

**University of Pennsylvania**  
**ECN 238: Economics of Education**  
**Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Francesco Agostinelli

**Office:** 604 (The Ronald O. Perelman Center for Political Science and Economics)

**Email:** [fagostin@upenn.edu](mailto:fagostin@upenn.edu)

**Time:** Monday and Wednesday at 3:30pm-5:00pm

**Location:** MCNB 286-7

**My Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday at 12:30pm-1:30pm

**TA:** TBD.

**TA Email:** TBA.

**TA Office hours:** TBA.

**Course Description:** The course focuses on the educational decisions, including individual choices, institutional strategies and government policies. It is an elective course in economics and it is designed for junior and senior students.

During the first part of the course we will go over the mathematical and empirical tools needed to understand and perform quantitative analysis on topics in the economics of education. Students should expect to work on optimization methods, regression analysis and causal inference analysis.

After we have built a solid foundation of empirical and theoretical knowledge, we start thinking about educational decisions, including individual choices, institutional strategies, and government policies. We begin by framing education choices within a model of investing in human capital. Topics include measuring the costs and returns of education from an individual and public policy perspective, the relationship between education and inequality, and the role of K-12 and post-secondary institutions in economic growth.

List of Topics:

1. Introduction to Regression Analysis and Selection Bias
2. Education and Economic Growth
3. The Theory of Human Capital
4. The Effect of Schooling of Wages
5. Schooling as a Signal
6. Education and the Equilibrium of the Labor Market
7. What Skills Are Valued in Today's Economy?
8. The Role of the Public Sector in Education
9. The Economics of College and Major Choice
10. Incentives for Teachers and Students
11. School Quality and Student's Outcomes.

**Textbook (not mandatory):** Brewer D. and P.J. McEwan. *Economics of Education*. New York: Elsevier. There will be also supplemental lecture slides.

**Additional Suggested Readings (not mandatory):**

- Borjas G.J., *Labor Economics*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 7th edition

- Lovenheim M. and Turner S.E., *Economics of Education*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Worth Publisher
- Murnane R.J. and Willett J.B., *Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science Research*, Oxford University Press, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition

**Prerequisites:** ECON 101, ECON 102, ECON 103

**Grading Policy:**

- 1) Math/Econometrics Quiz (20%)
- 2) Three Midterms: the best two out of three scores will be considered (80% total, 40% each midterm)

**Problem Sets:** In order to help you prepare for upcoming midterms, I will post problem sets, as well as the solutions before the exam. Although these will not be graded, it is in your best interest to complete the questions on these problem sets in preparation for your exam.

**Grading:**

A+: 100% - 99%,	A: 98% - 93%,	A-: 92% - 90%,
B+: 89% - 87%,	B: 86% - 83%,	B-: 82% - 80%,
C+: 79% - 77%,	C: 76% - 73%,	C-: 72% - 70%,
D+: 69% - 66%,	D: 65% - 60%,	
F: below 60%.		

**Exam Dates:**

- Math/Econometrics Quiz (Date: **Sept 22**)
- Three Midterms (Dates: **Oct 18, Nov 10, Dec 8**)

Extra Credit: **NONE.**

**Regrade Requests:** Examination regrade requests must be made in writing within a week of receiving your graded exam/problem set. All regrade requests should be made to the course instructor. Note that as we re-grade the entire exam, your score could increase or decrease.

**Classroom Policies:** Phones are not allowed in class. Phones and computers are not allowed during the exams. Recording classes is at the discretion of the course instructor.

**Academic Integrity and Ethical Behavior:** The College of Arts and Sciences takes academic integrity very seriously. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, it is imperative that you do your own work. Any suspected violations of academic integrity will be taken seriously. Information on the academic integrity policy may be found at <https://www.college.upenn.edu/academic-integrity>. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade (F) and will be reported to Office of Student Conduct.

**Excused Absences from Exams:** An absence from an exam will only be excused under extreme and documented circumstances. In these rare cases, please notify me of the situation **before** the exam date so we can make an alternative arrangement.

Accommodations will be made for students due to observed religious holidays. Below is the calendar of official religious holidays. For these specific holidays, students will be granted a makeup assignment or exam. All requests for accommodation must be submitted by the end of the second week of class.

Link to Secular and Religious Holidays: <https://chaplain.upenn.edu/worship/holidays/>

**Disability Accommodations:** If you need an accommodation for a disability, you must register with the Office of Student Disabilities Services.

Information contained within this syllabus (except grading, absence policies and exams dates) is subject to change.