

Economics for Lawyers – Law 108-004
Wednesdays, 6:05 – 9 pm
Antonin Scalia Law School, George Mason University, Fall 2023

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Office Hours. Wed. 4-5 pm, Thur. 2-3 pm, & by appt.

Welcome. This course is an introduction to a diverse set of materials designed to improve your ability to analyze legal problems using the tools of microeconomic theory. We will develop both the mechanics and subtleties of these tools—as this will better equip you to understand a dispute, craft an argument, and prepare a witness. Background knowledge is neither assumed nor required to perform well in the course.

Learning Outcome: By the end of the course, students will be able to comprehend, apply, and analyze the economic concepts developed over the semester. Students will be able to perform problem solving involving economics including its intersection with the law.

Texts & Readings.

- HENRY N. BUTLER, CHRISTOPHER R. DRAHOZAL, & JOANNA SHEPHERD, ECONOMIC ANALYSIS FOR LAWYERS, 3rd Edition (pdf on TWEN)
- N. GREGORY MANKIW, PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS, 6th Edition
- All other readings will be made available on TWEN.

Course Requirements and Grading.

Midterm Exam. The midterm exam will be administered in class on **Wednesday, October 4**, and will count for **30 percent** of your grade. It will consist of multiple-choice questions. *The exam is closed book and notes.*

Final Exam. The final exam will be administered on **Thursday, December 7 @ 6 – 9 pm** and will count for **70 percent** of your grade. (Unlock the “Improvement Bonus”: If you perform better on the final exam compared to the midterm, then I will count your final exam as 100 percent of your grade.) The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions covering *all* the material in the course. *The final exam is also closed book and notes.*

Grading. This course follows the grading policies outlined in Academic Regulations (AR) 4-6.7 & 4-6.8, which may be found at ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, <https://www.law.gmu.edu/academics/regulations/>.

Class Participation. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings and to come to class prepared. Your grade is subject to a discretionary class participation and preparation adjustment of 1/3rd of a letter grade in either direction (e.g., a B to a B+ or a B-). The course adheres to the attendance policy as outlined in AR 4-1.

Homework Assignments. I will periodically distribute ungraded homework assignments on TWEN. These will help you in reviewing the assigned materials.

Honor Code. Students are expected to adhere to the Scalia Law HONOR CODE, which may be found at https://www.law.gmu.edu/academics/honor_code/.

Tentative Syllabus. We may deviate from the tentative syllabus for reasons including current events, scheduling, new cases, *et cetera*. Please make sure you are signed up to receive updates via TWEN.

Intellectual Property. I own all course content that is created (e.g., slides, handouts), regardless of format (electronic, print, audio, video). You are forbidden to distribute them to anyone other than your classmates in this course. Pursuant to Academic Regulation 4-2.2, no portion of a class session or an examination may be preserved by means of a recording device such as an audio recording device or camera.

Class Schedule & Assignments

1 The Economic Way of Thinking; Demand (Wed., Aug. 23)

Economic Way of Thinking

- Butler et al., Chapter I (p. 3), I.A (pp. 5-17)
- Mankiw, Chapters 1 (pp. 3-8, 10-13), 2 (pp. 21-24, 29-31, Appendix)

Demand

- Butler et al., Chapter II.A (pp. 56-58), G.1 (pp. 109-114)
- Mankiw, Chapters 4 (pp. 65-72), 5 (pp. 89-98)

2 Supply; Market Equilibrium & Efficiency (Wed., Aug. 30)

Supply

- Butler et al., Chapters II.B (pp. 58-62), G.2-3 (pp. 114-117); IX.A (pp. 481-492)
- Mankiw, Chapters 4 (pp. 73-76), 5 (pp. 98-101), 13

Equilibrium & Efficiency

- Butler et al., Chapters I.E (pp. 45-46, 51-53); II.C-D.2 (pp. 62-69), E-F (pp. 89-99, 106-109), H (pp. 120-123)
 - Sedmak v. Charlie's Chevrolet (1981)
 - Comp. Enterprise Institute v. NHTSA (1992)
- Mankiw, Chapters 4 (pp. 77-84), 6 (pp. 112-119), 7
- L. B. Solum, *Legal Theory Lexicon: Efficiency, Pareto, and Kaldor-Hicks*
- State of Florida v. Medina, Complaint

3 Excise Taxes; Competition (Wed., Sep. 6)

Excise Taxes

- Mankiw, Chapter 6 (pp. 121-127)

Competition

- Butler et al., Chapter IX.B.1 (pp. 492-503)
- Mankiw, Chapter 14

4 Monopoly & Monopolistic Competition; Price Discrimination (Wed., Sep. 13)

Monopoly & Monopolistic Competition

- Butler et al., Chapter IX.B.2 (pp. 503-508, 517-520), B.3 (pp. 523-526)
- Mankiw, Chapters 15 (pp. 299-313), 16
- Benjamin Klein, *Brand Names*, in THE CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ECONOMICS

Price Discrimination

- Butler et al., Chapter IX.B.2.c (pp. 513-515)
 - ProCD, Inc. v. Zeidenberg (7th Cir. 1996)
- Mankiw, Chapter 15 (pp. 314-318)
- Hal Varian, *Differential Pricing and Efficiency*, 1 FIRST MONDAY 1 (1996)

5 Labor Markets; Basic Probability Theory (Wed., Sep. 20)

Labor Markets

- Butler et al., Chapter VIII.A.1 (pp. 421-424), A.3 (p. 425), B.1 (pp. 426-431), C.1 (pp. 453-455)
- Mankiw, Chapter 18 (pp. 375-389, 392)

Basic Probability Theory

- Complete the readings and exercises from the ONLINESTATBOOK:
http://onlinestatbook.com/2/probability/probability_intro.html
 - Introduction (V.2)
 - Basic Concepts (V.3)
- Butler et al., Chapter VI.A.1-A.3 (pp. 291-298)

6 Decision-Making Under Uncertainty; Catch Up & Review (Wed., Sep. 27)

Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

- Butler et al., Chapters VI.B (pp. 298-300, 304, 314); X.A (pp. 565-566), X.B (pp. 569-573), X.C (pp. 591-592, 595-597)

7 In-Class Midterm (Wed., Oct. 4)

8 Game Theory; Property Rights, Externalities, & Coase (I) (Wed., Oct. 11)

Game Theory

- Butler et al., Chapter I.D (pp. 39-45)
 - Page v. United States (1989)
- Randal C. Picker, *An Introduction to Game Theory and the Law*, Coase-Sandor Institute for Law & Economics Working Paper No. 22 (1994) (pp. 1-15)

Property Rights, Externalities, & Coase (I)

- Butler et al., Chapters I.B (pp. 17-21, 27-28, 30-33); IV (pp. 185-189, 195-198,)
- Fontainebleau Hotel Corp. v. Forty-Five Twenty-Five (1959)
- Mankiw, Chapter 10

9 Property Rights, Externalities, & Coase (cont.) (Wed., Oct. 18)

- Butler et al., Chapter IV (pp. 205-207, 213-220)
 - Boomer v. Atlantic Cement Company, 26 N.Y.2d 219 (1970)
- Harold Demsetz, *Toward a Theory of Property Rights*, 57 AM. ECON. REV. 347 (1967)
- Ronald H. Coase, *The Problem of Social Cost*, 3 J. L. & ECON. 1 (1960) (pp. 1-8, 15-19, 28-29, 42-44)

10 Public Goods; Economics of Information (*Wed., Oct. 25*) [No in-class meeting; a recorded lecture will be distributed]

Private Provision of Public Goods

- Butler et al., Chapter I.B (pp. 21-22, 24-26)
- Mankiw, Chapter 11
- Feist Publications v. Rural Telephone Service, 499 U.S. 340 (1991)

Economics of Information

- Butler et al., Chapter V.A-B (pp. 231-242)
- Hadley v. Baxendale, 9 Exch. 341, 156 Eng. Rep. 145 (1854)

11 Intellectual Property Rights; Economics of Tort Law (I) (Wed., Nov. 1)

IP Rights

- Butler et al., Chapter I.C (pp. 33-39)
 - Eldred v. Ashcroft (2003)
- Richard A. Posner, *Intellectual Property: The Law and Economics Approach*, 19 J. ECON. PERSP. 57 (2005)

Economics of Tort Law (I)

- Butler et al., Chapter VI.D.1-3 (pp. 327-339)
 - United States v. Carroll Towing Co. (1947)
 - Greenman v. Yuba Power Products (1963)

12 Economics of Tort Law (II); Efficient Breach, Optimal Deterrence, & Damages (Wed., Nov. 8)

Economics of Tort Law (II)

- Central of Georgia Ry. Co. v. Price, 106 Ga. 176 (Ga. 1898)

Efficient Breach, Optimal Deterrence, & Damages

- Butler et al., Chapter VI.D.4 (pp. 351-358)
 - Mathias v. Accor Economy Lodging (2003)

13 Economics of Crime; Catch Up & Review (Wed., Nov. 15)

- Butler et al., Chapter VII (pp. 383-393, 399-402, 404-409)
 - U.S. v. Gupta (2012)

14 Final Exam (*Thursday*, Dec. 7, 6 pm – 9 pm)