

ECON 642 – Syllabus
Topics in Applied Macroeconomics
The Master of Science in Applied Economics Program
University of Maryland
Winter 2021/22 – District of Columbia

Instructor: Dr. Arto Kovanen, Adjunct Lecturer

Email: akovanen@umd.edu

Office hour: Sundays, held online only (via WebEx), from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. (I would be available to discuss course-related issues also at other times by appointment).

Class meetings: Mondays, held in class, from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time, EST), which includes a 15-minute break (approximately in the middle). Pre-lecture notes and other material will be posted on the ELMS/Canvas in advance to complement material covered during class meetings.

Classroom: Location is 1400 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., Suite 140.

Teaching Assistant: Kenji-Higa Flores

Email: KenjiHF@umd.edu

Office hour: Fridays, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (via Zoom)

Course prerequisite: Admission to the University of Maryland's Master of Science (M.Sc.) Program in Applied Economics.

Course description: This course is the core macroeconomics course for the M.Sc. Program in Applied Economics. It develops a strong understanding of macroeconomic behavior and adjustment in the short and long run, and the roles of governments and monetary authorities play in implementing macroeconomic policies.

Course objectives: The M.Sc. in Applied Economics Program lists following general learning outcomes for students:

1. **Ability to understand, evaluate and analyze economic data**
2. Ability to understand and interpret statistical evidence from economic data
3. **Ability to apply empirical evidence to assessing economic arguments**
4. **Ability to apply macroeconomic theories to policy discussions**
5. Ability to apply microeconomic theories to policy discussions
6. **Ability to communicate economic ideas to a broader audience**
7. Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of policy programs using sound economic techniques

This course focuses on learning outcomes related to 1, 3, 4, and 6 (highlighted).

Course textbooks and other learning materials:

- A. Primary text is N. Gregory Mankiw (NGM, 2019). Macroeconomics, 10th edition (ISBN # 978-1-319-10605-8 (epub) and ISBN # 978-1-319-10599-0 (hard copy)). With some qualifications, students may also use the 8th and 9th editions, keeping in mind that some content has been amended in the most recent edition.
- B. Supplementary reading materials will be posted on ELMS/Canvas throughout the course, as considered relevant for topics under discussion.

The course will require a considerable time commitment. I wish to emphasize that it will be essential for students to familiarize themselves with the pre-lecture notes and any other material before the class, as they will assist students in learning and absorbing the subject matter of the course.

Grading policy: Final grades for this course will be based on the following assignments and weights:

A. Midterm exam	25 %	
B. Final exam (not comprehensive)		35 %
C. Homework assignments (total 8)		20 %
D. Online discussions (total 8)	10 %	
E. Group projects (preparation and presentation)		10 %
Total	100 %	

At the end of the course, each student will receive a numerical grade, on the scale from 0 to 100 (percent), which is then converted into a letter grade. Table 1 below provides scaling for the letter grades, calculated on the basis of above assignments and weights (grades will not be curved). At my discretion, I might assign a letter grade A + to a limited number of top students in the class.

Table 1: Grading scale

Numerical grade	Letter grade
93.0 – 100	A
90.0 – 92.9	A -
80.0 – 89.9	B +
70.0 – 79.9	B
60.0 – 69.9	B -
50.0 – 59.9	C +
40.0 – 49.9	C
30.0 – 39.9	C -
20.0 – 29.9	D +
10.0 – 19.9	D

Less than 10.0	F
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Midterm and final exams: Both exams will be administered in class. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Midterm exam will be held on Monday, January 10, 2022 (in class) and the final exam will be held on Friday, February 18, 2022 (in class), as indicated in Table 2. Each exam will begin at 6:45 p.m. on the day of the exam and will last for two (2) hours. Further instructions on how the exams are administered will be posted on the ELMS/Canvas in due course.

Homework: Homework assignments will play an important part in the learning process. I will assign new homework every Tuesday, except after Lecture # 6, 7, 10 and 12. There will be a total of eight (8) homework assignments. Each assignment will be due on the following Monday (at midnight, EST), subsequent to the posting on the ELMS/Canvas, except for homework # 4, which will be due on Monday, January 3, 2022 and homework # 5, which will be due on Monday, January 24, 2022. Students are permitted to discuss homework assignments among themselves, but each student is required to turn in his/her individual work (through ELMS/Canvas, no paper copies are accepted).

Online discussion topics: Online discussion topic assignments are intended to help students develop ability to think like an economist and analyze economic problems. I will assign a total of eight (8) discussion topics, which will be posted on the ELMS, every Tuesday, except on Lectures # 6, 7, 10 and 12. Each discussion topic assignment will remain accessible until the following Monday (midnight, EST) when it is due, except discussion topic # 4, which will be due on, Monday, January 3, 2022 and discussion topic # 5, which will be due on Monday, January 24, 2022. Students are highly encouraged to suggest topics for discussion assignments.

Online discussion assignment guidelines:

- A guiding principle for online discussion assignments is to develop skills to think analytically and provide critical and constructive feedback on the discussion topic that has been assigned.
- Each student is required to post one original response to each assignment on the ELMS/Canvas, before he/she can comment on other students' submissions.
- Group postings are not accepted, but students are permitted to discuss the online discussion topic assignments with other students.
- Students are expected to support their argumentation with economic analysis, not merely provide personal views/opinions on the subject at hand.
- Grading of each online discussion is based on participation and content as follows:
 - **Full points**, student makes his/her post and supports it with an economic analysis;
 - **Half of the points**, student makes his/her post, but fails to support it with economic analysis; and
 - **No points**, a student does not participate in the online discussions within the provided time limit during the week.

Group project: Teams (comprise 3 students) are assigned to prepare short presentations that will analyze macroeconomic topics relevant for the course. Each team is expected to prepare and provide a video recording of PowerPoint presentation (approximately 10 – 15 minutes long), which I will review and provide comments on before its finalization. Final versions of the PowerPoint presentations will be posted on the ELMS/Canvas ahead of presentations in the class, so that other students have the opportunity to review them and prepare questions/comments during the class discussions of the presentations. I will post further instructions on the modalities for group projects on the ELMS/Canvas in due course.

Other considerations:

- Please note that submissions (such as homework, exams, postings, course projects, and presentations) must be legible, clearly written, and neatly organized.
- Late submissions will not be accepted, and no credit will be given for assignments and/or exams that have not been submitted on time. Relevant deadlines will be posted clearly on the ELMS/Canvas. University of Maryland’s policy on excused absences applies (see below for further guidance).

Course outline (tentative, subject to modifications):

Below is a tentative outline for the course, which covers key foundational ideas that have been broadly established and accepted in the economics profession (Table 2). In addition to information provided in the course textbook and pre-lecture notes, additional material will be distributed throughout the course (some are listed below and will be posted on the ELMS/Canvas). They are intended to enhance students learning experience and develop their capacity to understand and analyze economic policy issues. Review sessions for the midterm and final exams will be announced separately.

Table 2: Course outline (tentative, subject to modifications)

Meetings:	Meeting topics/Assignments:	Notes/Chapters:
Meeting # 1 November 29, 2021 (PP)	Introduction and preliminaries Discussion Topic # 1 and HW # 1	NGM: Chapters 1 – 3 Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 2 December 6, 2021 (PP)	Economy in the long run Discussion Topic # 2 and HW # 2	NGM: Chapter 8 Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 3 December 13, 2021 (PP)	Economy in the long run (cont.) Discussion Topic # 3; HW # 3	NGM: Chapter 9 and Appendix to Ch. 9 Pre-lecture notes

Meeting # 4 December 20, 2021 (PP)	Economic fluctuations Chapters 5, 7, Discussion Topic # 4; HW # 4 (Due January 3, 2022)	NGM: 10, and 14 Pre-lecture notes
Winter Break December 24, 2021 – January 2, 2022		
Meeting # 5 January 3, 2022 (PP)	Economy in the short run Discussion Topic # 5; HW # 5 (Due January 24, 2022)	NGM: Chapter 11 Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 6 January 8, 2022 (PP) (Saturday)	Economy in the short run (cont.) (No new assignments) <u>Time of meeting: from 10:30 a.m. to 1: 15 p.m.</u> (Please note that this lecture will be held on <u>Saturday</u>)	NGM: Chapter 12 Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 7 January 10, 2022	Midterm Exam (held in class) Exam will cover Meetings # 1 – 4 and related materials (No new assignments) (Midterm exam will begin at 6:45 p.m.)	
No Class January 17, 2022	Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday	
Meeting # 8 January 24, 2022 (PP)	Money, inflation, and interest rates Discussion Topic # 6; HW # 6 (Group presentations begin)	NGM: Chapters 4, 15 Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 9 January 31, 2022	Money, inflation, and interest rates (cont.) Chapters 4, 15 Discussion Topic # 7; HW # 7 (PP) (Due February 7, 2022)	NGM: Pre-lecture notes
Meeting # 10 February 4, 2022 (PP) (Saturday)	Financial markets and banking (No new assignments) <u>Time of meeting: from 10:30 a.m. to 1: 15 p.m.</u> (Please note that this lecture will be held on <u>Saturday</u>)	NGM: Chapter 18 Pre-lecture notes

Standard Program Policies and Information

Course Website: Copies of the course syllabus, your grades, and other relevant links and documents will be posted on the course's ELMS/Canvas website. You can access the site via www.elms.umd.edu. You will need to use your University of Maryland "directory ID" and password.

Email: The University has adopted email as the primary means of communication outside the classroom. It will be used to inform students of important announcements. Students are responsible for updating their current email address via the website link <http://www.registrar.umd.edu/current/> (Under the first major heading of "Online Transactions" there is a link to "Update Contact Information".)

Academic Integrity: The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity. You should inform yourself about the UMD policies related to academic misconduct: <https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/home/current-students>.

Cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on exams, will be referred to the UMD Office of Student Conduct. If found responsible for academic misconduct, students can be subject to sanctions. The standard sanction for graduate students found responsible for cheating on exams is expulsion from the university. Exams in this course will ask students to affirm the UMD Honor Pledge: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination."

Student Conduct: Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility to one another or myself will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

Excused Absences: The University of Maryland's policy on excused absences is posted here:

<http://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-v-student-affairs/v-100g>

Please note:

If you miss any class meetings for any reason, you are still responsible for all material covered during the meeting you missed. It is your responsibility – not the instructor's – to get yourself caught up in the course. Instructors routinely facilitate things by posting lecture notes, etc.

If you need to miss an exam or other graded course requirement because of illness, injury, or some other emergency: Follow doctor's orders and get documentation. Get in touch with the instructor as soon as you're able – preferably prior to missing the exam or deadline. Communicate with the instructor to make up the course requirement as soon as possible. You are entitled to recover before you make up the course requirement, but you are not entitled to extra days to study beyond the time the doctor's note says you're incapacitated. If you are incapacitated

for more than a week or so beyond the end of the term, your grade in the course will be an "Incomplete". In such cases you must negotiate a plan with your instructor for completing the course requirements. Once you make up the course requirement the instructor will change your "I" to the appropriate letter grade.

School Closings and Delays: Information regarding official University closing and delays can be found on the campus website and the snow phone line: (301) 405-SNOW (405-7669). Since our program is an evening program in downtown Washington, DC, rather than a day program in College Park, we do not always cancel classes on the same days as the College Park campus. The program director will always announce cancellation information to the program as an announcement on the program's ELMS/Canvas site. This will generally be done by 1:00 p.m. on days when weather or other factors are an issue.

UMD Counseling Center: Sometimes students experience academic, personal and/or emotional distress. The UMD Counseling Center in Shoemaker Hall provides comprehensive support services that promote personal, social, and academic success. The cost of these services is covered by the fees you already paid when you registered for classes, and there is no additional charge if you use the services. Proactively explore the range of services available, including the Counseling Service, Accessibility and Disability Service, Learning Assistance Service, and the Testing Office, all described at <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>

Students with Disabilities: The University of Maryland does not discriminate based on differences in age, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, class, political affiliation, or national origin. Reasonable accommodations will be arranged for students with documented disabilities. Students who have an accommodations letter from the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) should meet with me during the first week of the term to discuss and plan for the implementation of your accommodations. If you require reasonable accommodations but have not yet registered with ADS, please contact the Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682 or adsfrontdesk@umd.edu.

Academic Progress: The UMD Graduate School requires that students maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the graduate school. Students on academic probation must ask the program's director to petition the graduate school if they want to remain enrolled in the program. The petition must include a plan for getting the student's GPA up to at least 3.0. Students who do not live up to their plan can have their enrollment in the program terminated without having earned the degree. Note: a grade of "B" corresponds to a GPA of 3.0. A grade of "B-" corresponds to a GPA of 2.7.

Laptop Computer Requirement: Completing some of this course's requirements will require a laptop computer (not a notebook or a tablet!) with at least 1 GB of RAM and at least 5 GB of free space available on the hard drive. We recommend laptops

with a 15-inch screen. Screens smaller than 13 inches are probably not practical. Because this is an online course, students also need a webcam and a microphone. Students are expected to participate in synchronous class meetings and office hours with their camera on.

Building access: Information related to access to our building at 1400 16th Street, and to our suite, will be provided by the program coordinator.