

ECON3230 Urban Economics

Fall 2025

Course Information

Course Instructor: Professor Jinyue Li
E-mail: jinyueli@yorku.ca
Office Hours & Location: Mondays 4pm-5pm, online on Zoom. Or by appointment.
The Zoom link is posted in eClass.

Course Time & Days: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30am-12:50pm
Class Location: DB0005
Course eClass site:
<https://eclass.yorku.ca/course/view.php?id=139814>

Course Overview

Course Description

Examines the economic performance of urban areas and applies economic theory to study contemporary metropolitan problems such as poverty and welfare, housing and land, transportation and traffic, and pollution and the urban environment. Considers theories of location to understand the existence and location of cities and the spatial distribution of alternative activities within cities.

Pre-Requisites: AP/ECON 1000 3.00 or equivalent

Course Credit Exclusions (CCE): GL/ECON 3320 3.00.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to use economic theories to explain:

- what a city is, why cities exist, how and why cities grow, and why property values and rents vary within cities.
- how firms and workers choose their locations, and how the firm's choice is impacted by the location of customers, other firms, and raw material inputs.
- the forces that shape land-use patterns and segregation within cities.
- patterns of education, crime, and poverty within cities.
- how housing values are determined, how the characteristics of a dwelling and its surroundings impact its value, and how the determination of housing values differs from the price determination of other types of goods.
- how transportation and transportation costs impact households and firms' choices, and how public policies and public provision of transportation options might alleviate certain transportation externalities within cities.

Course Organization

The course is delivered in-person with many hands-on activities in class. The format will be lecture + some active learning because active learning is the key for student success and growth. Only selected lecture materials are posted online. Students are responsible for taking notes during the class. **Therefore, class participation is essential for this course.**

Required Course Materials

Required Textbook: Urban Economics, by Arthur O'Sullivan, Ninth edition, McGraw Hill.

Purchase options and costs:

1. Hardcopy of the textbook is available at the University Bookstore for \$129.99 +HST.
2. D1D eText: \$69 for 180-day access

Second-hand copies or previous editions are good substitutes and are acceptable.

D1D eText

This course is participating in York University's Day1Digital Opt In program. Day1Digital (D1D) is the preferred method for York University students to receive their textbooks.

- You can access the eText on the first day of the semester through an easy link in eClass.
- You can opt yourself in or out for the first two weeks (until Sept 17, 2025) at the beginning of the semester to take advantage of lower prices.
- If you remain opted in after Sept 17, 2025, your student account will be billed the non-refundable digital material fee (\$69). If you find a cheaper alternative elsewhere, make sure that you opt out by Sept 17, 2025, so you won't be charged.
- If you withdraw from the course before Sept 17, 2025, you will not be billed, even if you were opted in to the material at the time of withdrawal.
- Day1Digital materials are HST-exempt.

More detailed information are available at the Day1Digital website:

<https://campus.bookstore.yorku.ca/day1digital>

Technical Requirements

Course materials will be posted on eClass and office hours will be conducted on Zoom.

Need technical help? Check out the following helpful links for information resources and support:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)

If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) webpage or write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Evaluations

Course Evaluation Chart

Assessment	Date	Weight %	Notes
Class Participation	Throughout the course	20%	Drop the lowest 4
“Explore Your City” Project	Throughout the course	10%	You will have at least 1 week for each assignment.
Midterm Exam	Oct 22, 2025	25%	In person exam during regular class time
Final Exam	Dec 4-19, 2025	45%	In person, scheduled by the Registrar’s office
Total		100%	

Class Participation

Attendance in this course is mandatory. There are three forms of class participation:

1. Attendance sign-in sheet
2. In-class worksheet to be completed in pairs
3. Small group discussions

While in-class worksheet is expected to be the most common form of participation, **when and how class participation takes place will not be announced in advance.** Students are expected to attend class and actively participate on a regular basis.

Late policy: If you are late to class but class participation (1, 2, or 3 above) is already done, you will not be given the chance to do it. You missed the credit for this class. Please see the accommodations for missed participation below. If you are late but class participation is still going on, you can participate but you won’t be given extra time to complete it, and you will be evaluated based on how you perform in the reduced time.

Missed Class Participation and Accommodations:

I understand that life happens. Circumstances such as illness or injury, bereavement, work or family responsibilities, technical issues or unforeseen/unavoidable incidents beyond a student's control, may prevent students from completing class participation. To support students fairly, **the lowest 4 class participations will be dropped. This means that you can miss 4 classes (equivalent to two weeks of the classes) without the need to notify me and will not impact your grades.**

Effective September 2025, the new **Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work** (see the section below) is in place. The flexibility in our grading scheme provides built-in accommodations that are designed to align with this policy. **The built-in accommodations are automatically granted for students, thus no further accommodations will be made for class participation, whether or not you self report an absence.**

How class participation is graded

Each class participation is worth 5 points.

1. Attendance sign-in sheet will be graded on completion.

2. In-class worksheet (completed in pairs) will be graded as below:

- 5/5: A good worksheet overall. The students answered all questions with only minor gaps in understanding. You can receive a 5/5 on a worksheet even if your answers are not perfect.
- 4/5: The students answered all questions but revealed significant gaps in understanding the material. As a rule of thumb, a student will receive this grade if the overall worksheet would typically receive a grade of 80% or less.
- 3/5: The students left a question blank, but the rest of the worksheet is good.
- 0-2/5: Low effort / nonsensical answers.
- 0/5: No submission.

3. Small group discussions (up to 4 students in a group): you will receive a handout with questions that can lead your thinking and are asked to brainstorm within the small group setting. You will need to write down all the ideas/opinions your group have. Then we will open the floor for discussion as a whole class. **Each group is expected to actively speak to express their own opinions, support other group's opinions, or critique other group's opinions.** The goal is to have a good open-floor discussion.

- 5/5: A good participation of the discussion overall. The handout is duly completed with various ideas and multiple members in the group actively speak to participate in the open-floor discussion.
- 4/5: The handout is duly completed with various ideas but less participation in the open-floor discussion.

- 3/5: The handout is duly completed with various ideas but the entire group remain silent in the open-floor discussion.
- 0-2/5: Low effort even in the completion of handout, not participating in the open-floor discussion.

You are not required to stick to the same pair or same group for your class participation. In fact, you are encouraged to form a new pair or a new group every time, so you can interact with different classmates and learn from each other.

“Explore Your City” Project

The “Explore Your City” is a research project that consists of a series of assignments to be completed throughout the course. There will be approximately 6-9 assignments, depending on how the class goes. You will be given at least 1 week to complete each assignment. Detailed instructions on each assignment and how it is graded will be posted in eClass – “Explore Your City” Project section.

Use of AI to complete the project assignments is strictly prohibited and will be reported to the appropriate university authorities, and can be punishable according to the Senate Policy on Academic Conduct. Please see the section of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) below.

Assignments must be submitted through eClass by Turnitin. **Submissions through emails are not accepted.** Please see the section of Turnitin below.

Late Policy: Each assignment is worth 5 points. The following penalties will apply to assignments turned in late:

- Grace period: 0 – 1 hour late, no penalties
- 1 point deducted: 1- 3 hours late
- 2 points deducted: 3 - 12 hours late
- 3 points deducted: 12-24 hours late
- no credit: >24 hours late

Missed Project Assignments and Accommodations:

Effective September 2025, the new **Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work** (see the section below) is in place. Students can self report two 7-day absence periods. When you declare your absence and if the due date of the assignment falls into your absence period, you will be granted an extension of 7 days after the absence period. This means that you can at most have two extensions of the project assignments in the course. **No more accommodations will be granted.**

Midterm Exam

The in-person midterm exam is scheduled on Wednesday, Oct 22, 2025, during our regular class time at 11:30am-12:50pm in our regular classroom DB0005. The coverage and format of the midterm exam will be announced later.

Missed Midterm Exam

There is no makeup exam. If you miss the midterm exam for any reason, whether you self declare absence or not, your midterm weight will be shift to the final exam. In this case, your final exam will be worth 70% of your total grade. In the past, students usually do better in their midterm because midterm exam covers less and potentially easier materials for the first half of the course. Therefore, this option of not writing the midterm exam should only be exercised when you have real emergencies.

Final Exam

The in-person final exam is scheduled by the Registrar's office. Final exam is comprehensive and covers all materials in this course. More details on the final exam will be announced later.

Missed Final Exam

Students must fill out the Deferred Standing Mach form
<https://www.yorku.ca/laps/econ/undergraduate-programs/academic-resources/departments/policies/deferred-standing/>

within 7 days of the original exam date. Students who do not submit the Deferred Standing Mach form within 7 days of the missed exam, will receive a zero for their final exam score.

There is only one date for the Deferred Final Exam. It will be held in-person in March 2026, with the exact date being announced in February 2026.

Course Schedule

Important Dates

Explore York University's [Registrar's Office](#) to find a list of important dates, such as class start/end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. We will try to cover as much of the material as time allows. I may change the topic in each week depending on how the discussion goes.

Tentative Weekly Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Key Concepts of Urban Economics (Ch 1 and 2)

Week 2: Why cities exist? Agglomeration (Ch 3 and 4)

Week 3: Where do cities develop? (Ch 5)

Week 4: Consumer cities (Ch 6)

Week 5: Urban Land use: Land rent and manufacturing land (Ch 10)

Week 6: Urban Land use: Office space (Ch 11)

Week 7: Midterm/Finish Urban Land use

Week 8: House price and residential land use (Ch 12)

Week 9: Monocentric City Model and Neighborhood Segregation (Ch 14 and 15)

Week 10: Housing policies and Guest Lecture (Ch 16 and 17)

Week 11: Urban Transportation: Cars and Roads (Ch 18)

Week 12: Urban Transportation: Public Transit (Ch 19)

Course Policies

Please review the course policies in this section. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Integrity and Conduct

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. You are encouraged to connect with reliable [on-campus resources](#) that support your coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring [SPARK: Academic Integrity Module](#), [LA&PS Academic Honesty](#) and [Academic Integrity for Students](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). **Using AI apps such as Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work in this course, is considered a breach under York's Academic**

Conduct Policy. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, you will normally be required to submit your written assignments to Turnitin (on the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, you are allowing your material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the [Turnitin.com website](#). York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Accessibility

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to Course Directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange. To learn more, please visit [Accommodated Exam/Test Scheduling](#).

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of days of religious significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course assignments, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor not less than two (2) weeks (or 14 days) prior to the date for which accommodation is sought. If the requested accommodation is for an exam or falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation Agreement \(PDF\)](#) at least three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the start of the exam period.

Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work

This policy applies to course assessments worth 20% or less of your overall course grade and does not apply to exams held during the final examination period. Students may self-declare two (2) 7-day consideration periods each 12-week term and one (1) 7-day consideration period per six-week term. An Attending Physician's Statement (APS) is not required for these self-declared absences. However, an instructor may request a signed APS for the final examination period, coursework worth more than 20% of the course grade and missed work outside of the self-declared academic consideration period(s).

Students can submit their self-declaration(s) for academic consideration [using eClass](#). Students are then responsible for contacting the instructor no later than two (2) business days after the end of the consideration period(s) to arrange details of any accommodation for missed coursework. If you do not do this, you may get a zero (0) on the missed work. Where courses have built-in accommodations already established, the instructor may decline providing additional accommodations under this policy. For further details, please review the [*Policy on Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work*](#).

Final Examination Identification Policy

For final exams in this course, you must present a valid York University official photo identification card ([YU-card](#)) to verify your identity. Also, you will need to sign the exam's attendance roster. Learn more about preparing for your exams by reviewing York's Policies on [Conduct of Examinations](#) as well as the Registrar's Office [Examination Tip Sheet](#).

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. **Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission.** Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.