because if I send a course e-mail I assume you will get it.

**Cheat on Me:** We at Sam Houston expect you to conduct your studies with integrity. My *minimum* penalty for cheating is a grade of 0 on that assignment. I am always on the lookout for academic dishonesty and never fail to take action when I detect it.

To ensure academic integrity, the exams in this course require you to use the “Respondus Lockdown Browser” and “Respondus Monitor” software furnished by SHSU Online. This automated online proctoring service is designed to deter cheating in an online testing environment, by monitoring eye movements, body movements, and voice recognition, and by preventing your computer from accessing other online materials during the exam. Any unusual activity will be flagged for me, and I will look at the video provided by Respondus to see whether any cheating has occurred.

Please be aware that repeatedly diverting your eyes or your attention from the computer screen will be considered suspicious activity. The first time I notice this, I will give you a warning; the second time, I will require you to take a replacement exam in person.

For this software, you are required to have a microphone, keyboard, mouse, and webcam (normally, an external webcam includes a microphone). For more information, see the “Proctored Exams” section of our course Blackboard site. If ever you run into problems installing or using this software, don’t contact me—I can’t help you. Instead, call SHSU Online Technology Support at 936-294-2780. If you run into a problem while taking an exam, call them immediately!

**Policy on Electronics:** Except in emergencies or to accommodate a disability, in-class use of all electronic devices of this type, including cell phones, smart phones, and laptop computers, is wholly prohibited. Use of any such device during a test is, by university policy, de facto evidence of cheating. Please turn off your phones and store them out of sight. If you violate my electronics policy more than twice, I reserve the right to dock your final grade by one point for each violation. Before I do that, I will first send you an e-mail asking to speak with you about the problem.

**Bonus Tracks:** For policies regarding students with disabilities, absences on religious holy days, and academic honesty, see www.shsu.edu/syllabus.