

**Economics 4300 – Economics of Cities (Urban Economics)**  
**Spring 2022**

**Instructor:**

Sarah Barry, MA

Email: [sbarry8@gsu.edu](mailto:sbarry8@gsu.edu)

Office Location: 650-B (GRA Desk) 55 Park Place

Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2 or by appointment

Office hours will be available via WebEx. Please send an email to make an appointment.

Link: <https://gsu meetings.webex.com/meet/sbarry8>

**Course Meeting:**

Wednesdays and Fridays, 9:30 am – 10:45 am, Classroom South 103

**Course Content:**

This course will primarily be focused on the study of *where* economic activity takes place and *why* economic agents (individuals, firms, and governments) choose to locate near each other and in certain areas. We will also study economic activity that is inherently place-based such as the housing market and local government policy. The course will use economic theory and present empirical evidence (where available) to answer questions such as, “Why do cities exist?” “Why do firms locate near each other?” and “Who benefits from urban economic re-development?”

**Text:**

*Lectures on Urban Economics*, Jan K. Brueckner

**Prerequisites:**

ECON 2106, Principles of Microeconomics

**Important Dates:**

3/1 – Last day to Withdraw (more information linked [here](#)).

3/2 – Midterm Exam (in-class)

3/14-3/20 – Spring Break, no class

4/27 – Final Exam, **8:00 am – 10:30 am** (per the university schedule)

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to identify the economic forces that explain why cities exist.
- Students will be able to explain why firms agglomerate.
- Students will be able to define the concept of bid rent.
- Students will be able to describe location equilibriums and analyze how they can change.
- Students will be able to identify the factors causing urban sprawl.
- Students will be able to identify reasons for poverty concentration in urban areas.
- Students will be able to identify the different ways of measuring economic growth in an urban area and how these measures represent benefits to various groups.

- Students will be able to evaluate different government policies used for urban economic redevelopment and determine how they benefit various groups.
- Students will be able to use a sorting model to determine the allocation of local public goods across an urban area.
- Students will be able to evaluate different techniques economists use to identify racial discrimination in housing markets.
- Students will be able to explain the Median Voter Result.
- Students will be able to explain aspects of the housing market that differ from a standard market in economics.
- Students will be able to explain the Hedonic pricing technique and how it can be used to value different attributes in the housing market.
- Students will be able to explain how the User Cost model of housing can be used to find the price of a home.

#### Assignments and Grading:

The required work for this course includes assignments to be completed and uploaded to iCollege by the specified due date. I encourage you to work together on assignments. However, you must always submit your own completed assignment and write up answers in your own words. In addition to class participation and assignments, students will be graded on a mid-term and final exam. Assignments will be based on lecture; exams will be based on lecture and assignments. The best way to prepare for exams and complete assignments is to attend class (and/or watch lecture videos). Exams will consist of both multiple choice and short answer/essay questions. The final exam is cumulative.

Students will be assigned a letter grade from the University letter scale: A+, A, A-B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F. The final letter grade will be assigned based on student performance on assignments, and exams with the following weight:

10%	Class Participation
25%	Assignments
30%	Midterm Exam
35%	Final Exam

I reserve the right to increase the weight of the final in order to benefit students that significantly improve their grade from the midterm.

Students who feel that an exam question was incorrectly or unfairly graded have the right to make a written appeal. The written appeal will be due one week from when the exam is handed back. The appeal should consist of a 1-3 paragraph explanation of why the student believes their answer deserves to be reconsidered and should be typed.

Students who wish to request accommodations for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are

responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought.

#### Missed Assignments and Exams:

**No make-up exams are given.** If a student misses the midterm exam for a valid reason (serious illness, death of a family member), the student will have their performance on the final exam weighted to make up for the lost exam. You will need an excused absence due to illness. GSU has a new process for students seeking excused absences through the Dean of Students Office. Please submit documentation to <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/professor-absence-notification/>. I will then be notified by the Dean of Students of any excused absences. In the case of other valid reasons not covered by the Dean of Students Office, provide a signed, dated note explaining the absence, with a phone number of someone to verify the excuse

There is no make-up for the final exam, missing the final will result in a failing grade.

**No exams will be distributed after the first 15 minutes of each exam period.**

**No make-up assignments are given.** The lowest assignment grade will be dropped. Assignments must be uploaded to iCollege by the date and time specified in iCollege.

**Late assignments will not be accepted.** The lowest assignment grade will be dropped. Assignments must be uploaded to iCollege by the date and time specified in iCollege.

#### Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken daily. Although attendance does not directly affect your grade, class participation does. Attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for class participation.

*All electronic communication devices* are to be turned off and made inaccessible during lectures and exams. Violations of this policy during lecture will affect your class participation score. Violations of this policy during exams will result in failure of the exam. Video recording and picture taking are prohibited during lectures and exams. Audio recording of lectures is allowed only with the permission of the professor.

#### Extra Credit:

Students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit at limited times throughout the semester. More information will be given by the instructor. All extra credit will be made available to all students.

#### Assigned Seating:

On the first day of in-person class, I will create a seating chart. Students should sit in their assigned seats for each in-person class session. If a student becomes ill, the seating chart will help identify those who may have been in close contact.

#### Face Coverings:

You are encouraged to wear a face covering in all class meetings. I know that face masks may make some aspects of class more difficult. It will be harder for us all to project our voices and read each other's facial expressions. However, I am willing to sacrifice these elements since wearing a mask is one thing I can control to support the health and safety of our community. Be aware that wearing face mask is not required by GSU, so there is no penalty if you choose to not wear a mask. Our university community has a strong tradition of upholding the value of mutual respect, we therefore ask students to not engage in behavior that would be disruptive if your fellow students make a different choice about wearing masks. If you have concerns, please discuss them with me and I will work to the best of my ability to provide a comfortable environment conducive to student learning.

#### Student Illness:

If a student develops a fever, cough or shortness of breath they should stay at home, not go to class or work, and stay away from other people. If a student becomes sick or is required to quarantine during the semester, they should notify me as soon as possible. Students who want to do well in this course will attend class following the class attendance policy. You will need an excused absence due to illness. GSU has a new process for students seeking excused absences through the Dean of Students Office. Please submit documentation to <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/professor-absence-notification/>. I will then be notified by the Dean of Students of any excused absences.

#### Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for knowing and following the academic honesty policies of Georgia State University (See Policy on Academic Honesty (Section 409)). All in-class exams in the course are closed-notes, closed-books exams. It is each student's responsibility to avoid any activity that suggests cheating on a test. Please refer to the Georgia State University Code of Conduct (available on-line at: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct.html>) for further explanation of the University policy. Note that any student suspected of academic dishonesty **WILL** be referred to the Dean's Office and prosecuted to the fullest extent of University policy.

#### Course Evaluations:

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

#### FERPA (Family Educational Rights Privacy Act) compliance:

In keeping with USG and university policy, this course website will make every effort to maintain the privacy and accuracy of your personal information. Specifically, unless otherwise noted, it will not actively share personal information gathered from the site with anyone except university employees whose responsibilities require access to said records. However, some information collected from the site may be subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. This means that while we do not actively share information,

in some cases we may be compelled by law to release information gathered from the site. Also, the site will be managed in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of education records without student permission. For more details on FERPA, [go here](#).

#### Basic Needs Statement:

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide resources that we may possess. The Embark program at GSU provides resources for students facing homelessness

#### Diversity Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of all diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your comments (in the discussion posts and in person) related to the class and content will be encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

#### AYS Career Services and Student Life Offices:

The Andrew Young School provides career support & leadership development services to all current AYS students and alumni. Students are invited to attend our career events and workshops, and individualized career counseling appointments can be arranged either with Colleen Perry, the Director of Career Services, or with University Career Services in the Student Center. Career Services can help students with résumé writing, interviewing, job searching, internship development, and networking. To see what career panels, career fairs, and events are available this semester, please visit: <http://career.aysps.gsu.edu/>

#### GSU Policy Prohibiting Students from Posting Instructor-Generated Materials on External Sites:

The selling, sharing, publishing, presenting, or distributing of instructor-prepared course lecture notes, videos, audio recordings, or any other instructor-produced materials from any course for any commercial purpose is strictly prohibited unless explicit written permission is granted in advance by the course instructor. This includes posting any materials on websites such as Chegg, Course Hero, OneClass, Stuvia, StuDocu and other similar sites. Unauthorized sale or commercial distribution of such material is a violation of the instructor's intellectual property and the privacy rights of students attending the class, and is prohibited.

Course Outline:

Class	Description	Dates
1	Introduction and Why Cities Exist, <i>Brueckner Chapter 1</i> Assignment 1: Digital Quiz	1/12 1/14
2	Why Cities Exist, <i>Brueckner Chapter 1</i> continued Assignment 2	1/19 1/21
3	Urban Spatial Structure, <i>Brueckner Chapter 2</i>	1/26 1/28
4	Modifications of the Basic Urban Model, <i>Brueckner Chapter 3</i>	2/2 2/4
5	Assignment 3	2/9 2/11
6	Urban Sprawl and Transportation, <i>Brueckner Chapters 4 and 5</i>	2/16 2/18
7	Review	2/23 2/25
8	Midterm exam Begin Housing Demand and Tenure Choice, <i>Brueckner Chapter 6</i>	3/2 3/4
9	Housing Demand and Tenure Choice, <i>Brueckner Chapter 6</i>	3/9 3/11
	SPRING BREAK	3/16 3/18
10	Housing Demand and Policy, <i>Brueckner Chapters 6 and 7</i>	3/23 3/25
11	Chapter 7 continued (if needed) Assignment 4	3/30 4/1
12	Local Public Goods and Services, <i>Brueckner Chapter 8</i> Neighborhood Effects	4/6 4/8
13	Schools Assignment 5	4/13 4/15
14	Review	4/20 4/22
	Final Exam, <b>8:00 – 10:30 a.m.</b>	4/27

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.