

ECON 501: MACROECONOMICS

Spring 2026

Instructor:	Jingnan Liu	Time:	Monday & Wednesday 11:00 – 12:20
Email:	jingnan@illinois.edu	Place:	317 David Kinley Hall

Course Pages: All course materials will be available on [Canvas](#). Please check updated information on Canvas. Homework assignments are submitted through Canvas.

Office Hours: Mondays 5 - 6 PM, 123 David Kinley Hall

Teaching Assistant (TA): Yuwen Rong (ryuwen2@illinois.edu)

TA Discussion Sessions: Fridays 12:30-1:50 PM, 215 David Kinley Hall

TA Office Hours: MW 1 - 2 PM, TR 2 - 3 PM, 12 David Kinley Hall

Overview: This is a course in macroeconomic theory at the intermediate level. Macroeconomics is concerned with the behavior of the aggregate economy. In the course we will be examining macroeconomic data and studying models designed to help us understand those data. We will pay special attention to the role of policymakers in shaping macroeconomic outcomes, and will also take a close look at the recent financial crisis and ensuing recession.

Prerequisites: The course presumes knowledge of both *Microeconomic Principles* (ECON 102) and *Macroeconomic Principles* (ECON 103), as well as differential calculus and algebra. It is helpful, though not necessary, to have taken *Intermediate Macroeconomics* (ECON 303).

Grading: Course grades will be assigned on a +/- letter scale and will be determined as follows:

- **Homework (5% × 4 = 20%)**
 - There are five homework assignments. Only the best four will be counted toward the final grade, with each counted homework worth 5% of the course grade.
 - Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas and are due at 11:59 pm on February 6, March 6, March 27, April 17, and May 1.
 - ***All homework must be submitted through Canvas by the posted deadline.*** The Canvas deadline is binding. Students are strongly encouraged to submit well ahead of the deadline to avoid potential technical or Internet-related issues.
 - ***Late submissions will not be accepted*** and will receive a grade of 0, except as required by university policy or approved accommodations.
 - Homework will be graded on a scale of 1–5, reflecting both the correctness of answers and the clarity of exposition.
 - Submissions must be in Word or PDF format. If a homework includes handwritten components, these must be clearly scanned and submitted as part of a single, legible document.
 - It is the student's responsibility to ensure that submitted files are complete, readable, and accessible. Files that cannot be opened, are corrupted, or password-protected will be treated as missing submissions and will receive a grade of 0.
 - Students may work in small groups on homework assignments; however, each student must write and submit their own solutions.

- **Midterm Exams (25% × 2 = 50%)**

- There are two midterm exams, each worth 25% of the course grade.
- The midterm exams will be held in class from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm on February 18 and April 1. Both exams will be in person and closed book.
- Exam dates are fixed. No make-up exams will be offered, except as required by university policy or approved accommodations.
- Calculators are permitted. Calculators with Internet access or communication capabilities (e.g., TI-Nspire models) are not allowed.
- Exams may be curved upward at the instructor's discretion. No student's exam score will be adjusted downward.

- **Final Exam (30%)**

- The final exam will be held from 8:00 am to 11:00 am on May 14, as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar under the [Final Exam Scheduling Guidelines](#).
- The final exam will be cumulative, in person, and closed book.
- The final exam date and time are fixed. The instructor does not independently approve individual rescheduling or make-up final exams.
- Any conflicts or accommodations must be addressed in accordance with university policies and procedures, including those administered by the Office of the Registrar and the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES).
- Calculators are permitted. Calculators with Internet access or communication capabilities (e.g., TI-Nspire models) are not allowed.
- The final exam may be curved upward at the instructor's discretion. No student's exam score will be adjusted downward.

- **Attendance and Participation**

- Attendance and participation may be taken into account in borderline grading cases.

Grading Policy: All grades will be posted on Canvas. If you believe there has been a grading error, you may submit a regrade request within **7 calendar days** of the grade being posted. Regrade requests submitted after this window will not be considered. All regrade requests must be submitted **in writing** and through the appropriate channels, as described below:

- **Homework and midterm exams**

Please **contact the Teaching Assistant by email** with a clear description of the perceived error and a concise explanation of why you believe the work should be graded differently. When a regrade request is submitted, the *entire* assignment or exam will be regraded, not just the specific question identified. As a result, the final score may increase, decrease, or remain unchanged.

- **Final exam**

Due to timing constraints associated with final grade submission, regrade requests for the final exam cannot be accommodated. However, the instructor will review final course grades to ensure that they are not sensitive to small, mechanical changes in the final exam score.

Deadlines, Exams, and Presentations Policy: Assignment deadlines, exam dates, and presentation dates are fixed and are not flexible. Exceptions will be considered only in cases of documented, serious circumstances, including:

1. documented medical emergencies, supported by a formal letter from a healthcare provider; or
2. the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, supported by appropriate documentation.

Students who anticipate a potential conflict must notify the instructor as soon as possible, and no later than **12:00 pm (noon) on the day before** the relevant deadline or exam, in order to discuss possible arrangements. Any request for an exception must be supported by verifiable documentation.

If no qualifying emergency can be verified, standard grading and deadline policies will apply. For additional details, please refer to the University of Illinois Student Code: [Article 1 — Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Course Support and Communication: The course is designed to provide multiple, complementary opportunities for students to ask questions, receive feedback, and engage with the material. Making use of these resources will help you get timely support and make the most of the learning environment.

- **Questions during class.**

Students are encouraged to ask questions during class, whether about course content (concepts, ideas, or interpretations) or about logistics and expectations. Many questions are shared by others, and discussing them in class can be especially helpful for everyone.

- **Teaching Assistant office hours.**

After class, the program offers daily TA office hours (Monday through Thursday), which are a valuable and readily available resource for discussing homework, working through problems, and clarifying course logistics. Students often find that TA office hours provide the most immediate and detailed help, and are encouraged to take advantage of this support throughout the semester.

- **Instructor office hours.**

If a question or concern is not fully resolved during TA office hours, or if you would like to discuss broader conceptual issues or connections across topics, you are welcome to attend my office hours on Monday from 5 pm to 6 pm in 123 David Kinley Hall.

- **Email.**

Email is best reserved for special circumstances or brief, personal matters that cannot be easily addressed during class or office hours. While I read all emails, I cannot guarantee a prompt response, particularly during busy periods.

AI Policy: You are allowed to use tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and other AI tools. We recognize that these tools are becoming increasingly valuable, and learning to use them effectively is important. However, relying too heavily on AI can cheat you of your own learning. You are paying large costs, both financially and in terms of opportunity costs, to learn at Illinois.

If you use AI for any part of your homework, you must include a brief note at the end of your submission describing how you used it. For example: *“I used ChatGPT to generate an outline, then wrote the full report myself,”* or *“Claude helped me draft the first version, which I then revised and expanded.”* This disclosure won’t impact your grade; it simply helps me understand how students are engaging with these tools and helps me improve the course for everyone.

Textbooks

- Charles I. Jones, *Introduction to Economic Growth*
- Julio Garin, Robert Lester, and Eric Sims (GLS), *Intermediate Macroeconomics*

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Jan 21	An Overview of Macroeconomics	Jones, Chapters 1-3
Jan 26	Why are Some Countries Richer than Others?	Jones, Chapter 4
Jan 28	Why Do Economies Grow? Inputs?	Jones, Chapter 5
Feb 2	Accounting for Growth	Jones, Chapter 6 (Section 5)
Feb 4	The Economics of Ideas	Jones, Chapter 6 (Sections 1-2)
Feb 9	Innovation and Economic Growth	Jones, Chapter 6 (Sections 3-8)
Feb 11	Are Ideas Getting Harder to Find?	
Feb 16	Midterm Exam Review	
Feb 18	Midterm Exam: 11 am –12:15 pm	
Feb 23	Two Period Consumption-Saving Problem	GLS, Chapter 9
Feb 25	Two Period Consumption-Saving Problem	GLS, Chapter 9
Mar 2	Equilibrium in Endowment Economy	GLS, Chapter 11
Mar 4	Equilibrium in Endowment Economy	GLS, Chapter 11
Mar 9	Fiscal policy and Ricardian Equivalence	
Mar 11	Production and Labor Supply	GLS, Chapter 12
Mar 16	Spring Break – No Class	
Mar 18	Spring Break – No Class	
Mar 23	Production and Labor Supply	GLS, Chapter 12
Mar 25	Neoclassical business cycle model	
Mar 30	Midterm Exam Review and Q&A	
April 1	Midterm Exam: 11 am – 12:15 pm	
Apr 6	The Dismal Science: Unemployment and Inequality	Jones, Chapter 7
Apr 8	The Dismal Science: Unemployment and Inequality	Jones, Chapter 8
Apr 13	Booms, Busts, and the IS curve	Jones, Chapters 9-11
Apr 15	Monetary Policy and the Phillips Curve	Jones, Chapter 12
Apr 20	Stabilization Policy and Expectations	Jones, Chapter 13 (Sections 6-7)
Apr 22	The Past 20 Years in Light of the Great Depression	
Apr 27	The Fiscal Problem of the 21st Century	Jones, Chapter 18
Apr 29	Course Wrap-Up	
May 4	Final Exam Review	
May 6	Final Exam Review	
May 14	Final Exam: 8 am – 11 am	

Miscellaneous

Academic Assistance: Students are encouraged to utilize the many resources we have throughout campus to assist with academics and visit the [Connie Frank CARE Center](#). We recommend that you seek them out starting early in the semester, not just in times of academic need, in order to develop good study habits and submit work which represents your full academic potential. Many resources are found on the Economics Website including details about the Economics Tutoring Center, Academic Advising, and other academic support options: <https://economics.illinois.edu/academics/undergraduate-program/academic-student-support>

Academic Integrity: According to the Student Code, “It is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions.” Please know that it is my responsibility as an instructor to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found here: <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4>

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the Academic Integrity Policies. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity. Read the full Student Code at <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/>

Students with Disabilities: To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to disability@illinois.edu. DRES Website: <https://dres.illinois.edu/>

Connie Frank CARE Center /Community of Care: As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the [Connie Frank CARE Center](#) (217-333-0050 or <http://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/>). Based on your report, the staff in the Connie Frank CARE Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. Further, we understand the impact that struggles with mental health can have on your experience at Illinois. Significant stress, strained relationships, anxiety, excessive worry, alcohol/drug problems, a loss of motivation, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can all interfere with optimal academic performance. We encourage all students to reach out to talk with someone, and we want to make sure you are aware that you can access mental health support at the Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>) or McKinley Health Center (<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>). For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or walk into the Counseling Center, no appointment needed.

Disruptive Behavior: Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action.

Emergency Response Recommendations: Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website: <https://police.illinois.edu/em/planning/>. I encourage you to review this website and the campus building floor plans website within the first 10 days of class.

<https://police.illinois.edu/em/building-emergency-action-plans/>.

Religious Observances: The Religious Observance Accommodation Request form is available at <https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/religious-observances/>. Submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students (helpdean@illinois.edu) as soon as possible.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <http://registrar.illinois.edu/ferpa> for more information on FERPA. Student information and records will not be released to anyone other than the student unless the student has provided written approval or as required by law.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation The University of Illinois is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: <http://www.wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/confidential>. Other information about resources and reporting is available here: <http://wecare.illinois.edu/>.

Student Support The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. Please visit their [website](#) to find valuable resources and services.

Counseling Center Information: 217-333-3704

Location: Room 206, Student Services Building (610 East John Street, Champaign IL)

McKinley Mental Health Information: 217-333-2705

Location: 3rd Floor McKinley Health Center 1109 South Lincoln, Urbana, IL

Emergency Dean: The Emergency Dean may be reached at (217) 333-0050 and supports students who are experiencing an emergency situation after 5 pm, in which an immediate University response is needed and which cannot wait until the next business day. The Emergency Dean is not a substitute for trained emergency personnel such as 911, Police or Fire. If you are experiencing a life threatening emergency, call 911. Please review the Emergency Dean procedures: <https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/emergency-dean>

Academic Dates and Deadlines: Students should make note of important academic deadlines for making changes to their courses (add, drop, credit/no-credit, grade replacement, etc.).

<https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-calendars> Please check with your academic department regarding specific procedures and policies.

Modifications: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course as deemed academically appropriate. Any such changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. Students are responsible for staying informed and keeping track of all course announcements.