Economics 215-01  
Labor Economics  

Spring 2013  
Tuesday, Thursday 1:10 PM – 2:30 PM  
Room: SCIE121

Professor David Harrington  
E-mail: deharrington@wesleyan.edu  
Cell Phone: 740/504-9045  

Office: PAC 312  
Office Hours:  
TTh 11:00-12:00 AM  
Sunday 1:00-3:00 PM

Course Objectives  
This course will examine labor markets, focusing on the determination of labor demand and labor  
supply, and the resulting equilibrium wages and employment levels. The effect of job  
characteristics and investments in human capital, such as education, on wages will also be  
examined. The effects of different compensation schemes on productivity, labor market  
discrimination based on gender and race, and unemployment will also be studied. This course will  
examine these issues both theoretically and empirically. The course will stress the application of  
economic theory to important policy issues such as minimum wage laws, manpower policies,  
welfare policies, occupational health and safety standards, immigration laws, and anti-  
discrimination policies.

Course Materials  
Required Books:  
York, NY: Addison-Wesley.  
Tobar, Hector. 2005. Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish-  
Speaking United States, New York: Riverhead Trade.  
Boo, Katherine. 2012. Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai  
Undercity, New York, NY: Random House

Contacting Me/Seeking Assistance  
The best way to reach me outside office hours is via e-mail. You are encouraged to visit me  
regularly during my office hours. You can always talk to me before or after lecture.

Course Requirements  
A. Examinations: There will be two exams during the course of the semester. Each will concentrate on  
material presented since the previous exam and will consist of short answer questions, problems,
and essays. The exams will be given during the regular class period on **Thursday, February 28th** and **Tuesday, April 30th**.

B. Final Comprehensive Examination: This will be a three-hour examination of all the material covered during the semester. Half the questions on the final exam will be taken verbatim from previous homework assignments and exams. The final exam will be given on **Friday, May 17th from 9:00 am to noon**.

C. Homework Assignments: There will be 7 homework assignments and your grade will be based on the top 6 scores. Homework assignments are due in class and there are no extensions.

D. Short Essay: There will be a short essay based on either *Translation Nation* or *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*. The short essay is due in class on **Tuesday, May 7th**.

Your final course grade will be based on the following weighting scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeworks</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Honesty**

Cases of plagiarism will be taken to the Honor Board. Plagiarism is a serious offence, which harms the offender’s growth as a writer and undermines our collective effort to learn from one another. It is a lousy thing to do. Examples of plagiarism are (1) cutting and pasting (and scrambling) other peoples’ words into your essays, (2) paraphrasing other peoples’ words without proper referencing, (3) failing to acknowledge ideas that originated elsewhere, pretending that they are yours, (4) submitting an essay written for another course.
TOPIC OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Thurs. 1/24  Overview of the Labor Market

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 1, 2

Tues. 1/29  Introduction to Regression

Ehrenberg and Smith: Appendix 1A

Tues. 1/31  Labor Demand

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 3
Playbill for “The White Divers of Broome”
Video Interview of Hilary Bell, the playwright of “The White Divers of Broome,” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5hX7ECNrCo

Thurs. 2/5  Isoquants and IsoExpenditure Lines

Ehrenberg and Smith: Appendix 3A
Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Prologue, Chap 1-3.

Thurs. 2/7  Labor Demand Elasticities

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 4
Moreno, Jenalia. 2001. “Mexico tries to Boost Poor Southern States.” Houston Chronicle, Tuesday, August 21, 2001

Tues. 2/12  Frictions in the Labor Market

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 5
Tues. 2/12 Labor Supply

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 6

Thur. 2/14 Labor Supply

Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chap 4-6.

Tues. 2/19 Compensating Wage Differentials

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 8, Appendix 8A

Thur. 2/21 Compensating Wage Differentials

Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chap 7-9.

Tue. 2/26 Indian Market for Waste-Pickers

Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chap 10-12.

Thur. 2/28 1st Exam

Tue. 3/5 Investments in Human Capital

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 9

Thur. 3/7 Investments in Human Capital


3/11-3/22 Spring Vacation

Tues. 3/26 No Class—CA Softball
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 11
Harrington, David E. and Jaret Treber, “Too Sweat a Deal,” in *Casket Wars: A Cautionary Tale of Entrepreneurship in the Internet Age*

**Thurs. 3/28**  
**Child Labor**

**Tues. 4/2**  
**Worker Mobility & Immigration**
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 10

**Thur. 4/4**  
**Worker Mobility & Immigration**
*Translation Nation*, Chp 1-3

**Tues. 4/9**  
**Worker Mobility & Immigration**
*Translation Nation*, Chp 4-6

**Thur. 4/11**  
**Discrimination**
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 12

**Tues. 4/16**  
**Discrimination**
Ehrenberg and Smith: Appendix 12A
*Translation Nation*, Chp 7-9

**Thur. 4/18**  
**Affirmative Action**

**Tues. 4/23**  
**Labor Unions**
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 13
Thurs. 4/25  **Occupational Licensing Laws and Immigrants**
_Translation Nation_, Chp 10, Epilogue

Tues. 4/30  **2nd EXAM**

Thurs. 5/2  **Matching Workers and Jobs**

Tues. 5/7  **Unemployment**
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 14

Friday, 5/17  **FINAL EXAMINATION (9:00 AM – noon)**