Boston College
Department of Economics

Syllabus

Urban Economics
EC394.01
Spring 2010
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 11:00 am-12:00pm.

Instructor: John Donovan
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Course Description: An examination of the economics of urban areas with an emphasis on location decisions of individuals, firms and industries. Urban problems and public policy decisions are covered.

Course Objectives: To study and understand the following: urban growth and development, intermetropolitan location of business firms, regional shifts in economic activity, intrametropolitan location of firms and households, and land use patterns.

University Policies adhered to in this course.
Academic Honesty: Anyone caught cheating will receive a final grade of F for the course and will be reported to judicial affairs.
Incomplete: An incomplete will only be given when a student has failed to complete an exam or other major course assignment for a justifiable reason that can be adequately substantiated. The student will then be given a final date for the required work to be completed.
Attendance: Students are responsible for everything covered in class. Therefore attendance is mandatory.

Requirements:
(1) To attend classes and keep current with all assignments.
(2) Two home work sets worth 5 points each
(3) A mid-term exam worth 40 points
(4) A final exam worth 50 points
(5) Four extra credit assignments worth 1 point each

Course Outline

Market Forces in the Development of Cities

Chapter 1 Introduction: Definitions of Urban Economics and Urban Areas
Chapter 2 Why Do Cities Exist?
Videos: Urban Squares
Harvard U/Watertown
Brookline/Catholic Church
New Bedford/Fall River

Chapter 3 Where Do Firms Cluster?
Readings: New Bedford rebounds
Video: Eric Canal

Chapter 4 City Size
Video: New York: A Documentary Film
Episode 2: Order and Disorder
www.pbs.org/wnet/new_york/series/index.html
Infrastructure
Readings: Infrastructure and social welfare in Metropolitan America
A whittled-down ‘Urban Ring’ emerges – along with obstacles
Videos: New York Bridges & Big Dig

Chapter 5
Urban Growth
Video: New York: A Documentary Film
Episode 5: Cosmopolis
www.pbs.org/wnet/new york/series/index.html

Chapter 6
Urban Land Rent

Chapter 7
Land-Use Patterns

Mid-term Exam

Chapter 8
Neighborhood Choice

Chapter 9
Zoning and Growth Controls
Readings: Report: Housing inhibited by rules

Chapter 13
Why is Housing Different?

Chapter 14
Housing Policies
Readings: Clam Point adds new neighborhood
Fact Sheets: Massachusetts and Chapter 40B

Inter-relationship of the Economy and Real Estate
Readings: “The Property and Capital Markets”; by DiPasquale/Wheaton
Video: Real estate bubble

Minorities and Real Estate/Development
Readings: The racial divide
Predatory lending on rise, study says
Redlining law needs teeth, says lawmaker

Chapter 15
Role of Government
Video: New York: A Documentary Film
Episode 4: The Power and the People
www.pbs.org/wnet/new york/series/index.html

Chapter 10
Externalities from Autos
Video: New York: A Documentary Film
Episode 7: The City and the World
www.pbs.org/wnet/new york/series/index.html

Final Exam