

Economics 4335: Economic Growth Theory

Prof. Dietrich Vollrath

Mechanics

Class is MW 2:30-4pm, Melcher 112

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Communication

From me to you: ALL my communication about class (changes to requirements, additional notes, changes to syllabus) will be posted as announcements in Canvas. Anything I post in Canvas is official class policy. It's your responsibility to check Canvas regularly.

From you to me: If you have a question about class send me an e-mail at the above address. The e-mail subject line MUST start with "Econ 4335" so that I can keep control of my inbox. If your e-mail doesn't have a subject line starting with "Econ 4335" you will probably not get a reply in a reasonable time frame.

Office Hours

You can book a time for an office meeting by [using this link](#) (also available on Canvas). That link gives you options for meetings either Tuesdays 1-2:20 or Wednesday 1-2:20. If you need a time outside those bands, e-mail me.

Class Overview

This class will explore the determinants of economic growth in the long run, as opposed to fluctuations in economic growth due to business cycles. It will dig deeper into questions you may have studied in intermediate macroeconomics (Econ 3334), which is a prerequisite.

Class Materials

- While the course is run through Canvas, the main content of this course is hosted at <https://growthecon.com/StudyGuide>. A link to this site is located on Canvas. The materials here are all hosted outside of Canvas so that I can support some embedded items Canvas doesn't like. Most important for you, the material on quizzes and tests is based **solely** on what we discuss in class meetings and on this study guide.
- The format of the class is something like a "flipped" classroom. My expectation is that you'll have looked through the appropriate material for each class meeting and then class meetings will be for me to expand on that material, for you to ask questions, and for us to work through examples of applying what was in the material.
- There is a book that is **optional**. You may find it useful to read further on certain topics. But no matter what, the study guide website above overrides the book. The book is [Introduction to Economic Growth](#), by Jones and Vollrath, 4th Edition.

- Some assignments require you to work with data in Excel (or Google Sheets). You should have access to a computer with Excel on a regular basis. Excel is available for free through UH by logging into AccessUH and using the "Office 365" button.

Grading

I use a slightly different grading system than you are used to, and it effectively allows you to "choose your own grade" by the amount of work you are willing to put in.

First, let me explain the different assignments and evaluations that will be used. Each one shows the total points from that assignment. There are a total of 760 points for the whole class.

- **Syllabus Quiz (0 points):** You must complete a syllabus quiz with 100% to proceed with the class by the due date listed on Canvas (about a week after class starts). Most of the class material will not unlock until you do this. You can take the syllabus quiz as many times as you like until you receive 100%.
- **Attendance (450 points):** You need to attend regularly. If you attend 22 or more of the 28 classes, you will get the full 450 points. If you attend 21 or less, you will get zero points. See the attendance section below for more details.
- **Quizzes (120 points):** There are 8 quizzes, 15 questions each. These are all hosted on Canvas and are multiple choice.
 - You can take each quiz as many times as you like.
 - There is a bank of questions, so each version of the quiz you take will be different, although some questions may repeat themselves.
 - Each Quiz has a due date (listed on Canvas). You can take a Quiz after the due date, but you lose 2% of the points for each day it is late. After 10 days you will lose 20% of the points, which could prevent you from completing all the quizzes and tests.
- **Tests (90 points):** There are 3 tests, each with 30 questions. These are all hosted on Canvas and are a mix of multiple choice and calculations, and they refer to specific material on the Study Guide site.
 - The tests will reuse some questions from the quizzes.
 - These also have a bank of questions, and each version of the test will be different, although some questions may repeat themselves.
 - You can take each test as many times as you like.
 - Each Test has a due date (listed in the course calendar below). You can take a Test after the due date, but you lose 2% of the points each day it is late. After 10 days you will lose 20% of the points, which could prevent you from completing all the quizzes and tests.
- **Project (100 points):** This is either a paper, a recorded presentation, a program/spreadsheet, or an empirical analysis.
 - Doing the project is optional (see below).
 - Each person works on a unique project.
 - I describe the options for the projects in a separate document posted on Canvas.
 - If you choose to do a project, you must sign up for a specific project on Canvas by the due date listed there.

- If you turn in a first draft of your project by the due date listed on Canvas, I will provide comments that you can incorporate to get a better grade.
- Your final project is due by the date listed on Canvas. **No late projects are accepted.**
- **There is no separate final exam for this course**

Second, let me explain how grading works. Your final letter grade is determined by your total points out of 760, according to a standard grading scale: 93+%: A, 90-93%: A-, 87-90%: B+, 83-87%: B, 80-83%: B-, and so on. In borderline cases (you got a 90%) I will give you the higher letter grade.

However, in this class you can only progress through the material if you meet certain minimum scores on quizzes and tests to “unlock” later material. Think of this as a contract between you and me.

1. **If you put in the effort and time to meet those minimums...**
 - a. You can take the quizzes and tests multiple times to reach the minimum.
 - b. Beware of the deadlines. If you are very late, you won't be able to reach the minimum. There is no way to “make it up on the final”.
2. **...then you will get the grade you earned by meeting those minimums.**
 - a. There is no high stakes take-it-one-time test that can affect your grade.
 - b. If you do the work, you will get the grade specified. No surprises.

Based on the requirements these are examples of how to reach certain grades:

1. **Getting an F.** You need to attend 22 or more classes to get the full 450 points for attendance. If you attend 21 or fewer you will get zero points for attendance. Even if you get **all** the other points on quizzes, etc., you'd still get $310/760 = 41\%$, which is an F.
2. **Getting a D-.** If you attend 22 or more classes and average 5/15 on the first three Quizzes, you'll get $(450+15)/760 = 61\%$, a D-.
3. **Getting a C-.** If you attend 22 or more classes and complete all the Quizzes with 12/15, then you'll get $(450 + 12*8)/760 = 71.8\%$, a C-.
4. **Getting a B-.** If you attend 22 or more classes, complete all the Quizzes with 12/15, and complete all the Tests with 24/30, then you'll get $(450+12*8+24*3)/760 = 81.3\%$, a B-.
5. **Getting a B+ or more.** If you attend 22 or more classes, complete all the Quizzes, complete all the tests, and submit a final project, then you'll get at least a B+. The exact grade will depend on your points on the first draft and final draft of your project.

In each case you can move those grades up by scoring above the minimums on the quizzes and tests. Remember, you can retake them as many times as you like.

Student Conduct

CLASS students are expected to abide by the University of Houston's Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>

In accordance with the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation,

sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. More information can be found on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

Technical Problems

You will undoubtedly encounter technical issues with Canvas or the Study Guide website. I am not an expert on Blackboard, so here is how you should handle any technical issues.

- **Canvas.** You should FIRST try UH support, at [this link](#). You should get a service ticket from them when you ask for help. If they cannot solve your problem or tell you it is a content issue that I have to solve, THEN e-mail me and INCLUDE the service ticket number.
- **Study Guide.** This is my website. If you have an issue with the site, you should e-mail me about it.

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

Issues and Problems

I am happy to work with you to make sure you succeed in this course. To do that, though, I need to be aware of issues as soon as you realize they are a problem. If you come to me weeks after the fact, I am less able to help.

For those of you who have testing accommodations, there should not be a big issue. The quizzes and tests are available to you through Blackboard, and you are welcome to take each as often as you like. Quizzes and tests are untimed, so you can take as long as necessary.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)—www.uh.edu/caps—are available for students having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or somebody you know is in crisis. The “Let’s Talk” program provides a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. <https://uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets-talk/index.php#hours>

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who

request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).

Attendance

As per the grading policy, you need to attend 22 or more class meetings to get a passing grade in this class. Your attendance will be noted by doing the in-class problem sets and turning in a worksheet at the end of class.

There are 28 total class meetings during the semester. This means that you can have up to 6 absences without jeopardizing your grade in this course. Those 6 absences INCLUDE absences that the University considers excused as part of the [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#): medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition.

Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Note that because of the structure of the course, it is impossible for you to miss a required quiz or test because of an absence. Therefore, there is no make-up of any course activity or material required or available if you are absent. **You do not need to notify me of individual absences or provide documentation. You should contact me if you have a serious issue that may require a series of absences.**

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Academic Honesty

I, and the University, expect students to adhere to the Academic Honesty Policy as described in the UH Undergraduate Catalog. Anyone caught cheating will be reported to the department for further

disciplinary actions, receive sanctions as explained in the Undergraduate Catalog, and will have an academic dishonesty record at the Provosts office. The sanctions for confirmed violations of this policy shall be commensurate with the nature of the offense and with the record of the student regarding any previous infractions. The UH policy on academic honesty is here: <http://www.uh.edu/academic-honesty-undergraduate>

Presence in Class and COVID

Your presence in class each session means that you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#) that makes you think that you may have COVID-19
- Have NOT tested positive or been diagnosed for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

Course Calendar

The online Study Guide gives you the full content of what we will cover. Canvas contains all the official due dates for quizzes, tests, and the project. Any changes to this calendar will get posted on Canvas, which will be the final authority on due dates.