

ECONOMICS OF TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR
ECONOMICS EC2156A-001
Department of Economics
Western University

September 2020

General Information:

Delivery Mode: Online. Times are according to the Eastern time zone ET (EDT/EST).

Course website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

Instructor: Deanna Walker

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Phone: 519661-2111 x.85452 (not in use at this time)

E-mail: dwalke44@uwo.ca**

**must be addressed from your uwo.ca account, subject line must include "2156"

Office hours: I will respond to emails or meet by zoom Mondays 9:00-11:00 a.m. ET

Class messages will be sent via OWL postmaster to your uwo.ca address.

Undergraduate inquiries: 519-661-3507 or SSC Room 4075 or econugrd@uwo.ca

Registration:

You are responsible for ensuring you are registered in the correct courses. If you are not registered in this course, the Department will not release any of your marks until your registration is corrected. You may check your timetable by using the Login on the Student Services website at <https://student.uwo.ca>. If you notice a problem, please contact your home Faculty Academic Counsellor immediately.

Prerequisite Note: The prerequisite(s) for this course is (are) [Economics 1021A/B](#) and [Economics 1022A/B](#), or [Economics 2001A/B](#).

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites, and that you have not taken any anti-requisite courses. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis for appeal. If you are found to be ineligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. This decision cannot be appealed.

If you find that you do not have the course prerequisites, it is in your best interest to drop the course well before the end of the add/drop period. Your prompt attention to this matter will not only help protect your academic record, but will ensure that spaces become available for students who require the course in question for graduation.

Course Objectives:

The economic and legal aspects of labour relations will be approached under some or all of the following headings: the history and origin of the trade union movement, the economics of trade unions, labour law, wage/price controls and the relationship of unions, firms and governments.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Students will recognize the rationales and effects of union interventions in the labour market as well as various government and legislative influences.
- Students will apply the assumptions and predictions of basic labour market and union models in order to make outcome predictions and explain related policy implications in terms of economic theory.
- Students will interpret issues arising in labour relations in order to evaluate outcomes in hypothetical, historical, and/or contemporary situations.

Textbook(s):

Benjamin, Gunderson, Lemieux, Riddell, *Labour Market Economics*, 8th edition, McGrawHill Ryerson, 2017

Supplemental material and other references will be posted on OWL.

Expectations:

A. Students are responsible at all times throughout the term for stable and reliable internet connection as well as compatibility of electronic devices and software. You may be asked to submit in pdf format. Unless otherwise specified, the following are all acceptable: work created by tablet or annotation saved as pdf, a scan or photograph of written work converted to pdf.

B. Students are expected to have competence in prerequisite topics, and to be able to follow instructions and submit their work with accuracy. The student bears all responsibility for errors, clerical or otherwise. Failure to abide by instructions given may also result in penalties.

C. To pass the course, a student must complete all components of the course. If any component has not been completed, a pass will not be granted regardless of the grade on the remaining components.

Students are expected to work consistently throughout the term. This includes on-time completion of weekly readings and OWL lessons, participation in OWL forum discussion posting, and submission of homework problems.

This course also has a final examination. A student who fails to maintain good standing throughout the term including satisfactory engagement, may be prohibited from writing the final examination. (See the university's Attendance Regulations for Examinations and also the Policy Regarding Class Attendance and Engagement in the Please Note appendix to this course outline.)

D. Students are responsible at all times for clear articulation and reading comprehension. Work which shows a lack of proficiency in English may either be failed or, at the discretion of the instructor, returned to the student for revision to a literate level.

E. Students will be held to the [Student Code of Conduct](#). All submissions in this course are required to be your own, individual work. You must properly acknowledge anyone else's words or ideas which you use and you must follow any instructions given regarding authorized exam materials. The final exam and all coursework are not collaborative.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, will be treated as a scholastic offence.

A helpful tutorial with quizzes for self-testing is available at http://lib.usm.edu/plagiarism_tutorial.html. Assessments in this course may be subject to Turnitin analysis.

Copyright:

All course materials are protected by copyright law.

Copyright protection on course material includes lectures, power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials. Students may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational purposes. Students may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without written consent.

Topics Covered and Relevant Chapters:

Weeks are counted Wednesday to Wednesday.

Weeks 1-2: Unions and the Labour Market (Ch 1, 8)

- Competitive labour market model and Neoclassical predictions
- Special considerations about labour markets and function of the wage rate
- Do workers need union empowerment?

Weeks 3-4 : Labour Market Outcomes (Ch 7)

- Monopsonistic demand for labour
- Union effects on market outcomes under different market structures
- Can government regulation achieve worker objectives without unions?

Week 5-6: Models of Union Behaviour and Bargaining (Ch 14, 14A)

- Overview of unions in Canada
- Union preferences - what do workers care about?
- Models of contract determination

Week 7-8: Impact of Unions (Ch 15)

- Wage differentials and effects of unions across sectors
- How unions affect non-wage outcomes

Week 9-10: Labour Supply (Ch 2)

- Participation and hours-of-work decision, special constraints
- Union influences on individual and market labour supply

Week 11-12: Labour Demand (Ch 5, 6)

- Demand for labour in the presence of unions

- Labour and product market structures
- Quasi-fixed costs and compensation negotiation

The above list is tentative and may be modified as the course progresses. Supplemental material and other references will be posted on OWL.

Grading:

As described under “Expectations,” all components of the course must be completed in order to be given credit for the course. Upon meeting this requirement, the grade will be calculated as follows (note that late submissions count towards the completion requirement for the course credit, but will be graded as zero):

- On-Time Lessons: 6%
- Participation in Discussions: 6%
- Assigned Homework: 36%
- Final Exam: 52%

You will complete an OWL lesson and forum discussion post followed by a homework assignment every two weeks, six of each in total. Due dates (by 11:55pm ET) for lessons, discussion posts and homework are as follows:

Material Coverage	Lessons & Discussion	Homework
Week 1-2	September 18	September 23
Week 3-4	October 2	October 7
Week 5-6	October 16	October 21
Week 7-8	October 30	November 11
Week 9-10	November 20	November 25
Week 11-12	December 4	December 9

The final examination will be scheduled by the Registrar. The final exam period is December 11-22.

Any missed or late components of the assessment must be submitted for the completion requirement, but will be receive a grade of zero. If the student’s absence is formally excused (under extenuating circumstances or valid SRA), some form of accommodation will be offered as deemed appropriate by the instructor. Such accommodation will depend on the particulars

of the situation and may involve altering the weight, coverage, length and/or format of the student's coursework at the instructor's discretion. Students who miss any assessments must follow Western University's procedures for approval of their absence in order to receive such an accommodation. See the 'Please Note' section of this course outline for details of these procedures.

Tips on How to Be Successful in this Class:

While this course is challenging in-person, it can be even more challenging online if you are not careful. Students should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

- I have set up the course in two-week blocks of lesson work followed by homework, with due dates to encourage you to stay on track. There remains a lot of flexibility within this schedule. Find a habit that works well for you and stick to it.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions about the content. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards and/or make use of office hours.
- Work on it earlier rather than later so that you can alternate with breaks and have time to digest. The textbook is not written specifically for our subject, so depending on your background and aptitude you may find you need to devote more mental effort than you would normally expect in order to apply lessons.
- In recognition of the challenges, I have set up the course grade to directly encourage and reward your participation and diligence. It may not seem like much but it does make a difference, so be sure to take advantage of these opportunities to boost your grade.

The University expects all students to take responsibility for their own Academic Programs. Students should check their registration to ensure they are enrolled in the correct courses.

Academic Rights and Responsibilities: Students should be familiar with their “Academic Rights and Responsibilities” as outlined [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar. Claiming that “you didn’t know what to do” is not an acceptable excuse for not following the stated procedures.

Guidelines and Policies for Students are posted online in the current Western Academic Calendar at <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca>. Undergraduate information for the Faculty of Social Science can be found at: <https://www.ssc.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html> and for the Department of Economics at: <https://economics.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html>.

Rules of Conduct for Examinations: Students are expected to know the university’s Rules of Conduct for Examinations, available [here](#).

Cheating and Academic Offences: Students are responsible for understanding what it means to “cheat.” The Department of Economics treats cheating and other academic offences very seriously and will investigate any suspect behavior. Students found guilty will incur penalties that could include a failing grade or being barred from future registration in Economics courses or programs. The University may impose further penalties such as suspension or expulsion.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is an academic offence. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Ideas/passages taken from another author must be referenced with footnotes or citations and acknowledged with quotation marks where appropriate. Western University uses software to check for plagiarism and students may be required to electronically submit their work. Those found guilty will be penalized as noted in point 3. See Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar.

Academic Appeals: Students should refer to the Student Academic Appeals section [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar. Please note the relevant deadlines.

Department Appeals Procedures: The Department will not consider an appeal unless an attempt has been made to settle the matter with the instructor first. Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome may submit a written appeal to the Undergraduate Director in Economics, stating the reasons for their appeal. Information on the Department of Economics’ appeals procedure and the appeals form are available [here](#).

Systematic Adjustments: Systematic adjustments of class grade distributions (either up or down) can occur in Economics courses. The systematic adjustment of a class grade distribution is **not** grounds for an appeal.

Add/drop deadlines:

Deadline to add a first term half course:

Thursday September 17, 2020

Deadline to drop a first term half course:

Thursday November 12, 2020

Oversleeping or Misreading the Exam Schedule: Faculty of Social Science policy states that oversleeping or misreading the exam schedule is NOT grounds for a makeup. This rule applies to all exams in the Department of Economics.

End of Term Travel: Students must book travel arrangements AFTER final exam dates have been posted; travel is not an acceptable excuse for absence from a final exam.

Rewriting Exams and Retroactive Reweighting are NOT Permitted: Students who proceed to write a test or examination must be prepared to accept the mark. Rewriting tests or examinations, or retroactive reweighting of marks, is **not** permitted.

Accommodation Policies: Students with disabilities should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence: Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office for more information about the relevant documentation. It is strongly recommended that students notify the instructor as soon as possible, ideally before the assessment, when they become aware of an absence. University policy is that students must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the SMC or immediately upon their return from their documented absence. Failure to follow University policy and procedures may result in denial of academic accommodation and a grade of zero.

Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons. **All required documentation for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#).

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Policy Regarding Class Attendance and Engagement: If the instructor deems a student's attendance or engagement in the class to be unsatisfactory, that student may be prohibited from writing the final examination. Examples of unsatisfactory class engagement include frequent absences from an in-person or synchronous online class, lack of assignment submissions, and inadequate use of online course materials. Instructors who intend to make use of this policy will notify the student in advance.

Statement on Mental Health and Support Services: Students under emotional/mental distress should visit http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for more information and a complete list of resources on how to obtain help.