Rutgers University
Department of Economics
Labor Economics (ECONOMICS 402)
Syllabus - Summer 2026

Instructor:	Arashk Afshar
Email:	aa2129@**economics.rutgers**.edu
Office Hours:	after class or by appointment

Class Hours:	Tuesday, Thursday 1:00 pm - 4:40 pm
Classroom:	Murray Hall - Room 204 (MU-204)
Final Exam:	**July 2**

Prerequisites:

- Intermediate Microeconomics Analysis (Econ. 320)
- Econometrics (Econ. 322)

Course Description: This course covers traditional and contemporary topics in labor economics and plans to encourage the development of independent research interests. This course aims to help students understand the foundation of the labor market, labor, and firms' behavior as maximizing agents. It also discusses how this theory can be used to analyze public policy. This course relies heavily on intermediate microeconomic analysis.

PLEASE NOTE

- Laptops and cell phones may not be used at any time, for any purpose, during lectures or exams.

Textbook: The required textbook is "*Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*," ISBN 9780367346973 (14th edition). You can use the 13th edition as well; there is no difference between these two editions for our purposes.

Method of Evaluation:

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Quizzes	20%
Final Exam	40%
Project & Presentation	40%

Remark:

- **Quizzes and Final:** In this course, you will have four quizzes and one final exam, all of which are closed-book and closed-notes.
  Quizzes will take place during the **first 20 minutes** of class on Tuesdays, except in the last week. Please note that there will be no extensions to this time; any delay in arriving at class will reduce the time available for the quiz.
  Make-up exams will only be offered if you can provide valid medical documentation or evidence of an emergency, signed by a physician or the Dean's office. In such cases, you must notify me within 24 hours before or

after the missed exam. If you do not inform me within this timeframe, you will receive a grade of zero for the missed quiz or exam.

- **Project:** For your project, you will propose and explore a question related to a specific governmental policy and its impact on the labor market. You must focus on a recent policy implemented between January 2020 and December 2024. The chosen policy should be specific and demonstrate your insight into labor market analysis. The following topics are **not acceptable** for this project: *state-wide minimum wage policies, transparency laws, and federal acts such as the CARES Act, the American Rescue Plan Act, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).*

  - The first phase of the project involves identifying a specific policy and preparing a recorded proposal presentation. This portion is worth 10 points.

  - Once your research proposal is approved, you will conduct independent research to identify multiple sources that provide evidence addressing your question. This research should enhance and contextualize your understanding of the topic.
    In the second phase of the project, you will create a recorded presentation that lasts at least 5 minutes and write a paper with a minimum length of 1200 words. This phase is worth 30 points.
    ∗ Please keep in mind that the project's **primary focus is the presentation**.

  Project Timeline:

  - Proposal Due: **June 6**
  - Final Project Submission: **June 27**

Course Outline :

•	May 26	Intro to the Class, Labor Market	Chapter 2
•	May 28	The Demand for Labor, Labor Demand Elasticities	Chapters 3 & 4
•	Jun 2	*Quiz*, Frictions in the Labor Market	Chapter 5
•	Jun 4	Labor Supply	Chapters 6 & 7
•	Jun 9	*Quiz*, Compensating Wage Differential and Labor Markets	Chapter 8
•	Jun 11	Investments in Human Capital	Chapter 9
•	Jun 16	*Quiz*, Pay and Productivity Wage	Chapter 11
•	Jun 18	Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Labor Market	Chapter 12
•	Jun 23	*Quiz*, Unions and the Labor Market	Chapter 13
•	Jun 25	Unemployment	Chapter 14
•	Jun 30	Inequality in Earning	Chapter 15
•	July 2,	**Final Exam**	

Disclaimer: I reserve the right to add or subtracttopics as the course develops. Not all topics will be covered in the same detail. Time constraints may cause some topics to be omitted. Unless otherwise notified, students are

responsible for all the topics noted in the lecture outline.

Helpful information

Offices of the Dean of Students https://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/

Academic integrity: http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

Support for students with disabilities: https://ods.rutgers.edu/

Counseling services: http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/