MSRE6238: Real Estate and Urban Economics
Spring 2016, Wednesday 5:30-8:00pm

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Billings
Office: Friday 340A (704-687-7625)
Email: sbillin2@uncc.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday 3-5pm, but please make an appointment given the class location


I suggest purchasing a used version of this textbook since the first edition has been out for a couple of years, but please use the same edition (2010) because I may assign some homework problems from the textbook

Course Description and Objectives: The course is divided into three parts. The first is Urban Growth. This part of the course analyzes the economic forces that cause cities to form and grow. It explains where cities develop, why some are large and others are small, and how many cities exist in a region. The second part of the course develops the Monocentric City Model, which explains the equilibrium land rent and land-use patterns within a city. The final part of the course focuses on urban problems such as poverty, inadequate housing, transportation, and local public finance.

Course Pre-requisites: This course is part of the M.S.R.E. program’s core curriculum. Students without an appropriate background in economics will need to complete MSRE 5110 and MSRE 5131 prior to enrollment in this course.

Electronic Distribution of Class Material: There is a Moodle page for this course, accessible through 49er Express. Lecture outlines (for some classes), homework assignments, journal articles and other materials will be posted to the website as the semester progresses. While you are not required to print the outlines and bring them to class, the pace of the lectures will be based on the assumption that you have the outlines in front of you during class.

Software: I will provide some tutorials on using statistical software prior to homework assignments. I am planning on using excel for basic regression analysis and familiarity with Excel is expected prior to this class.

Attendance: Classroom attendance is strongly recommended. We will be covering a substantial amount of material in this course, and you will probably find that the easiest way to keep up (and find out what I think is important) will be to attend class. I expect you to be in class on time and stay for the duration. If you do not plan to attend the entire lecture, please see me in advance or refrain from coming to class.

Communication: Communication with those outside of class while class is in progress is not acceptable. (In other words, turn off all communication devices prior to the start of class.)
Students are expected to check their UNC Charlotte e-mail (username@uncc.edu) as well as the class Moodle webpage accounts weekly for correspondence regarding the course.

**Grading:** Final grades will be based on the student’s performance on an oral presentation, homework assignments, the midterm and final exam. Homework consists of 3-4 problems sets or mini-projects where students directly apply the theory learned in lectures to specific quantitative problems. For example, students will be asked to examine the empirically ranking of cities by population or relate city population to different urban amenities and city attributes. An oral presentation will consist of 1 presentation of a class reading and the second presentation will involve presenting the results of a project that analyzes property valuation of specific parcels here in Charlotte using county property records. Exams involve a mix of theory and applied analysis of urban economics and real estate and will incorporate short answers problems that span the topics outlined below.

Grades will be determined according to the weights given below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Tests:** Makeup exams are administered only for extreme situations such as illness, death in the family, etc and the instructor is allowed to re-weight other assignments in lieu of a makeup exam.

**Grading Scale:** Letter grades will be based on the following scale (in percentage terms):

- A 90 and above
- B 80-89.99
- C 70-79.99
- U Below 70

**Academic Integrity:** Please note that academic misconduct (cheating) will NOT be tolerated. In addition, students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student’s work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases, the course grade is reduced to U. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor. In addition, the following rule regarding conduct applies:
Statement on Diversity: The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Proposed Course Outline: While there are no guarantees regarding how well I will be able to follow this outline, it should give you some idea of the material that I intend to cover and of the intended rate of progress. Keeping up with deviations from the outline is your responsibility.

Topic 1 – Introduction/Course Expectations/Review of Economics

Topic 2 - What is Urban Economics?

Topic 3 – Understanding urban area hierarchies

Required Readings
McDonald and McMillen, Chapter 3

Additional Readings

Homework/mini-project 1 – Zipf's Law and the Size of Cities

Topic 4 – Urban Area Growth and Decline

Required Readings
McDonald and McMillen, Chapter 18D & 19


**Additional Readings**


Topic 4 – Location Models within a City

*Required Readings*

McDonald and McMillen, Chapter 5, 6 and 7

**Homework/mini-project 2 –**Bid-rent and monocentric city model.

EXAM 1

Topic 5 – Housing and Land Valuation

Statistical Session – excel

*Required Readings*

McMillen Ch.8, 9


**Homework/mini-project 3 – Hedonic housing price project.**

**Topic 6 – Housing Policy**


**Topic 7 – Agglomeration Economies**

**Homework/mini-project 4 – Agglomeration Economics**


**EXAM 2**

**Topic 8 – Issues in Urban Economics – Readings and Lectures.**


Presentations of Class Project