

Syllabus -- Center for Development Economics Academic Orientation
Classes on Microeconomics, Regression, and Writing
Williams College, Summer 2013

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Welcome to the Center for Development Economics Orientation! During the three-week period from Monday August 12th through Friday August 30th, we will be offering intensive courses in microeconomics, math, basic probability and statistics, regression, and writing. This syllabus describes the schedule and assignments for the classes that I am teaching, which will be on microeconomics, regression, and writing. Prof. Lara Shore-Sheppard will be covering most of the mathematics and statistics material and will provide you with instructions for her classes.

The purpose of the CDE Academic Orientation is to make sure that all CDE fellows begin the year with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills that will be used extensively during the academic year. For some of you, this will mostly be a quick but important review of material you've already learned before, while for others with less prior experience with economics or statistics, this will be a crucial opportunity to learn essential elements of economics and statistics to prepare yourself for a successful year. Because the review session will move at a very rapid pace during these three weeks, we *strongly* urge you to begin preparing in advance, most especially if you have limited prior experience with economics or statistics, or if there is some possibility that you will not arrive on time. We have created a rich array of online resources to help you prepare on your own in advance.

Your fall semester professors will proceed under the assumption that you already know the material that is covered in the CDE orientation. In addition, since many people find grade incentives to be a useful motivational tool, we are requiring that before the fall semester begins, all CDE fellows take an exam on the math and statistics you learn in classes with Prof. Shore-Sheppard, which will count towards your grade in Econ 502 or 503 (econometrics classes for people with different levels of prior preparation), and another exam on basic microeconomics, regression, and writing (we will henceforth call that the "microeconomics exam"). The microeconomics exam will count towards your fall semester grade in Economics 504 (Public Economics). **The microeconomics exam is scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, August 28th.** Any student who arrives after that date will be required to take a make-up exam shortly after arriving, so if you expect to be delayed, it is particularly important that you begin preparing on your own using our online resources. No one will be excused from the microeconomics exam, regardless of your reason for arriving late. We will have a teaching assistant on hand to help tutor people who arrive late, but you will find it much easier to catch up if you have prepared in advance.

What will be covered in Prof. Bakija's classes?

- Basic math review and introduction to "Aplia." We will begin with a review of some basic skills in math and graphing that will be essential in all of your classes. There will also be an introduction to the "Aplia" software that we will be using extensively during orientation for homework assignments and practice problems.
- Principles of microeconomics. The next eight class meetings with Prof. Bakija will review numerous topics that are typically addressed in modern introductory and intermediate microeconomics courses in the United States.
- Introduction to regression. During the fall semester, you will be taking an econometrics course that will explain statistics and regression analysis in great detail. However, during the fall semester you will also be taking other courses, including Public Economics, where you will be expected to read articles that discuss the results of regression analyses before you learn about that topic in detail in your econometrics course. The purpose of the orientation class on regression is to give you a concise non-technical explanation of what a regression is and how to read a regression table, so that you can understand what you are reading in your fall classes.
- Introduction to academic writing. Finally, we will learn about some particularly important rules that will apply to all of your writing assignments at the CDE regarding academic honesty, citation, quotation, paraphrasing, and references.

Course materials

Readings will include a textbook, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 6th edition, by Greg Mankiw, available as an e-book on the class "Aplia" web site, as well as additional readings that are being made available in electronic format on the class web site on the class "Glow" web site and which will also be distributed to you in hard copy when you arrive. (Information on Aplia and Glow are provided on the next page of this syllabus). You will have free access to an electronic version of the 6th edition Mankiw's textbook online through mid-December via the course Aplia web site. We may also have some hard copies of an earlier edition of the textbook to lend you if you prefer that format to the electronic version. The differences between the various editions of Mankiw are not important -- you can read an earlier edition of Mankiw if you wish without missing anything. We will cover sections 1-1 and 1-2 of chapter 1, the appendix to chapter 2, almost all of chapters 4 through 9, and chapter 21 from Mankiw's 6th edition textbook.

Aplia and Glow course web sites

We have created an extensive set of online resources for the CDE academic orientation at two web sites:

APLIA <<http://login.cengagebrain.com/>>

(After you log in, click on the link for “Aplia: CDE Orientation Summer 2013”, then click on “View All Assignments” and scroll down to week 20)

GLOW < <http://glow.williams.edu>>

(After you log in, click on the link for “CDE Orientation”. If you are accessing Glow before mid-summer, you might need to click on the plus sign next to “Future Courses” in order to find it.)

Aplia is instructional software that enables you to do homework problems in economics, math and statistics online. The Aplia site for the CDE Orientation includes a large number of graded and practice homework problems. You will need to establish an account, username, and password for Aplia. We will send instructions on how to do that in a separate document. Note that you will *not* have to pay to register for Aplia. The Center for Development Economics is paying your registration fee for you.

Glow is Williams College’s own online course management system. We have posted readings, lecture notes, and various other course materials on Glow. In order to log into Glow, you will need a Williams College information technology account, username, and password. If you have not yet set up your Williams College account, please contact Karima Barrow <Karima.E.Barrow@williams.edu> at the CDE for help.

The schedule of assignments included below in this syllabus makes clear which resources can be found on Aplia and which can be found on Glow.

We are making all of these online resources available to you starting early in the summer, to help you learn and prepare at home before you arrive. Figuring out how to get on to Aplia and Glow, trying them out early, and using them to help you prepare during the spring and summer before you arrive, should be a high priority for you.

IMPORTANT! Note that the Aplia course is set to start April 1st, so that you can access the online materials and start preparing right away. Because of this, the actual materials that you need to work on for the CDE orientation are in weeks 20 through 22 (August 12 – August 30) of the Aplia assignment schedule. When you’ve logged into <<http://login.cengagebrain.com/>> and navigated to the Aplia page for “CDE Summer Orientation 2013,” click on “View All Assignments” and scroll down to weeks 20 through 22 to find all of the class materials and assignments for the orientation.

Homework Problems

The best way to learn (or review) economics is to actively work on solving problems and answering questions. With that in mind, we have created an *Aplia* web page for this class that contains a very extensive array of un-graded practice problems and graded homework problems on various topics covered in the review. The *Aplia* software enables you to solve and submit your answers to homework problems completely online. The program then grades the problems automatically and provides you with explanations of the answers.

Microeconomics practice problems and homework problems. You can work on the microeconomics practice problems any time you want, including during the summer in your home country. When you answer a practice problem on *Aplia* and submit the answer, *Aplia* immediately returns the correct answer and an explanation. If you are reading the textbook in advance, you will find that you will absorb information much better if you do the practice problems for a particular chapter after you read each chapter. For the graded homework problems, you can begin working on these and start submitting answers as early as you want as well, but *Aplia* will not return the correct answer until after the due date for that particular homework assignment. You are free to go back and change your answers to the graded homework problems at any time before the deadline.

Note that the *Aplia* problems on statistics might work slightly differently than what I described above, as some of these might use the “GradeItNow” feature of *Aplia*. Prof. Shore-Sheppard will provide you with information on that.

The graded homework deadlines are very strict, and no graded homework problems will be accepted after the deadline under any circumstances. I understand that there are occasionally technical problems with computers, but you should take that into account and make sure that you work on and submit your homework answers early enough that there is time to correct any technical problems. This is all implemented by computer, so there is no room for leeway. It does not matter whether problems obtaining a visa, through no fault of your own, made it impossible for you to get to campus on time. In that case, you must either go online to the course *Aplia* web site and submit your answers to the homework problems before the deadline from your home country, or accept that you will not get credit for the homework and that the exam will instead count for a larger portion of your grade (see section on grading below). In addition, *Aplia* makes the answers to the graded homework problems available to you online immediately after the deadline, and it is impossible for me to know whether you looked at the answers before attempting to submit your homework assignment late.

Finally, in the microeconomics review session, you are allowed and in fact encouraged to work together in groups to help each other with the homework. However, it is very important that you submit your answers on your own. It is particularly essential that you fully understand all of your answers and do not simply copy them from others. If you don't really understand the homework, you are sure to pay for it on the exam.

Grading

Your performance in Prof. Bakija's CDE orientation classes will account for 10 percent of your grade in your fall semester public economics course (Economics 504). Up to 50 percent of those 10 points can be based on the homework you complete before or during the orientation, and the rest will be determined by the exam. This will work as follows. There are five graded homework assignments for Prof. Bakija's orientation class, and for each one you will receive a percentage grade. If you failed to complete any of the homework assignments before the deadline, or if there are any homework assignments for which your percentage grade was lower than your percentage grade on the exam, these will be dropped from the grade calculation, *but in addition the share of your grade that is determined by homework will be proportionately reduced, and the share that is determined by the exam will be proportionately increased.* So for example, suppose you score 82% on the exam, and you completed four of the five homework assignments and failed to submit the other one on time. Further suppose your grades on the homework assignments that you completed were 92%, 88%, 76%, and 73%. I drop the scores that are lower than your exam grade (76% and 73%). As a result, you are left with two homework assignments to contribute towards your grade, so 80% of your microeconomics review grade is determined by the exam and 20% by homework. Your grade is thus $(.8) \times (82\%) + (.2) \times [(92\% + 88\%) / 2] = 83.6\%$, or 8.36 points towards your Econ 503 grade out of a possible 10.

The bottom line is that the graded homework assignments for the microeconomics review are essentially optional, but submitting them can help increase your grade, and can never lower your grade. With that said, the single most important thing you can do to prepare for the microeconomics exam is to do the practice problems and graded homework problems carefully, and then to do them again when studying for the exam. Failure to do the homework carefully is one of the best predictors of a bad exam grade.

Schedule of classes and assignments for Prof. Bakija's CDE orientation classes

Practice and graded homework problems and readings from the Mankiw microeconomics textbook are posted on Aplia, and all other readings and course materials are posted on Glow. In the schedule below, I indicate where you can find each item by putting [APLIA] or [GLOW] in square brackets immediately after it. The statistics classes are not listed here -- see the overall calendar for the CDE Academic Orientation as well as the syllabus from Pablo Cuba for details on those.

Date	Class meeting with Prof. Bakija	Assignments
Mon. Aug. 12	2:30PM – 4:00PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Aplia • Review of basic math and graphing • Introduction to microeconomics 	<u>Do these readings by 2:30PM Aug. 12</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mankiw, Chapter 1 sections on microeconomics (especially review “marginal” and “opportunity cost”) – Sections 1-2 and 1-2 in the 6th edition. [APLIA] • Mankiw, Chapter 2 Appendix: “Graphing: A Brief Review.” [APLIA] <u>Do these practice problems by 2:30PM Aug. 12</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial on Aplia Interactive Tools [APLIA] • Introductory Practice Problem Set on Aplia [APLIA] • Math and Graphs Practice and Tutorial [APLIA] • Optional tutorial and extra practice problems on basic math skills (if needed) [APLIA]
Tue. Aug. 13	No Microeconomics class meeting	<u>Do these graded problems by 4:30PM Aug. 13</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 1, Part A: Introductory Graded Problem Set on How to Use Aplia [APLIA] • Graded Homework 1, Part B: Math and Graphs Pretest [APLIA] <p>If you do not get a perfect score on the “Math and Graphs Pretest,” please go back and review any material that you had trouble with, using the “Math and Graphs Practice and Tutorial,” and if necessary the “Optional tutorial and extra practice problems on basic math skills,” on the Aplia assignment schedule for Monday August 12th. After you review, you will have an opportunity to take a “Math and Graphs Post-Test” before 4:30PM Wednesday August 13th, and only the higher grade between the Pretest and the Posttest will count.</p>
Wed. Aug. 14	No Microeconomics class meeting	<u>Do these graded problems by 4:30PM Aug. 14</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 1, Part C: Math and Graphs Posttest [APLIA]

Date	Class meeting with Prof. Bakija	Assignments
Mon. Aug. 19	9:00AM – 10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply and demand • Elasticity 	<u>Do these readings by 9:00AM Aug. 19</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mankiw Chapter 4 [APLIA] • Mankiw Chapter 5 (Note: you can skip the sections on “Total Revenue and the Price Elasticity of Demand” and “Elasticity and Total Revenue along a Linear Demand Curve.”) [APLIA]
Tue. Aug. 20	9:00AM – 10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers, producers, and the efficiency of markets • Supply, demand, and government policies 	<u>Do these practice problems by 9:00AM Aug. 20</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Problems: The Market Forces of Supply and Demand [APLIA] • Practice Problems: Elasticity and Its Application [APLIA] <u>Do these graded problems by 9:00AM Aug. 20</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 2, Part A: The Market Forces of Supply and Demand [APLIA] • Graded Homework 2, Part B: Elasticity and Its Application [APLIA] <u>Do these readings by 9:00AM Aug. 20</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mankiw Chapter 7 [APLIA] • Friedman, “Summing People Up” [GLOW] • Mankiw, Chapter 6 [APLIA]
Wed. Aug. 21	9:00AM – 10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The economic costs of taxation • International trade 	<u>Do these practice problems by 9:00AM Aug. 21</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Problems: Supply, Demand and Government Policies [APLIA] • Practice Problems: Consumers, Producers, and the Efficiency of Markets [APLIA] <u>Do these graded problems by 9:00AM Aug. 21</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 3, Part A: Supply, Demand, and Government Policies [APLIA] • Graded Homework 3, Part B: Consumers, Producers, and the Efficiency of Markets [APLIA] <u>Do these readings by 9:00AM Aug. 21</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mankiw Chapter 8 [APLIA] • Mankiw, Chapter 9 [APLIA]

Date	Class meeting with Prof. Bakija	Assignments
Thu. Aug. 22	9:00AM--10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theory of consumer choice 	<p><u>Do these practice problems by 9:00AM Aug. 22</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Problems: The Costs of Taxation [APLIA] • Practice Problems: How Effective Are Cigarette Taxes? [APLIA] • Practice Problems: Supply-Demand Analysis of a Government Price Subsidy [APLIA] • Practice Problems: International Trade [APLIA] <p><u>Do these graded problems by by 9:00AM Aug. 22</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 4, Part A: The Economic Costs of Taxation [APLIA] • Graded Homework 4, Part B: Supply-Demand Analysis of a Government Price Subsidy [APLIA] • Graded Homework 4, Part C: International Trade [APLIA] <p><u>Do these readings by 9:00AM Aug. 22</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mankiw Chapter 21 [APLIA] • Bakija, “Notes on Indifference Curve Analysis of the Choice between Leisure and Labor, and the Deadweight Loss of Taxation.” [GLOW]
Fri. Aug. 23	9:00AM--10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to regression 	<p><u>Do this reading by 9:00AM Aug. 23</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakija, “A Non-Technical Introduction to Regression” [GLOW] <p><u>Do these practice problems by 4:30PM Aug. 23</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Problems: The Theory of Consumer Choice [APLIA] • Practice Problems: Budget Constraint and Indifference Curve Analysis of a Tax [APLIA] • Extra Practice Problem on Budget Constraint and Indifference Curve Analysis of a Tax: Deadweight Loss (you don’t need to know this one for the exam). [APLIA] <p><u>Do these graded problems by 4:30PM Aug. 23</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Homework 5, Part A: The Theory of Consumer Choice [APLIA] • Graded Homework 5, Part B: Budget Constraint and Indifference Curve Analysis of a Tax [APLIA]

Date	Class meeting	Assignments
Mon. Aug. 26	9:00AM--10:30AM & 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Citations, Quotations, References, and Academic Honesty 	<p><u>Do these practice problems by 9:00AM Aug. 26</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Problems: Interpreting Regression Estimates [APLIA] <p><u>Do these readings by 9:00AM Aug. 26</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakija, "Rules for Writing Assignments: Academic Honesty, Citation, Quotation, Paraphrasing, and References" [GLOW] • Williams College "Eph Survival Guide" online tutorial on Citing and Documenting http://web.williams.edu/wp-etc/acad-resources/survival_guide/CitingDoc/CitingContents.php • "Academic Honesty at the CDE" [GLOW] • "Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date System" http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php • Paul and Elder, "Paraphrasing" [GLOW] • Persky, "Retrospectives: Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Classical Creed" [GLOW] • Hicks, "The Rehabilitation of Consumers' Surplus" (excerpt) [GLOW]
Tue. Aug. 27	9:00AM--10:30AM, 10:45AM – 12:15PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing your writing (<i>taught by Betsy Burris</i>) 2:00PM – 3:30PM, 129 Schapiro Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional review session for exam 	<p><u>Do these practice problems by 2:00PM Aug. 27</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago Author-Date Plagiarism Detection Exercise http://web.williams.edu/wp-etc/acad-resources/survival_guide/CitingDoc/QuizCh2.php • Optional micro practice problems to prepare for exam [GLOW]
We. Aug. 28	9:00AM – 11:30AM, Schapiro 129: Exam on Microeconomics, Regression, and Writing	

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