

Darren Grant (I go by Mr. Grant) 2:00-3:15 pm M,W (Sec. 01); 6-8:50 pm T (Sec. 02)
ECON 3351, Labor Economics, Spr. 2017 Office Hours: 3:15-5 pm, M, W; 5-6 pm at The
237H Smith-Hudson; (936) 294-4324 Woodlands Center, by appt., when the door's open.
dgrant@shsu.edu <http://www.shsu.edu/dpg006/>

Course Objectives. In general, Labor Economics is the study of labor markets (e.g., the market for lumberjacks), labor market institutions (e.g., unions), public policy labor market issues (e.g., immigration or the minimum wage), the wage structure (e.g., income inequality), and the economics of human resource management (turnover, incentive pay). In particular, this course is oriented toward basic theories that help you understand how practical business decisions involving labor are, and should be, made. Thus, the course is focused on reasoning and analysis, rather than the acquisition of factual knowledge per se.

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

1. How basic labor market institutions, such as unions, and the government influence the operation of labor markets;
2. How incentives shape labor market outcomes, such as the allocation of labor across occupations or the intensity of work effort;
3. How opportunity costs shape labor market decisions, such as labor supply or which job benefits to offer;
4. How these forces play out in domestic and international economies.

Prerequisite. ECON 2302, Principles of Microeconomics, or equivalent, is a prerequisite for this class. Please drop if you don't have the prerequisite.

Book. The text is Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*, any edition is fine. The current edition is the 12th, but earlier editions are much cheaper, acceptable to me, and available online.

Plan for the Course. The course is organized into three units, listed on the schedule at bottom. This schedule identifies the topic for each week of class, book chapters, and reading quizzes. (Reading quizzes may be on either day of the week, which may or may not be announced in advance.) I do not plan on changing anything on this calendar except for significant unforeseen circumstances.

Each unit contains four to six lectures, a couple of "outside" readings (from magazines, newspapers, etc.), one application that relates the theory to an everyday labor market, a set of homework problems, and a test.

Cheating. At Sam Houston, we expect you to conduct your studies with integrity. My minimum penalty for cheating is a grade of 0 on that test or assignment. I am always on the lookout for academic dishonesty and never fail to take action when I detect it.

Attendance. Plan on being in class and being on time. Both affect my impression of your professionalism. Furthermore, lateness by even a few students every day can be quite disruptive. Please make every attempt to be here on time.

I reserve the right to lock the door at the beginning of class, and open it once after about ten minutes for latecomers. I don't like to do this, but I cannot let class be disrupted by latecomers or people who leave in the middle of class.

Begraded. Your final average is calculated as follows:

3 Tests	32 pts. each	96 pts. total
Reading Quizzes (see below)	10 pts.	<u>10 pts. total</u>
		106 pts. total

The tests each feature a mix of graphing, short answer, and multiple choice questions, some of which will be similar in style to the homework problems and exercises that are discussed in class. There are six reading quizzes, which each have six multiple-choice problems. I allow you to miss one question on each quiz without penalty, and drop your lowest quiz.

The grading scale is expressed in points, not percent:

A = 90-106
B = 80-89.99
C = 70-79.99
D = 60-69.99
F = 0-59.99

I will round up students with particularly good professionalism (see below) as much as 1.00 points. Do not take this as the default: I must recognize that you have good professionalism, rather than fail to notice its absence. There is also an extra credit opportunity (see below) that will add one point to your final average.

Professionalism. Good professionalism is easy to spot. It is about exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, businesslike manner appropriate to an upper-division class in the College of Business. This includes coming to class regularly, and being on time; being prepared for class every day; having a single, well-organized notebook for class notes and materials; participating in class; maintaining proper classroom decorum; and doing all assigned work, graded or ungraded, conscientiously. If I recognize that you exhibit good professionalism, I will round up your final average as much as one point.

In addition, Career Service and the College of Business Administration will host several events this semester that will help you develop the professional, interpersonal, and leadership “soft skills” that can be so useful on the job and in life. I encourage you to attend as many as you can, and will add one point to your final average for attending at least two of them. To get this extra credit, you absolutely must have your attendance taken by having your Bearkat Onecard swiped; no credit is given for attending just one event.

These events are as follows:

- *Feb. 1: Mock Interview Day*
- *Feb. 22: Career Insights Workshop*
- *Mar. 29 (The Woodlands) or Apr. 19 (Huntsville): Etiquette Dinner*
- *Feb. 23: Executive in Residence*
- *Mar. 22: Alumni Career Panel*
- *Apr. 6 and Apr. 20: Soft Skills Panels*

Events in italics are put on by Career Services, the others by the College of Business. Contact each to find out the times and locations of each event.

Making Up. Let’s not go down this road unless we really, really need to. The only valid excuses death in the family, illness with *doctor’s* excuse, and the like. If you miss a test for an acceptable reason, I reserve the option of replacing its grade with the average of your other test scores or giving you an essay-style make-up test. There are no make-ups for reading quizzes—I drop everyone’s lowest quiz outright.

Policy on Cell Phones, Electronic Equipment, and Food and Drink. Unless required to accommodate a disability, and except for calculators, all electric equipment is prohibited in this class. This includes headphones, cell phones of all types, and laptop computers. Cell phones cannot be used as calculators. Cell phones should be turned off and stowed out of sight at the beginning of class.

Also, all food and drink other than water and breath mints is prohibited in this class, consistent with the policy of the college, in order to keep the rooms in nice condition.

Violating these policies is an act of commission, rather than omission. Two or three violations will seriously impact my impression of your professionalism. Furthermore, I reserve the right to dock anyone’s final grade by *one letter grade or more* for repeated cell use. Before doing this I would warn you by e-mail, to your SHSU e-mail address.

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

Schedule. If a lecture has an associated book chapter, it is listed below. In order to facilitate the groupings below, some chapters are taken out of order, and some are not covered. Furthermore, rarely will you be asked to read an entire chapter. In class I will “walk through” each chapter, telling you which parts to be sure to read, and which to leave out. Color code: black = lecture, red = homework, green = application, blue = graded work, orange = break.

Unit 1: What Work Is Worth

Unit 2: Skill

Unit 3: Wage Differences

Jan. 18-25: Introduction to Labor Markets, Basic Supply Demand Analysis (Ch. 2)

Feb. 27-Mar. 1: Human Capital and Schooling (Ch. 9), with a [Reading Quiz \(Veterinarians\)](#)

Apr. 10-12: Compensating Wage Differentials and Worker Sorting (Ch. 8), with a [Reading Quiz \(Manhole Covers\)](#)

Jan. 30-Feb. 1: Labor Supply and Unemployment (Ch. 2, 6, 14), with a [Reading Quiz \(Priests\)](#)

Mar. 6-8: On the Job Training (Ch. 5, 11)

Apr. 17-19: Discrimination (Ch. 12)

Mar. 13-15: [Spring Break](#)

Feb. 6-8: Labor Demand (Ch. 3, 4), with a [Reading Quiz \(Scrap\)](#)

Mar. 20-22: *Gang Leader for a Day*, including a [Reading Quiz](#)

Apr. 24-26: International Trade (Ch. 16), with a [Reading Quiz \(Trade Articles\)](#)

Feb. 10-12: [Homework 1 \(work all problems in advance\)](#), and [Discussion of Occupational Licensure](#)

Mar. 27-29: [Homework 2 \(work all problems in advance\)](#), and [Discussion of Financing Human Capital Development in Professional Sports](#)

May 1-3: [Homework 3 \(work all problems in advance\)](#), and [Discussion of Teacher Supply in Texas Public Schools](#)

Feb. 20-22: [Test 1 and Test 1 Review](#)

Apr. 3-5: [Test 2 and Test 2 Review](#)

May 8, 3:30 pm (Section 01) or May 9, technically scheduled for 8:30 pm (Section 02): [Test 3 \(not cumulative\)](#).