

*Course Syllabus*  
**ECON 233 Labor Economics**  
**Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Andrew Shephard (asheph@econ.upenn.edu)

**Teaching assistant:** Emilio Borghesan (borghesa@sas.upenn.edu)

**Course Description:** This is a one semester course in labour economics for undergraduate students. Labour economics is the study of labour markets. We will survey a broad range of topics that include: the theory of labour supply (both static and dynamic), labour demand, labour market equilibrium, unemployment, employment contracting and personnel economics, investments in education and training, discrimination, and patterns of inequality. We will also discuss applications of economic theory to important public policy issues such as minimum wage laws and welfare reform. In addition, this course will have an important empirical component. We will review basic econometrics and survey some of the major empirical issues in labour economics.

**Prerequisites:** Econ 101 (intermediate micro theory), Math 104 (Calculus, Part I) and either Math 114 (Calculus Part II) or Math 115 (Calculus Part II with Probability and Matrices). Note that credit cannot be received for both Econ 033 and Econ 233. Wharton students can satisfy the Econ 101 prerequisite with BEPP 250 HONORS. Regular sections of BEPP 250 do not count as a substitute for Econ 101. Econ 103 (Statistics for Economists) is recommended.

**Textbook:** The textbook for this course is *Labor Economics* (8th Edition) by George Borjas. Earlier editions are also OK but the book chapters and sections may be renumbered. Please contact the instructor if you are unsure. There may be occasional supplemental readings, and details of these will be provided in class. The lecture slides will indicate the relevant reading.

**Office hours:** Office hours for both Professor Shephard and Emilio will be held online using Zoom (the link is provided on the Canvas class site). Professor Shephard will have office hours on Mondays, 9:00–10:30am, and Thursdays, 10:30am–12:00pm. Emilio will have office hours on Mondays, 3:00–4:30pm, and Wednesdays 3:00–4:30pm. Please contact us by email if you want to speak to either of us outside of these regular scheduled times.

**Problem sets:** There are three equally weighted problem sets that will be assigned throughout the semester. One of these will include a substantial empirical component. These will be due on the announced date, and 25% of your final grade will be determined by these. While you are encouraged to work in small groups, each student must write up and submit their own answers written in their own words (no copies).

**Exams:** There will be three in-class midterm exams. There is no final exam. Your lowest exam score will count for 20% of your final grade, your highest score for 30%, and the intermediate score for 25%. All exams are closed book, and no study aids are permitted. The first will take place on Thursday September 30th, and you will receive your grades in advance of the end of the course drop period. The second will take place on Thursday November 4th. The third midterm will take place on Thursday December 9th (the final class). Note that this third midterm will also cover some core material from the early classes (guidance will be provided in class). Attendance at all exams is mandatory and there will be no makeup midterms. In exceptional circumstances please contact the instructor in advance by email.

**Regrading policy:** Any regrade requests must be submitted to the instructor by email within *one week* of the work being returned. Any requests should provide a clear and concise statement of where you believe the grading error has been made. Errors in grading arising from illegible or garbled answers are not subject to correction. If the request arises because you think different students have been graded differently, all the affected students should submit their work as a group.

**Ed Discussion:** The class is participating in a University pilot for *Ed Discussion* as a possible replacement for *Piazza*. Ed Discussion is a tool for online question and answers, and threaded discussion among students or between students, instructors and TAs. We will be using Ed Discussion to make course announcements and answer questions about course material and logistics. By asking your question and getting an answer on Ed Discussion, you create a positive externality: other students benefit from your questions and you benefit from theirs. The instructor and teaching assistants will actively moderate Ed Discussion both to answer questions and approve (or correct) answers written by your fellow students. Students who actively participate in Ed Discussion (by asking questions, answering questions, posting content relevant to the course, etc.) may earn extra credit. Ed Discussion is accessible through the link on the Canvas class site.

**Departmental Course Policies:** All Economics Department course policies apply even if they are not explicitly listed here. See: <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/index.php/undergraduate/course-information/course-policies> for full details.