

## MIDTERM EXAMINATION GUIDE

Pace yourself. If you get stuck in one part of a problem, do your best to proceed to the next part. I am looking for clarity, precision, and rigour. Conciseness, when not excessively sacrificing rigour, is one aspect of clarity. The midterm exam will be a closed book one, but you are permitted to have one A4 “cheat sheet” (both sides) for the exam.

---

### Honour Code

Students are expected, *individually and collectively*, to uphold the rules of the bachelor programme and the professional norms regarding cheating and plagiarism. Examples of cheating in the context of this exam include (a) copying from another student’s examination paper; (b) allowing another student to copy from your paper; (c) any other form of collaboration in an exam; (d) consulting materials other than your a4 cheat sheet as outlined above; (e) revising and resubmitting the exam for regrading, without the lecturer’s knowledge and consent.

---

*“O good old man, how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world,  
When service sweat for duty, not for meed.  
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,  
Where none will sweat but for promotion,  
And having that do choke their service up  
Even with the having”*

**1599 Shakespeare, As You Like It II, ii**

## I. What should examinations mean?

The goals of a research university is diverse, but amongst them are two important aspects – perhaps naturally conflicting in nature. On one side is to produce “truth” and future pursuers of truth: and the other is to survive with grace in a class society.

In this course, and its examinations, I take the liberty in attempting to fulfil the first. In training you to be pursuer of truth through research, I will look for *clarity, precision, and rigour*. Rigour in our context of intellectual work refers most importantly to the thoroughness and right understanding of the material being learned. As you know, I aim to be rigorous, and I have not settled with mild and informal contact with key ideas of our course.

As a result, I tend to view examination as a tool that is fundamentally flawed *as the sole measure* of your understanding in course materials. Exams are also a poor way of encouraging you to think about course materials outside of the classrooms, and I believe that such exercise is necessary. Hence, we resolve to readings and intellectually-challenging problem sets. Work hard, collaborate, and try to learn this course *rigorously*, and you will succeed in the exams.

What will my exams be like then? My exams will be designed to serve two main purposes: (i) reward those who have worked hard trying to understand the materials being learned and their nuances; and (ii) discourage

shirkers who have benefited from those mentioned in (i). As such, memorisation of concepts will not suffice to excel all parts of the exams. **Therefore it is very important, for your own sake, to show every step of your work in the exams.**

Now, go back and read the quote. If you get it, it is up to you to do with whatever it means. If you do not get it, read it again.

## II. Topics covered

Everything covered in all lectures leading up to the midterm examination will be covered.

- Macroeconomic variables, their meanings, and limitations
- Some notion of history of economic thoughts
- National accounting, concepts, and limitations
- Theories of consumption and investment
- Basic Keynesian model with/without government spending, taxes, imports, and exports
- Fiscal policies, unemployment, and short-run economic fluctuations

We will test your conceptual, mathematical, and graphical understanding of the materials above. As for the mandatory readings, they will significantly help you.

## IV. My general advices for undergraduate students

Lastly, these advices are especially valuable if you are interested in economics as a social science. They are quite similar to Chris Blattman's – but with my own take.

1. Read. *Everything*. A lot. It is the foundation of everything that have mattered, and will matter.
2. Learn how to write *well*. Therefore you must also write. Reading books on writing may help (I uploaded some good ones on the moodle).
3. Challenge yourself to specialised courses. Some skills are difficult to obtain outside of these walls. Statistics, advanced econometrics, Stata, R, Python – take as much as you could. Don't be put off by math and statistics.
4. Do unfamiliar things, including going to unfamiliar places.
5. For those who wants to continue to a masters or a phd, develop good relationships with some of your professors. You will need recommendations, and it is better that you are acquainted with the professors you will ask them from.
6. Highlighting texts and rereading notes or slides does not work as well as self-testing and redoing problem sets (in pay attention in class).
7. Ignore all my advices. Live! Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul, instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers. For, “*The universe requires eternity. That is why they affirm that the conservation of this world is a perpetual creation, and that the verbs 'to conserve' and 'to create', so endangered here, are synonymous in Heaven.*”

“*El Universo requiere la Eternidad. Por eso afirman que la conservación de este mundo es una perpetua creación, y que los verbos 'conservar' y 'crear', tan enemistados aquí, son sinónimo en el Cielo*”

Jorge Luis Borges, *Historia de la Eternidad*, 1936