

## ECON 3823 (WI01) - Urban Economics

Department of Economics

Acadia University

Winter 2023

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Instructor	Dr. Justin Beaudoin
Email	justin.beaudoin@acadiau.ca
Office Location	BAC 346 & Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
Office Hours	Wed, 10:00 - 11:00; Thu, 11:00 - 12:00; and by appointment
Course Website	<a href="https://acorn.acadiau.ca/course/view.php?id=28754">https://acorn.acadiau.ca/course/view.php?id=28754</a>
Class Location	BAC 364
Class Times	Mon/Wed, 1:00 - 2:20

### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to urban economics. This class will use established economic tools/analysis to explain why cities exist, how/where they develop, and what forces underlie the distribution of economic activity. Also examined will be the determinants of land prices/rents, market failures related with land use and relevant public policy. The course will also look at urban issues such as congestion, poverty, and crime. These issues, as they relate to Canadian cities, will be the primary focus of this class.

### Course Learning Objectives

Upon course completion students are expected to be able to:

- understand why cities form,
- apply basic microeconomic concepts to several aspects of urban cities,
- associate urban economic issues and models with simple mathematical expressions, graphical representations, and displays of economic information,
- explain the role of markets in urban areas and their interaction with government policy,
- recognize the positive and negative aspects of urban city structure, and
- develop skills and knowledge that will translate into many possible careers and educational paths.

### Prerequisite

In general, completion of ECON 1013 (or approval of the instructor). Students without a background in supply and demand analysis may find parts of the course more challenging, but I will review the required microeconomic concepts as necessary.

## **Course Materials and Websites**

ACORN is the primary source for class announcements and will contain all course materials: syllabus, class notes/slides, video recordings, and materials for quizzes and exams.

Microsoft Teams may be utilized as an option for office hours and review sessions.

## **Technology Issues & Support**

If you are having technological issues, please contact the Service Desk for support. The Consultants will help you work through any issues that you're having.

Live Chat: [ts-chat.acadiau.ca](https://ts-chat.acadiau.ca)

HUB Service Portal: [hub.acadiau.ca](https://hub.acadiau.ca) or [ts.acadiau.ca](https://ts.acadiau.ca)

Phone: 902-585-4357 or 1-888-609-3330

Email: [helpdesk@acadiau.ca](mailto:helpdesk@acadiau.ca)

## **How to Ask Questions?**

I encourage you to ask questions throughout the course. I can promise you that if you have a question, several of your classmates have that same question. There are many ways to ask questions relating to material discussed in class:

- In person during class
- Via Teams using the chat feature
- During office hours
- Via email

## **Office Hours**

I will hold scheduled office hours but will also be available by appointment this semester. You are welcome to send me an email to schedule a time to meet. Office hours may be held in my office or over Teams.

Should any issues or concerns arise throughout the course, you are encouraged to consult with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to find the resources to help you succeed.

## **Textbook**

The textbook for the course is "Lectures on Urban Economics" by Jan Brueckner (2011). This text provides excellent coverage of the topics covered in the course and we will follow the relevant chapters fairly closely, with the lectures supplementing the textbook material.

Some of the material in the textbook is fairly challenging, so you are encouraged to do the reading in advance in order to discuss the material in class.

## **Daily Articles & Discussion**

We will begin most classes with a discussion of a short article related to the day's topic. The article will be posted the day prior to class and you should read the article and be prepared to discuss it in class. You will not receive a high score for the class participation grade if you do not attend class and participate in discussions from time to time.

## **Assignments**

There will be 3 assignments throughout the course, each worth 10% of the overall course grade. These assignments may be completed individually or in pairs (with each student in the pair receiving the same grade). Assignments are due by midnight on the date indicated. Late assignments will receive a 10 percentage point penalty for each day it is submitted beyond the due date.

- Assignment #1: due Feb 1
- Assignment #2: due Feb 15
- Assignment #3: due Mar 20

You will typically be provided with a recent newspaper article(s) discussing a topic of the course, and you will be asked a series of questions designed to develop critical economic thinking about policy-relevant issues to apply the concepts covered in previous classes.

## **Research Proposal**

There will be a Research Proposal that focuses on an issue of your choosing that relates to any of the topics covered in the course. You are encouraged to meet with me in office hours to discuss your choice of topic and to get some feedback at an early stage. The proposal will take the form of a submission for an academic research grant. Instructions for the research proposal will be provided early in the course.

The proposal will be prepared with a partner. There will be two components: (i) a written submission, and (ii) an in-class presentation. The objective is to develop both written and verbal skills, which are essential for both your future academic and professional endeavors.

### **1. Written submission**

- Maximum of 10 double-spaced pages
- Initial outline (1 paragraph) due by Mar 8
- Final proposal due by midnight on Apr 5

– No late submissions accepted

- Detailed instructions regarding suggested format and content will be provided early in the course

## 2. In-class presentation

- Each pair will give a 10 minute presentation in support of their proposal
- Presentations will be scheduled in class on Mar 27 and Mar 29 (attendance is mandatory)
- Detailed instructions regarding suggested format and content will be provided early in the course

## Final Exam

The Final Exam will be held on the date determined by the Registrar. Unless there is a valid reason (*approved in advance*), students are required to take the exam on the date assigned by the University. The Final Exam will cover the entire course. Practice exam(s) and a study guide will be provided in advance. More details regarding the format and timing of the exam will be provided closer to the exam date.

## Grading

Discussion of daily articles	10%
Assignment #1	10%
Assignment #2	10%
Assignment #3	10%
Research Proposal	30%
Final Exam	30%

*No extra credit opportunities will be offered.* The grade scale for the course is below:

Letter Grade	GPA	% Range	Rating
A+	4.33	90 - 100%	
A	4.0	85 - 89%	Excellent
A-	3.67	80 - 84%	
B+	3.33	77 - 79%	
B	3.0	73 - 76%	Good
B-	2.67	70 - 72%	
C+	2.33	67 - 69%	
C	2.0	63 - 66%	Average
C-	1.67	60 - 62%	
D+	1.33	57 - 59%	
D	1.0	53 - 56%	
D-	0.67	50 - 52%	Pass
F	0.0	0 - 49%	Failure

## Class Material

The following list outlines the material that we will cover in the course, with the class discussions highlighting the most important concepts within each chapter. The extent to which we cover various topics will be affected in part by student interest, amount of discussion, and difficulty of material.

- Chapter 1: Why Cities Exist
- Chapter 2: Analyzing Urban Spatial Structure
- Chapter 3: Modifications of the Urban Model
- Chapter 4: Urban Sprawl and Land-Use Controls
- Chapter 5: Freeway Congestion
- Chapter 6: Housing Demand and Tenure Choice
- Chapter 7: Housing Policies
- Chapter 8: Local Public Goods and Services
- Chapter 9: Pollution
- Chapter 10: Crime
- Chapter 11: Urban Quality-of-Life Measurement

The class notes and links to recorded videos will also be posted on ACORN.

## Class Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule for the course topics that may be updated as the course proceeds. Readings refer to the textbook and are listed as suggestions to keep you up-to-date with the course; the materials in that day's class may not perfectly coincide with the listed reading. The posted class notes will contain any information about any potential changes to the schedule in advance.

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 1</i> .....		
1	Mon, Jan 9	Class Introduction & Discussion of Syllabus
2	Wed, Jan 11	Chapter 1
..... <i>Week 2</i> .....		
3	Mon, Jan 16	Chapter 1
4	Wed, Jan 18	Chapter 2

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 3</i> .....		
5	Mon, Jan 23	Chapter 2
6	Wed, Jan 25	Chapter 3
..... <i>Week 4</i> .....		
7	Mon, Jan 30	Chapter 3
8	Wed, Feb 1	Chapter 4; Assignment #1 due
..... <i>Week 5</i> .....		
9	Mon, Feb 6	Chapter 4
10	Wed, Feb 8	Chapter 5
..... <i>Week 6</i> .....		
11	Mon, Feb 13	Chapter 5
12	Wed, Feb 15	Chapter 6; Assignment #2 due
..... <i>Week 7</i> .....		
-	Mon, Feb 20	No class (study break)
-	Wed, Feb 22	No class (study break)
..... <i>Week 8</i> .....		
13	Mon, Feb 27	Chapter 7
14	Wed, Mar 1	Chapter 7
..... <i>Week 9</i> .....		
15	Mon, Mar 6	Chapter 8
16	Wed, Mar 8	Chapter 8; Research Proposal outline due
..... <i>Week 10</i> .....		
17	Mon, Mar 13	Chapter 9
18	Wed, Mar 15	Chapter 9
..... <i>Week 11</i> .....		
19	Mon, Mar 20	Chapter 10; Assignment #3 due
20	Wed, Mar 22	Chapter 11
..... <i>Week 12</i> .....		
21	Mon, Mar 27	Student presentations, Day 1
22	Wed, Mar 29	Student presentations, Day 2

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 13</i> .....		
23	Mon, Apr 3	Chapter 11
24	Wed, Apr 5	Course Wrap Up and Review; Research Proposal due
..... <i>Final Exam: TBA</i> .....		

## Course Policies

Course dates/policies are outlined at the beginning of the course and are the student's responsibility; please communicate any issues, concerns or scheduling conflicts *well before* the relevant deadline so that we can address the issue appropriately.

Please communicate with me if an illness or other issue will cause you to miss multiple classes. I ask that students exercise proper classroom etiquette in respect of their classmates and the instructor.

## Accessibility

Acadia University is dedicated to improving access to campus life for all students with disabilities. While we attempt to ensure that all courses are accessible, we recognize that there are barriers that need to be addressed on an individual basis. Students who require accommodations to complete coursework or otherwise fully participate in class should contact Accessible Learning Services directly as soon as possible.

Please visit the Accessible Learning Services website (<https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/accessiblelearning.html>) or email them at [accessible.learning@acadiau.ca](mailto:accessible.learning@acadiau.ca) for more information.

## Academic Ethics

It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with the University's policy on academic ethics. Copying, plagiarism and other academic offenses will not be tolerated. Penalties are severe and may result in suspension from a program/course and expulsion. A complete list of Academic Regulations can be found on the Policies page of the University's website. I strongly recommend that all class members review the sections in the 2022-23 academic calendar dealing with Academic Policy and Regulations. It is a serious offense to engage in academic misconduct.

*Last updated: January 7, 2023*