

ECON/FRE 374: Land and Resource Economics

Class Time: MWF 11:00 -11:50 AM

Room: MacMillan 166

Instructor

Sumeet Gulati
Phone: (604) 822-2144
Office: 341 MacMillan
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Contacting me:

- Visit me during office hours. *Please come prepared with your questions or thoughts written down.*
- Call me during my office hours.
- Immediately after class: for quick questions.
- Email: sumeet.gulati@ubc.ca (slowest response): While writing emails make sure you have either ECON 374 or FRE 374 in the subject header or a spam filter on my email account might prevent your email from reaching me. I respond to my emails approximately once a workday. Usually, never on weekends or holidays. In cases where answers to your questions are easily available in your syllabus or on vista, I may not respond to your query.

Teaching Assistants

Name	Anderson Frey	Zahra Gholami
Office	Brock Hall Annex O155	MacMillan 318 D
Email	ander.frey@gmail.com	maral.gholamy@gmail.com
Office Hours	Tuesday, 2:00-3:00 PM.	Tuesday, 11:30-12:30 PM

Prerequisites

- 1) An introductory level course in microeconomic theory.

Why you should take this course?

Do you wonder why, our fish are severely over-exploited? Record numbers of known wildlife species are going extinct? We seem to care little about the long-run well being of our forests? Some cities sprawl, while others have high density? Or do you care about other similar questions?

If you do, this course is for you.

What you will gain from this course?

- An understanding of how we (collectively as a society) make decisions about our natural resources.
- An objective analytical framework to evaluate our decisions, and improve them.

Together, we will build an analytical framework from simple economic principles. We will use it to define society's optimal preservation of natural resources, and evaluate over-exploitation. We will then ask: why do we make sub-optimal decisions? There will be no single answer, but we will be able to identify significant issues. Is the market failing to do the optimal? When it comes to natural resources, the market often fails. What can we do to improve it? Based on the type of resource, we will study how policy can bring exploitation to optimal levels.

We will not find any definite solutions to the above questions. We will instead learn of some of the major economic explanations. If, at the end of this term, you can identify some of the economic reasons underlying natural resource decisions in the real world, this course would have achieved its objective.

Course Material

Required Text: (you can buy the new or old text): Available at UBC Bookstore.

New Text: Barry C. Field (2008). “*Natural Resource Economics: An Introduction*”, Waveland Press
Book Website: <http://www.waveland.com/Titles/Field.htm>, either the new or old edition.

Old Text: Barry C. Field (2001). “*Natural Resource Economics: An Introduction*”, McGraw-Hill

Online Course Material: Available at UBC Connect: <http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/>.

You are required to regularly login to your course page for ECON/FRE 374. This syllabus, course-lecture slides, additional material, announcements, assignments, and grades can be accessed there.

Clickers: (you can buy used or new): Available at the UBC bookstore.

We will use clickers throughout this course for in class questions, assigning participation grades, and for in class quizzes. More information at: http://wiki.ubc.ca/Documentation:Clickers#Student_Info. You must register your clicker on vista so I can assign grades. Your ECON/FRE 374 Connect page has a clicker registration link. Use this link if you have not already registered your clicker for another course. Your must have a registered clicker by midnight, 12 AM, Friday, September 13th, 2013 (Thursday night). Your information will be downloaded to my computer after midnight. Clicker use in class starting Friday, September 13th will count towards your grade.

Optional Reference Material via Twitter: Almost everyday, I shall provide links to news and blog posts related to the economics of natural resources and environment via my twitter page: <https://twitter.com/sgulati>. This material is solely for your edification. It is not required.

Assessment: How your grade will be determined.

The philosophy for the assessment section is to allow you several means to get do well in this course. If you do not do too well on one particular test, or assignment you will have the opportunity to make it up in another.

You will be tested on: All material

- Covered in class.
- Material that I post in your course page on UBC Connect.

I will design questions to test an understanding of the material, and an ability to apply it.

Your Grade: Will be determined as follows

Assessment Tool	Date or Other Information	Percent of Grade
Midterm	Friday, October 18 th , 2013	30 percent
Best Three Problem Sets	Out of four assigned on Vista	15 percent
Best two in Class Quiz	Out of three administered in class	15 percent
Class Participation	Based on your Clicker Use in class	5 percent
Final Exam	As per university exam schedule.	35 percent

- One Midterm Examination: 30% of your grade.
- Out of 4 Assignments: your 3 best scoring assignments will account for 15%.
- 3 in-class surprise quizzes: The best two scoring quizzes will account for 15% of your grade.
- Class Participation: Based on your clicker use. If you attempt over 3/4th of the questions asked in a class, you will earn one participation point. These points will account for 5% of your total grade. I will not ask you to use the Clicker in each class. However, I will not know in advance if I might include questions using your Clicker. *You should be carrying it all the time.*
- The Final Examination: 35%

Assignments submitted late will automatically receive a mark of zero – no exceptions.

Information about your Exams.

All midterm and final exams will include only short answer questions. The final examination will be cumulative - i.e., the final will cover *ALL content covered during the term.*

The Registrar's Office will schedule the end of term exams for any time during the examination period. *You have to ensure that you are available throughout that period.*

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance or scheduled tests or exams. Please let the instructor know in advance if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Other absences for varsity athletics, family obligations or other similar commitments are not part of University policy and students should not assume that they will be accommodated. If you have a pressing issue that conflicts with an exam, you should discuss this with your instructor as soon as possible. Refer to the UBC Calendar for details of 'academic concession.'

Your unsurprising in-class quizzes: Will last for approximately 15 minutes. Will be entirely multiple choice and will be administered using your Clicker. These quizzes will cover anything covered in class including material taught that day itself.

- QUIZ 1 can be on any of the following days: 30th of September, 2nd or 4th of October.
- QUIZ 2 can be on any of the following days: 28th, 30th of October, or the 1st of November.
- QUIZ 3 can be on any of the following days: 25th, 27th, or the 29th of November.

Make-up Exams: It is important that everyone take the same exams under the same conditions for maximum fairness. I therefore do not give make-up exams unless you have a valid reason. If a midterm or final exam is missed for a legitimate reason, and a doctor's note or other verification is provided, a make-up exam will be permitted. You need to contact me as soon as possible prior to the missed exam.

Extra Credit: In this class there is no extra credit. Your grade is based on your performance on exams, assignments, quizzes, and in-class activities. There is nothing else that can be submitted or done to gain any extra points.

Classroom Procedures

Attendance: It is, essential that you *attend classes*, and is strongly recommended you *read ahead* in the text. If, you do miss a class, you are responsible for getting class notes from another student.

Laptop/iPod/iPad/Smart Phone use: While you are in class it is important that you use your time for learning and challenging your instructor. If you must use these devices, please ensure that it is for class use only. And yes, that means no social networking during class.

Cellphones: You should turn off all cell phones in class.

Participation: Active learning is important for you to keep up with the material and for you to better understand the subject. Classes will be a combination of lectures, discussion and in-class exercises. Anyone disturbing the class will be asked to leave. If you are often disruptive, you will be asked to meet with undergraduate advising.

How to Learn Successfully

Prior to Class: In order to prepare for the day's lesson, and to prevent falling behind on reading assignments, it is strongly recommended to read the text material before attending class. You should also go over the assigned readings prior to class.

During Class: Taking notes is extremely important for understanding and organizing the material.

After Class: It is recommended that you *rewrite/reorganize your notes* following class; revisiting the material on a weekly basis may seem like more work now, but this time is saved later when preparing yourself for examinations! *Review the "Big Picture"* and see where the class material fits in (if you have doubts, ask

me before the next class). In order for you to understand the material in this course, it is extremely important that you *do the assigned homework problems*. Working with your classmates can be a great help, and I strongly encourage it. I also urge you to ask questions about any problems that give you trouble. *Find a study partner*. Missing a lecture here or there can mean the difference in a letter grade. Study partners can share notes, and can help highlight problem content. *Ask me for help*. By far, the most important and least utilized resource available to students is the course instructor. Use office hours and time before and after class to talk with me in order to clarify content

Academic Dishonesty

Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Other Important Resources

UBC Counseling Services provide stress management, group therapy, and individual counseling for students. See their website: <http://www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell>.

The UBC ombudsman office provides an independent, impartial and confidential resource to assist students in addressing and resolving concerns about unfair treatment at UBC Vancouver. See their website: <http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/>.

During Exams

Please keep in mind the following requirements for each exam and quiz.

- Please bring your picture ID and make it visible during each exam.
- No cell phones please. If you have them with you, switch them off and keep them in your bag. They should not be visible to us.
- No Calculators or Pencil cases.
- There should be no talking during or after the exam INSIDE the exam hall, even if you have submitted your exam.
- Tips on Taking Exams
 - Read every question on the exam before you start working. This will give you a feel for how long the exam is and how you should pace yourself. It will also give your subconscious mind a chance to start working on the questions.
 - If you are not sure what a question means, please ask me. I am trying to see how well you know the material, not to trick you with ambiguous wording.
 - Look at the point value of each question. Obviously, it is more important to do well on the questions that count the most than the ones that count the least.
 - It is generally best to do the easiest problem first, then the next easiest, and so on. You do not have to do the problems in the order they appear on the exam.
 - If you get stuck on one question, move on to the next. Come back later to the question that is giving you trouble.
 - Be aware of how much time you have left. Do not spend too much time on a single question. It is generally better to get partial credit on every question than full credit on a single question.

Course Outline (with reading assignment required before class)

1. **An Introduction to Natural Resource Economics:** Field chapters 1 and 2
2. **Building Blocks**
 - a. **Willingness to Pay:** Field chapter 3
 - b. **Costs/Supply:** Field chapter 4
 - c. **Efficiency/Sustainability:** Field chapter 5
3. **Markets and Efficiency:** Field chapter 6
4. **Public Policy, Objectives, types, etc:** Field chapter 7
5. **Natural Resource Analysis**
 - a. **Principles of Analysis:** Field chapter 8
 - b. **Valuation of Natural Resources:** Field chapter 9
6. **Applied Natural Resource Problems**
 - a. **Mineral Economics:** Field chapter 10
 - b. **Marine Resources:** Field chapter 13
 - c. **Forest Economics:** Field chapter 12.
 - d. **Economics of Wildlife Management:** Field chapter 18
 - e. **Economics of Biodiversity Preservation:** Field chapter 19
 - f. **Land Economics**
 - i. **An Introduction:** Field chapter 14
 - ii. **Resource Rents and Rent Capture:** Field chapter 14 and material on vista.
 - iii. **Efficiency and Equity in Land Use Planning** reading material on vista.
 - iv. **Degradation and Conservation of Agricultural Land:** reading material on vista.
 - g. **Water Resources:** Field chapter 15
 - h. **Natural Resource Decisions in Developing Countries:** Field chapter 21

This syllabus is not exhaustive and may be revised later depending on how the class proceeds.