ECN552/PPA730 - ECONOMICS OF AGING

Text: A bound packet of readings is available at Campus Copy. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are not in the packet but are on reserve at Bird Library.

This course provides an economic perspective for students interested in aging issues. You will develop an “economic tool-kit” for evaluating public policies targeted on older people. You will read articles on selected aging issues that illustrate the use of economic analysis to predict the behavioral affects and income distribution consequences of government policy.

You will also learn to use computer software on panel data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) to estimate the economic well-being of older people and show how sensitive your results are to the methods used.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Assigned readings below.

2. Preparation of a report on the economic well-being of older people using data from the PSID.

3. Development of a position brief in response to Section 503 of the American with Disabilities Act. (Maximum length 1000 words)

4. Attendance and active participation in class.

5. A midterm and final exam.

Grading Policy

The approximate weights in your final grade are:

30 percent Midterm exam
25 percent PSID project
10 percent ADA position brief
35 percent Final exam
COURSE PREPARATION

The course prerequisite is Microeconomic Theory (ECN 301) or Managerial Economics for Public Administration (PPA 730). It is designed for students with a grasp of applied micro theory and a desire to use it to evaluate public policies targeting older people. Because statistical evidence is brought to bear in some of the articles on the reading list, Economic Statistics (ECN521) or its equivalent will provide useful background for this course. However, it is not required. I will provide in class, a heuristic guide for interpreting key statistical concepts and results.

The course primarily deals with Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (Social Security) because that is the single most important social program in the United States budget and it most dramatically affects older people. But other programs—Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps, etc.—will be discussed as will policies that attempt to end discrimination against the old or those with disabilities.

IMPORTANT DATES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>March 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussion of PSID Results</td>
<td>March 21-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussion of Section 503</td>
<td>April 18-20</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 8 (2:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.)</td>
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SCHEDULED CLASSES

January 17  Introduction


January 31- February 2 Measures of Economic Well-Being: Single Versus Multi-Period Analysis


February 7-9 Program Concepts: In-Kind versus In-Cash Transfers and Welfare versus Insurance Programs


February 14-16 Program Concepts: Horizontal versus Vertical Equity


February 21-23 Managing Social Security


February 28-March 7 The Labor Force Participation of Older Workers


March 9 Midterm Exam

March 14-16 Spring Break

March 21-23 PSID Economic Well-Being Reports

March 28-30 What is Discrimination and How is it Measured?


April 4-6        Unisex


April 11-13        The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990


April 18-20        Making Disability Policy: Section 305 of the ADA


April 25-27        Review

May 8              Comprehensive Final Exam  (2:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.)