University of Colorado Boulder
URBAN ECONOMICS
ECON 4242 SYLLABUS, SUMMER 2024

Instructor: Dr. Sara Avila
Email: **sara.avila@colorado.edu**
Zoom: https://cuboulder.zoom.us/my/saraavila

- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am – 12:00 pm using Zoom

INSTRUCTOR BIO

I am an economics instructor with more than two decades of experience. My research interests are in the fields of environmental economics and more recently, in how to teach economics. I have worked on topics related to air quality, climate change, urban transportation, and biodiversity conservation. I am passionate about building understanding in a diverse environment and I am an avid (also aging) runner. I am grateful to have the opportunity to share with you this learning experience.

Term Start: June 3, 2024
Term End: July 26, 2024

COURSE WEBSITE

Canvas is our class website:

- Login using your University of Colorado Boulder identikey and password https://canvas.colorado.edu/
- Under Course List, click "ECON 4242: Urban Economics: The Economics of Cities"
- Note: all email correspondence will be through your CU Boulder email address.
    - Do not use the Canvas email or messages, it is not checked.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Urban Economics we study the economics of cities. This course solves three types of questions. The first type is about the development of cities. Why cities exist? The second type is about how people behave within metropolitan areas. Why do some parts of cities grow faster than others? How do the rich and poor allocate within a city? The third type of questions is about the economics and spatial dimensions of urban problems. Mostly externalities from automobiles, poverty concentration, racial segregation, and suburban sprawl. More than half of all humans live in a city. Despite congestion, poverty, dirt, and disease, cities are also where people learn, share, live, and thrive.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify the factors that drive the growth of cities.
2. Explain the concept of spatial equilibrium and how it shapes land rents.
3. Analyze the costs and benefits from different land use regulations.
4. Assess the costs of automobile use and evaluate policies to address them.
5. Examine the cost of urban sprawl and justify different policies to address it.
6. Write clear economic arguments advocating for policies to address such challenges as suburban sprawl, urban poverty, and racial segregation.

7. Identify challenges facing cities in the future and how cities can manage them.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Requires prerequisite courses of ECON 3070 (Intermediate Microeconomic Theory) and ECON 3818 (Introduction to Statistics with Computer Applications) or STAT 4520 or APPM 4570 or CHEN 3010 or CSCI 3022 or CVEN 3227 or MATH 4520 (all minimum grade C-).

COURSE MATERIALS

The required textbook is:

- O'Sullivan, A., Urban Economics, 2019. McGraw Hill, ISBN 9780078021787

You may use the electronic version, the printed version, a rented version, a used textbook, as long as you have it.

We will also use the following books, you may buy them, borrow from the library, or rent them. **Several Homework questions come from O'Flaherty.** I will have copies in the relevant module, but it's always better to know the context:

- O'Flaherty, B., City Economics, Harvard University Press, 2005. Hardcover ISBN 9780674041615, Ebook ISBN 9780674041615
- Brueckner, Jan K., Lectures on Urban Economics, The MIT Press, 2011. ISBN 9780262016360
- O'Sullivan, A., Urban Economics, 9th Edition, McGraw Hill Irwin, 2019. ISBN 9780078021787.
- Glaeser, Edward, Triumph of the City, Macmillan, 2011. ISBN 9780230709393

Course Website: https://canvas.colorado.edu/ (Canvas) Grades and any further additional readings will be posted on Canvas. Please check Canvas frequently for any relevant notifications/changes that may occur throughout the course.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERY

This course is delivered via distance education format using the CU Canvas system. This format will use a combination of readings, online discussion, and other web-based resources. You will interact with the instructor and other students using the communication functions provided by Canvas. You will submit assignments in accordance with the course outline using Canvas.

COURSE PRESENTATION AND PROCEDURES

There will be 14 modules corresponding to the 14 weeks of the course (1 module per week). You should proceed through one module per week, which will be comprised of readings from the course texts, supplemental class notes, graded discussion questions, homeworks and quizzes, exams, and various outside sources of information such as additional readings and video content, among other content.

COURSE OUTLINE

Review the separate weekly class schedule found on Canvas under "Syllabus" link.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is designed to engage you mostly through exercises, however, there will be 4 to 5 class discussions on the topics covered in the course materials. It is important that you participate in class

discussions to facilitate learning by other students and gain exposure to different viewpoints of other students in the class.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Course grades will be determined by the completion of assignments, exams, and discussions, as shown below:

	Points per assignment	Frequency	Grade Points	Grade Percentage
Perusall*	5	22	110	11%
Homework*	40	8	320	32%
Discussions	30	5	150	15%
Homework-low stake*	10	2	20	2%
Proctored Midterm Exam	200	1	200	20%
Proctored Cumulative Final Exam	200	1	200	20%
TOTAL			**1000**	**100%**

Keep a copy of all work created for the course, including work submitted through Canvas.
*The lowest grade of these assignments will be dropped. See below.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Grade	Percentage Grade	Equivalent Points	Indicates
A	94.1-100	941 – 1000	Excellent
A-	90-94	900 – 940	
B+	87-89.99	870 – 899	
B	83-86.99	830 – 869	Above Average
B-	80-82.99	800 – 829	
C+	77-79.99	770 – 799	
C	73-77.99	730 – 769	Average
C-	70-72.99	700 – 729	
D+	67-69.99	670 – 699	
D	63-67.99	630 – 669	Below Average
D-	60-62.99	600 – 629	
F	0-59	600 or lower	Failure

ASSIGNMENTS

Perusall (220 POINTS) –There will be 30 or more Perusall activities, each worth 5 points. I will count your 22 best Perusall scores so you can you use these judiciously.

Discussion postings (150 POINTS) – There will be five discussion postings. The discussion will occur asynchronously; I will post a discussion question and you will respond to the questions at your convenience prior to the due date. Some of the questions will require solving a problem set and making comments about your results. See the class schedule for due dates of posts and comments. Discussions are open book and open note. Discussions will be submitted through Canvas. The initial discussion post is due Thursdays, and the discussion response is due Sundays.

Homework (320 Points) – There will nine 40 point homework assignments. The format can be problem sets or writing assignments. Your lowest one (1) homework will be dropped from your final grade calculation.

Homework-low stakes (20 Points) – There will three 10 point homework assignments to complement discussions. The format will be multiple choice. Your lowest one (1) homework will be dropped from your final grade calculation.

Exams (400 POINTS) – There will be two (2) exams. The proctored Midterm Exam is worth 200 points and the proctored cumulative Final Exam is worth 200 points. The format of the exam will be multiple choice, short answers, and calculations and will be closed book. The exams are completed on Canvas in a proctored setting.

This course requires proctored examinations. Exams are proctored which will require planning on your part. Proctors are individuals who administer the exam process following the guidelines provided by University of Colorado Boulder to ensure academic integrity.

Who can be my proctor?

If you are in Boulder or nearby, you can take your exam:

1. At the Department of Economics. There is no cost for using this proctor. This option is only on selected days during the exam period.
2. At the University Testing Center on-campus in Boulder, CO. There may be a cost for using the testing center. This option is only available M-F during regular business hours.
3. With Proctorio. Online proctoring is a service that uses a webcam and microphone to ensure academic integrity. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There will be a cost for using the online proctoring services. Please review Proctorio Minimum System Requirements.

If you are outside of Boulder, you can take your exam:

1. At an accredited college or university testing center in your town or nearby. There may be a cost for using this testing center.
2. With Proctorio or a comparable online proctoring service as determined by your instructor. Online proctoring is a service that uses a webcam and microphone to ensure academic integrity. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There will be a cost for using the online proctoring services.

- Note that you are required to have a computer with a functioning webcam and microphone or have access to a computer with a functioning webcam microphone to complete your exams.
- See Canvas for detailed information about proctoring. If you are in a rural area or on a military base, you may need approval process.

EXTRA CREDIT

There MAY (or may not) be 50 points of extra credit available (= 5% of the course grade).

- Extra credit may be available during the semester for completing certain activities, such as listening and commenting on a podcast, solving exercises or discussions. These extra credit opportunities will be determined by the instructor and announced on Canvas.

COMMUNICATION

I am nice and I want you to succeed. Do not hesitate to contact me about anything.

E-mail: sara.avila@colorado.edu

- Please always remind me of what course you are taking. I teach a bunch of courses, and I have more than 150 students. Sometimes I forget what course you are taking, especially at the beginning of the semester.
- I will respond to email within 12-18 hours, but usually within 2-4 hours. I always respond to emails. If you have not had a response within 18 hours, I did not receive the email. Be sure to use your CU email address because sometimes Gmail and yahoo email accounts are filtered into my spam folder.

Additional ways to contact Dr. Avila:

- Online Office Hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 am -1 pm using Zoom (https://cuboulder.zoom.us/my/saraavila)

General Course Announcements

- Announcements: Please check the "announcements" section on Canvas.

TUTORING

The Economics Department provides a free drop-in tutorial office which offers assistance on all core courses in the major, and occasionally on other undergraduate courses in the Department. Its website is https://www.colorado.edu/economics/node/513/attachment.

The Economics Department maintains a list of tutors who are available for private hire. Its website is https://www.colorado.edu/economics/node/515/attachment.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

CU Boulder uses Canvas.

Here is the list of recommended system requirements: Canvas Computer Specifications Page

Here is the detailed list of internet browsers in Windows, MacOS, iOS and Android: Supported Browsers Page

Technical Support

- Canvas technical support. If you are experiencing issues with Canvas please contact:
  - CU Boulder's Help desk at 303-735-4357 (5-HELP) or help@colorado.edu. 5-Help will answer your call: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6:00 p.m., Closed during University Holidays
  - On your computer, click the "help" (?) icon on the left side of Canvas, once logged in within the Canvas App, you can search the Canvas support guides, Report a Problem or chat with Canvas Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Connect tech support:
  - http://mpss.mhhe.com/ or http://bit.ly/StudentRegistration

COURSE POLICIES.

Course Withdrawal Policy: Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must submit a request directly to Continuing Education. For complete information, please visit their website at https://ce.colorado.edu/resources/topics/dates-and-deadlines-general-info/

POLICY ON DUE DATES

Each lecture you will complete Problem Sets, Quizzes, and sometimes discussion posts. It is your responsibility to turn in each assignment on the required date. Assignments or discussion postings turned in after the scheduled due date will be lowered to the next letter grade for each 12-hour period late. The exceptions that may be considered is due to sickness, university excused function, or circumstances beyond the students' control. The instructor reserves the sole right to determine what grounds constitutes a reasonable excuse for missing or submitting a late work assignment, the right to require the student to submit proper verification of such excuse.

NETIQUETTE

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember.

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of nonverbals with your message, your message can be misinterpreted. So please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. There are places to chat and post for fun everyday stuff. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Don't use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, do not use "R U" instead of "are you". There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile ☺ is welcome, anything offensive is not.
5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face (or kinder). It might be easy to hide behind the computer. Treat all with dignity and respect.

Website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

Compiled by Melissa Landin, Instructor, Dept. of Communication, Inver Hills Community College, mlandin@inverhills.edu

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CHAT GPT)

You may use AI as help if you are stuck. You may use AI to generate ideas or brainstorm. You may not submit work or answers generated by AI as your own. Make sure you verify and craft the ultimate answer to assignments. Make sure your use of AI does not violate any copyright or intellectual property laws as well as CU Boulder Honor Code. Above all, make sure you learn how to solve the problems on your own because AI is not allowed on Exams.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the classroom behavior policy, the Student Code of Conduct, and the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

REQUIREMENTS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all applicable campus policies and public health guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases. If public health conditions require, the university may also invoke related requirements for student conduct and disability accommodation that will apply to this class.
If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for isolation and testing. If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home but should follow the guidance of the CDC for masking and testing.

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES AND TEMPORARY MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

PREFERRED STUDENTS' NAMES AND PRONOUNS

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, reporting options, and support resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit Don't Ignore It.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Because of the flexibility of timing of completion of assignments in this class, you must contact the instructor in at least two weeks in advance if you anticipate a religious holiday may impact your completion of coursework.

For more information on the religious holidays most commonly observed by CU Boulder students consult the online interfaith calendar.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must submit a request directly to Continuing Education. For complete information, please visit their website at https://ce.colorado.edu/resources/topics/dates-and-deadlines-general-info/

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

A variety of instructional support services, such as writing center, guidance on personal or educational issues, tutoring questions and library resources are available to the students. For more information about their services, visit their websites linked under modules on Canvas.

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Module (start date)	Topic	Graded Assignments	Due Date by *11:59pm MST/MDT*
1 (6/3)	What is a City?	Module 1 Perusall Module 1 Discussion Discussion response Module 1 Homework	Tuesday 6/4 Tuesday 6/4 Wednesday 6/5 Wednesday 6/5
2 (6/6)	Agglomeration and Firms	Module 2 Perusall Module 2 Homework	Friday 6/7 Sunday 6/9
3 (6/10)	Demand for Urban Living	Module 3 Perusall Module 3 Homework	Tuesday 6/11 Wednesday 6/12
4 (6/13)	Growth and local policy	Module 4 Perusall Module 4 Discussion Discussion response	Friday 6/14 Friday 6/14 Sunday 6/16
5 (6/17)	Land rent- monocentric model	Module 5 Perusall Module 5 Homework	Tuesday 6/18 Wednesday 6/19
6 (6/20)	Urban-rural migration- monocentric model	Module 6 Perusall Module 6 Homework	Friday 6/21 Sunday 6/23
7 (6/26)	You may take the proctored midterm exam the day of your choosing Thursday through Sunday.	Discussion Post Discussion Response **Proctored Midterm Exam**	Wednesday 6/26 Thursday 6/27 **Thursday 6/27 - Sunday 6/30**
8 (7/1)	Economics of Housing Markets	Module 8 Perusall Module 8 Homework	Monday 7/2 Wednesday 7/3
9 (7/5)	Urban Mobility: Cars	Module 9 Perusall Module 9 Homework	Friday 7/5 Sunday 7/7
10 (7/8)	Urban Mobility: Transit	Module 10 Perusall Module 10 Homework	Tuesday 7/9 Wednesday 7/10
11 (7/11)	Race and space in the city	Module 11 Perusall Module 11 Homework	Friday 7/12 Sunday 7/14
12 (7/15)	Urban poverty: the role of neighborhoods	Module 12 Perusall Module 12 Discussion Module 12 Homework Module 12 Discussion response	Tuesday 7/16 Tuesday 7/16 Wednesday 7/17 Wednesday 7/17
13 (7/18)	Looking to the future	Module 13 Perusall Module 13 Homework	Friday 7/19 Sunday 7/21
14 (7/22)	You may take the proctored cumulative final exam the day of your choosing Thursday through Sunday	Practice Exam **Proctored Final Exam**	Thursday 7/25 **Thursday 7/25 Sunday 7/28**