

GENERAL INFORMATION

Section Information

- **ECON 490 E3 (70384)**: meeting times on 11:00 am - 12:30 pm Monday and Wednesdays in 1092 Lincoln Hall

3 credit hours

Instructor(s): [Dr. José J. Vazquez](#)

Course Description and Goal

The course is designed to inspect some fundamental questions in the world economy:

- What are the primary factors driving the per capita GDP growth of any particular country?
- What explains the convergence or divergence patterns of growth rates across nations?

Firstly, we look at the data of economic growth. Then we proceed to offer a theoretical explanation of those facts and patterns. Our focus is divided into three parts: 1) factor accumulation, 2) productivity and 3) growth fundamentals. The objective of the course is to enable students to apply the knowledge of macroeconomic theory and mathematical tools to address issues in growth.

My Teaching Style and Philosophy

I believe:

Students ARE human = I believe students are human, rational thinkers. Therefore, I tend to give them the benefit of doubt when designing my course. For instance, if I know most students don't like to read the textbook before coming to class, then I don't assume they are lazy. Rather, students are bereaving as normal humans, and reading text is not the best way to transfer complicated information to humans. When we read, our brain is assimilating information through only one main channel: the eyes. This is very hard, specially when we have to go from one page of a textbook to another page to make sense of the information.

In contrast, consider how much better our brain can assimilate information through a lecture (either in a classroom or virtually); when the instructor talks and draws in the board (or makes hand gestures) at the same time. Now, our brain receives information through two channels: eyes and ears. So when students choose not to read the textbook before class, they are simply using their brains in the most effective way it was designed. Hence, I do not assign textbook readings before class.

Each student is unique = some students like to complete assignments very quickly, others tend to take a bit longer. Some students have to work while they attend college, others do not. Some students like to work in groups, others prefer to do it individually. Therefore, I do not design the course for just ONE student, but rather try to give students AUTONOMY in completing the assignments. This is the reason I only use 4 due dates for the complete course. Further, I do not use hard deadlines in my courses, but rather charge students a small daily penalty if they miss a deadline.

A motivated student WILL learn = I believe learning is a self-regulated event. In other words, I believe in order to learn anything, a student must WANT to learn it. I simply can't force any student to learn, by pouring information into her brain.

Yet, when a student WANT to learn, there is very little I (or anyone else, for that matter) can do to prevent that student from learning. Therefore, I consider my main job not to MAKE students learn, but rather to MOTIVATE them to learn on their own.

Some of this learning will take place during the semester, but also much of it will take place after the course is done. Therefore, I tend to focus my teaching on activities that spark's students internal motivation for learning. Three important internal motivations for learning are: curiosity, mastery, and autonomy. Therefore, I place those at the forefront of my teaching.

For instance, my classroom lecture is designed not to "explain" things from the front of the room, but rather to ASK students questions to spark their curiosity, and to encourage them to continue to ASK questions themselves.

In the same way, I tend to dislike using activities that rely on external rewards for learning, such as once-and-done (summative) exams, hard deadlines, and so forth.

Academic Integrity

At the University of Illinois, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of Academic Integrity. We believe that this is essential to the success of our Program in its mission to educate and train our students. In addition, maintaining high standards of academic integrity provides a foundation

for responsible conduct in our students' lives after graduation. The following acts have been listed in the [Student Honor code as violations of academic integrity](#).

Students with Disability

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, which will require academic accommodations, please notify me within the first week of the class and I will strive to accommodate your needs. However, to obtain official disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must also contact 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, e-mail dtheisability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website. If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting "Sign-Up for an Academic Screening" at the bottom of the page.

Academic Assistance

Students are encouraged to utilize the many resources we have throughout campus to assist with academics. 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:

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 [Student Assistance Center](#) (217-333-0050). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance 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](#) or [McKinley Health Center](#). 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:

<http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/>. I encourage you to review this website and the [campus building floor plans website](#) within the first 10 days of class.

Religious Observances

The Religious Observance Accommodation Request form is available at [here](#). Submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students (helpdean@illinois.edu) by the end of the second week of the course; in the case of exams or assignments scheduled after this period, students should submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students 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 combating 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](#).

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:

<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>.

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: <http://odos.illinois.edu/emergency/>

COURSE MATERIALS AND WEBSITES

Required Materials

- Economic Growth by David Weil
 - [E-book option](#) = \$100 - \$160 depending on whether you rent or purchase
 - [Hard copy](#) - can be ordered directly from the publisher.

HOW I WILL CALCULATE YOUR GRADE?

Course Activities

Below are all the activities you are required to complete in the course, along with the weight each of them has towards your final grade.

Course Activity	Weight (out of 100%)
Lecture Quizzes (11)	10
Problem Sets (3)	30
Exams (2)	40
Final Exam	20

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned only at the end of the semester based on the overall score for the course. There is no curve in this class.

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A+	97.00–100	C+	77.00 - 79.99
A	93.00–96.99	C	72.00 - 76.99
A–	90.00–92.99	C–	70.00 - 71.99
B+	87.00–89.99	D+	67.00 - 69.99
B	82.00–86.99	D	62.00 - 66.99
B–	80.00–81.99	D–	60.00 - 61.99
		F	0 - 59.99

COURSE ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

Lecture Quizzes (LQs)

What are they? The LQs are the problems you will complete as part of the lecture. They are basically essayed, diagram, and math open-ended questions. You can complete them during class, or later on your own. You do not lose any points by missing lectures and completing the LQs quizzes on your own.

How are they graded? LQs are graded entirely on completion and not on accuracy.

When Are They Due? The deadlines to complete the Lecture Quizzes (LQs) follow the deadline for the Exam for which they are included. Specifically, at 11:59 PM on the following dates

- February 22nd: Chapters 1, 3, 3, and 4
- March 29th: Chapters 6 and 7
- April 26th: Chapters 8, 9, and 11

What happens if I miss one of the deadlines above? We do not accept any excuses for missing the deadline. Yet, you can turn in your work late and suffer only a penalty of 1% of the score for everyday late.

Problem Sets

What are they? The Problem Sets are a collection of longer, usually graph, numerical, and/or essay problems.

How are Problem Sets graded? Problem Sets are graded on completion and effort; not correctness. We will simply mark them “complete/not completed”. If you turn in a Problem Set and receive a “not completed” grade, you have the opportunity to revise and resubmit up until the deadline below.

I encourage you to work in these Problem Sets collaboratively, along with other students in the class. Yet, remember that when you sit down to write down your submission, you must do so on your own. I will definitely mark/review your submission under the assumption it is yours alone.

Can I get the answer keys? Yes, the answer key to each problem set question is available as soon as you get marked “complete” for that question.

When Are They Due? The deadlines to complete the Problem Sets follow the deadline for the Exam for which they are included. Specifically, at 11:59 PM on the following dates

- February 22nd: Problem Set 1
- March 29th: Problem Set 2
- April 26th: Problem Set 3

What happens if I miss one of the deadlines above? We do not accept any excuses for missing the deadline. Yet, you can turn in your work late and suffer only a penalty of 1% of the score for everyday late.

Exams

What are they? The Exams are a collection of questions similar to those you do in your problem sets, as well as some multiple-choice questions. Each Exam contains comprehensive material up to that point in the course. *Notice that there is still going to be 3 Exams and one Final Exam, even though Exam 3 and the Final Exam cover basically the same content.*

All the exams are completely online!

Are exams open book/notes? Yes. Exams in this class are open notes/book. You are not allowed to collaborate with other students, but you can consult any other sources during the exam.

Do you need to proctor the exams? No, you will take the exam on your own. Still, I expect all students to follow the rules specified above.

How are Exams graded? Exams are graded on accuracy. Each Exam will have two parts: a Multiple-Choice Part (Part I), and an Open-Ended Questions Part (Part II). You can attempt the multiple-choice part up to two times, and I will only count the highest score of your two attempts.

You can only attempt the Open-Ended Section one time.

What happens if I miss an Exam? Things come up that disrupt our schedules; I totally get that. That is why I allow all students to miss one exam without any penalties. All students can take advantage of this since I will only count the highest two of your three exams before calculating your final grade. Hence, all students get to “drop” one exam. If you miss an exam (for any reason), you must use that exam as your “drop” Exam. Students do not need to drop a complete exam, but can choose to drop only one part.

Are there any practice exams available? YES! There is a practice exam available in Moodle for each of the three exams. You will have TWO attempts to complete each practice exam.

When Are They Due? Exams will open 48 hours before they are due. The due dates for the exams will be 11:59 pm on the following dates:

- Exam 1: February 22nd
- Exam 2: March 29th
- Exam 3: April 26th

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must complete the exam INSIDE the exam window in order to receive full credit. This means if you begin the Exam at 11:58pm on the due date, you will only have 1 minute to complete the exam without a penalty.

Final Exam

What is it? The main purpose of the Final Exam is to meet the College's Identity Verification Requirement. To complete it, you must answer 30 multiple choice questions within a time limit of 3 hours. *The exam is designed so that it will reflect accurately the work you have done, and the skills you have acquired, in the course up to that point.*

The final exam is completely online!

How is it graded? The final exam is graded by accuracy. You will be able to see your score as soon as you submit your exam. You will be able to see all the answers one minute after the end of the exam window.

Is the Final Exam open book/notes? Yes. Exams in this class are open notes/book. You are not allowed to collaborate with other students, but you can consult any other sources during the exam.

Do you need to proctor the final exam? Yes. You will take the final exam in the classroom, or on your own using Zoom. If you are using Zoom to proctor your exam, make sure to follow [these instructions](#) carefully. Notice that you will need to complete some of the steps BEFORE the day of the exam

When is it due? It depends on the way you are proctoring the exam.

- *If you are taking the exam in the classroom:* The Final Exam will take place 8:00-11:00 a.m., Thursday, May 11
- *If you are taking the exam on your own using Zoom:* You can take the exam at any three hour period during Exam week.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Course Outline

Chapter #	Module Title
1	Introduction to Economic Growth
2	A Framework for Analysis
3	Physical Capital
4	Population
6	Human Capital
7	Productivity
8	Technology
9	Cutting Edge Technology
11	Government

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Week 1	Mo., Jan 16 We., Jan 18	NO CLASS Chapter 1: Introduction to Economic Growth
Week 2	Mo., Jan 23 We., Jan 25	Chapter 1: Introduction to Economic Growth Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis
Week 3	Mo., Jan 30 We., Feb 1	Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis Chapter 3: Physical Capital
Week 4	Mo., Feb 6 We., Feb 8	Chapter 3: Physical Capital Chapter 3: Physical Capital
Week 5	Mo., Feb 13 We., Feb 15	Chapter 4: Population Chapter 4: Population
Week 6	Mo., Feb 20 We., Feb 22	Exam 1 Review (Exam 1 opens at 12:01 am) NO CLASS (Exam 1 due at 11:59pm)
Week 7	Mo., Feb 27 We., Mar 1	NO CLASS (Class canceled to offset evening exams) NO CLASS (Class canceled to offset evening exams)
Week 8	Mo., Mar 6 We., Mar 8	Chapter 6: Human Capital Chapter 6: Human Capital
Week 9	Mo., Mar 13 We., Mar 15	Chapter 6: Human Capital Chapter 6: Human Capital
Week 10	Mo., Mar 20 We., Mar 22	Chapter 7: Productivity Chapter 7: Productivity
Week 11	Mo., Mar 27 We., Mar 29	Exam 2 Review- ONLINE (Exam 2 opens at 12:01 am) NO CLASS (Exam 2 due at 11:59pm)
Week 12	Mo., Apr 3 We., Apr 5	Chapter 8: Technology Chapter 8: Technology
Week 13	Mo., Apr 10 We., Apr 12	Chapter 9: Technology-II Chapter 9: Technology-II
Week 14	Mo., Apr 17 We., Apr 19	Chapter 11: Government Chapter 11 Government
Week 15	Mo., Apr 24 We., Apr 26	Exam 3 Review - (Exam 3 opens at 12:01 am on Tuesday) NO CLASS (Exam 3 due at 11:59pm on Thursday)
Week 16	Mo., May 1 We., May 3	Final Exam Review Final Exam Review

Due Dates

Here are all the due dates for this course. Make sure to use this information to mark your calendars. But I will remind you of all of them in the Weekly Announcements.

Due Date (11:59 PM)	Which Lecture Quizzes are due?	Which Problem Set is due?	Which Exam is due?
February 22nd	1, 2, 3, and 4	Problem Set 1	Exam 1
March 29th	6 and 7	Problem Set 2	Exam 2
April 26th	8, 9 and 11	Problem Set 3	Exam 3

Policy on Technical Difficulties

Since we offer students such a long window to complete all assignments, WE DO NOT ACCEPT TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES AS AN EXCUSE TO MISS DEADLINES. By starting an assignment close to the deadline, you are assuming the risk of not being able to turn in the assignment due to some unexpected technical difficulties.

Policy on Missing Deadlines

We do not accept any assignments after their due dates. If you miss any deadline, and you feel you have a justifiable excuse to make up the work, you have the right to apply for a grade of I (Incomplete). According to university policy, only the dean of the student's academic college may authorize an I for our undergraduate students.

COMMUNICATION AND GETTING COURSE SUPPORT

Weekly Announcements

I will send a weekly announcement every Monday by 5pm at the latest. The Weekly announcement will have, at the minimum, the following:

- Short introduction to the material I included in the weekly lectures
- Reminders of what is due that week (if anything is due).
- Answers to some common questions I see in the Q and A Forum

Students can always read all Weekly Announcements in the course by visiting the *Announcements* forum located at the top of the page.

Discussion Forum

This will be the most effective way to get quick answers to your questions since my teaching staff and I will monitor the Forum regularly and post answers to most questions within a 24hr period. So I encourage you to visit the Forum regularly and participate, even answering the questions posted by your fellow students.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Main Instructor: Dr. José J. Vazquez

Office: DKH 102

Email Address: vazquezj@illinois.edu

Office Hours: 8:00 - 9:00 am on Monday and Wednesdays, or by appointment



Short Bio

I teach economics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), where I teach one of the largest face to face sections of Microeconomics in the nation; 950 students. I am also the Coordinator of e-Learning for the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS), as well as the Director of LAS Teaching Academy. During my tenure at Illinois I have received several teaching awards, including The Outstanding Teacher of Freshmen Award , a campus-wide award given every year by the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society. I have also been included in the List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent for several consecutive years. Before returning to Illinois, I was the Associate Director of the Teaching and Learning and Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio. I specialize in developing technologies that can be used in large enrollment courses, particularly classroom simulation games and web-based assessments/activities. I have published this work in several academic journals including the International Journal of Economic Education, and has presented at numerous academic conferences. I have a new Principles of Economics textbook, co-authored with Eric Chiang of Florida Atlantic University, that will be published by Worth Publishers in 2015.

Table of Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Section Information](#)
[Course Description and Goal](#)
[My Teaching Style and Philosophy](#)
[Academic Integrity](#)
[Students with Disability](#)
[Academic Assistance](#)
[Community of Care](#)
[Disruptive Behavior](#)
[Religious Observances](#)
[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
[Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation](#)
[Student Support](#)

COURSE MATERIALS AND WEBSITES

[Required Materials](#)

HOW I WILL CALCULATE YOUR GRADE?

[Course Activities](#)
[Grading Scale](#)

COURSE ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

[Lecture Quizzes \(LQs\)](#)
[Problem Sets](#)
[Exams](#)
[Final Exam](#)

COURSE ORGANIZATION

[Course Outline](#)
[Tentative Weekly Schedule](#)
[Due Dates](#)
[Policy on Technical Difficulties](#)
[Policy on Missing Deadlines](#)

COMMUNICATION AND GETTING COURSE SUPPORT

[Weekly Announcements](#)
[Discussion Forum](#)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

[Main Instructor: Dr. José J. Vazquez](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

