Economics 215-01
Labor Economics

Spring 2014
Monday, Wednesday 9:00 am – 10:20 am
Room: PAC125

Professor David Harrington
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Office: PAC 207
Office Hours:
Sunday 1-3 pm
Mon, Wed noon-1:40 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:

Aplia: I will be using the online grading system, Aplia, for your homework assignments. Instructions for how to register and pay for Aplia are at the end of the syllabus. You will also be asked to read newspaper articles that will be available on the teaching section of my website, davideharrington.com. I will post copies of my PowerPoint lectures, within 24 hours of the completion of the lecture.

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 Wednesday, February 26th and Wednesday, April 23th.

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 Tuesday, May 13th from 9:00 am to noon.

C. Homework Assignments: There will be 9 Aplia homework assignments and your grade will be based on the top 8 scores. Homework assignments are due Sunday night at 11:00, a few hours after my office hours.

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

- Top 8 scores on 9 Homework assignments: 20%
- Exam #1 (Wed., Feb. 26): 25%
- Exam #2 (Wed., April 23): 25%
- Final Exam (Tue. May 13, 8:30-11:30 am): 30%

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 to 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 (all readings are available via the Wesleyan University’s library using Lexis/Nexis, JStor and other online services.)

Mon. 1/27  Overview of the Labor Market
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 1, 2

Wed. 1/29  Introduction to Regression,
Ehrenberg and Smith: Appendix 1A

Sun., 2/2  Homework 1: Explaining College Grades & 19th Century Sailors (due by 11:00 p.m.)

Mon. 2/3  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

Wed. 2/5  Isoquants and IsoExpenditure Lines
Ehrenberg and Smith: Appendix 3A
Working in the Shadows, pp. xi-xvii, 1-43.
Video for Working in the Shadows http://workingintheshadows.wordpress.com/video/

Sun., 2/9  Homework 2: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)

Mon. 2/10  Labor Demand Elasticities
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 4
Moreno, Jenalia. 2001. “Mexico tries to Boost Poor Southern States.” Houston Chronicle, Tuesday, August 21, 2001

Wed. 2/12  Frictions in the Labor Market
Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 5
Sun., 2/16  
**Homework 3: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

Mon. 2/17  
**Minimum Wages**


Wed. 2/19  
**Labor Supply**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 6

Sun., 2/23  
**Homework 4: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

Mon. 2/24  
**Labor Supply**

*Working in the Shadows*, pp 45-94.

Wed. 2/26  
**Exam 1**

Mon. 3/3  
**Compensating Wage Differentials**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 8, Appendix 8A

Wed. 3/5  
**Compensating Wage Differentials**

*Working in the Shadows*, pp. 97-159.

3/10-3/21  
**Spring Vacation**

Mon. 3/24  
**In Class Homework 5: TBA (due by 11:00 pm)**


Wed. 3/26  
**Investments in Human Capital**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 9

Mon. 3/31  
**Investments in Human Capital**

Wed. 4/2  
**Wages of Athletes—Does Sports Participation Create Unconventional Abilities?**


Sun., 4/6  
**Homework 6: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

Mon. 4/7  
**Teacher Absences & Behind the Beautiful Forevers**


Wed. 4/9  
**Fishers and Phones in India**


Sun., 4/13  
**Homework 7: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

Mon. 4/14  
**Worker Mobility & Immigration**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 10

Wed. 4/16  
**Rewards to Immigrants from Speaking English**


Sun., 4/20  
**Homework 8: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

Mon. 4/21  
**Flowers and Food**

*Working in the Shadows*, pp. 217-285

Wed. 4/23  
**Exam 2**

Mon. 4/28  
**Discrimination**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 12

**Mon. 4/30**  
**Discrimination**


**Sun., 5/4**  
**Homework 9: TBA (due by 11:00 p.m.)**

**Mon. 5/5**  
**Labor Unions**

Ehrenberg and Smith: Chapter 13  

**Wed. 5/7**  
**Occupational Licensing Laws**

Pictures of the Monks: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/louisiana-monks-fight-for-the-right-to-sell-coffins/2012/05/28/gJQAuoAwzU_gallery.html#photo=1

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**Fri. 5/17**  
**FINAL EXAMINATION (9:00 AM – noon)**
How to access your Aplia course

Labor Economics (Econ 215)

Instructor: David Harrington
Start Date: 01/23/2014
Course Key: XADF-5ZDB-WWU7

Registration

Aplia is part of CengageBrain, which allows you to sign in to a single site to access your Cengage materials and courses.

1. Connect to http://login.cengagebrain.com/
2. **If you already have an account, sign in.** From your Dashboard, enter your course key (XADF-5ZDB-WWU7) in the box provided, and click the Register button.
   **If you don't have an account,** click the Create a New Account button, and enter your course key when prompted: XADF-5ZDB-WWU7. Continue to follow the on-screen instructions.

Payment

**Online:** After registering, you can buy access to Aplia from myhome.cengagebrain.com.

If you choose to pay later, you can use Aplia without paying until 11:59 PM on 02/12/2014.

For more information on registering for Aplia, please visit http://www.cengagebrain.com/aplia/.