

## 1 Course Description

The popular conception of economists is that we use models to describe monetary transactions. While monetary transactions are still the bread and butter of economics, many economists have applied economics to unique fields including dating, crime, and even baseball. Why baseball? The industry has a clear structure. On field decisions are made under a known set of rules. Baseball players are employees whose productivity data has been published for every game played in over 100 years. Their salaries are publicly available and negotiations are often public. We will discuss topics from why more batters get hit by pitches in the National league to the beginnings of the *Moneyball* revolution.

## 2 Course Goals

The goals of this course are to learn some of the basic tools used by economists, how those tools can be used to explain aspects of baseball, and to have fun.

## 3 Course Materials

**Required Text:** *The Baseball Economist*, Author: J.C. Bradbury

## 4 Course Requirements and Grading

**The weighting of grades is always determined by the syllabus. Mistakes on Carmen are unlikely, but any discrepancy will go to the syllabus.**

- **Attendance and Participation (25%):** You are expected to attend every class and participate in class discussions. Participation will be evaluated based on both attendance and active participation in class.
- **Reading and Class Preparation (25%):** You will be assigned a weekly reading, typically from *The Baseball Economist*. Prior to each class you are required to submit a summary of the reading. The summaries will be submitted through Carmen and many will include writing prompts or questions for you to consider.
- **Current Events (10%):** Each week 1 to 2 students will be assigned a current event. To complete a current event you must find some media (article, video, podcast, etc.) that you can relate to economics and baseball. Then you write up a summary of the article and submit the summary on Carmen. During class you will share your summary of the article.

- **Final presentation (40%):** At the end of the semester every student will prepare and present a 3-5 minute presentation. Half way through the semester, you will need to share your basic idea with the class. The presentation should be an investigation into some aspect of professional baseball from an economic perspective. The presentation should present a question and then answer the question with economic thought and/or data.

### Letter Grade Distribution:

>= 93	A	73 - 76	C
90 - 92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
83 - 86	B	60 - 66	D
80 - 82	B-	<= 59	E
77 - 79	C+		

## 5 Help with coursework:

Short questions can always be answered by email. I guarantee all emails received prior to 5:00 pm will be answered that day. I have 5 hours per week of designated office hours. If you are struggling, come to office hours immediately. If you have a schedule conflict that prevents you from attending any of the office hours, arrangements may be made to meet at alternate times.

## 6 Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term academic misconduct includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

## 7 Disability Services:

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement/>

# Readings and Topics List

This calendar is a rough outline of topics to be covered.

Week	Content
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 1 Accidents Happen</li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity Costs</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 3 Left Handed Catchers</li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Seeking</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 4 Lobbying Balls and Strikes</li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for Winning and Competitive Balance</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 6: The Big City vs. Small City Problem</li> </ul>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game Theory and Strategic Interactions</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 9: The Steroids Game</li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximization</li> <li>• Developing your presentation</li> <li>• Sharing Project Ideas</li> </ul>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using data to test theory I</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 10: Innovating to Win</li> </ul>
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using data to test theory II</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 11: Scouts vs. Stat-Heads</li> </ul>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 12: How to Judge a Hitter or a Pitcher</li> </ul>
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor Markets</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 13: What is a Ballplayer Worth?</li> </ul>
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Structures</li> <li>• Reading assignment: Chapter 14: Is Major League Baseball a Monopoly?</li> </ul>
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> </ul>
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> </ul>