

Course Outline

Course Code : RE2705
Course Title : Urban Economics
Semester : Semester 2, Academic Year 2025/2026
Faculty : Assoc Prof Liao Wen-chi
Department : Real Estate
Email : wliao@nus.edu.sg

Overview

This course introduces urban and real estate economics. It applies economic principles to examine the benefits and costs of cities, the spatial distribution of urban activities, land use and rent, growth and change, transportation, and sustainability issues in urban development. These areas of knowledge enable students to understand the fundamentals of real estate market in a city. The course then introduces real estate space and asset markets. It examines demand, supply, stock, rent, and pricing, covering important types of properties including housing.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

- Understand and apply economic principles to analyse the structure, operation, and development of cities, as well as the operation of real estate markets in a city.
- Acquire knowledge of key concepts like urban land rent, urban forms, urban agglomerations, urban growth and declines, urban transportation, real estate space and asset markets, and segmentations, the demand and kinked-supply curves of a real property and its rent determinants in a real estate space market, and the pricing of a real property in a real estate asset market.
- Evaluate urban or real estate challenges, analyse policies, and contribute to discussions about sustainability and social justice within the context of urban and real estate economics.

Course Prerequisite(s)

BSP1703/BSP1703X Managerial Economics OR RE1704 Principles of Real Estate Economics OR EC1301 Principles of Economics OR EC2101 Microeconomic Analysis I OR EC1101E Introduction to Economic Analysis

Course Preclusion(s)

EC3381 Urban Economics

General Guide & Reading

Urban Economics (9th Edition) by Arthur O'Sullivan. McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Tentative Schedule & Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Activity
1	12 Jan	Introduction. Preview. Project brief.	
2	19 Jan	Benefits of cities	
3	26 Jan	City size determination	
4	2 Feb	Urban structure, land use, and land rent	

5	9 Feb	Urban cars and roads	
6	16 Feb	Urban public transit. Urban growth & decline, and kinked property supply.	
	21 Feb – 1 Mar	RECESS WEEK	
7	2 Mar	Future of cities	Quiz 1. Review. Workshop 1.
8	9 Mar	Real estate demand & supply RE pricing	Midterm consultation
9	16 Mar	Mid term test (Examplify)	Workshop 2
10	23 Mar	Long-run RE adjustment. Affordability.	
11	30 Mar	Short-run RE adjustment	Review
12	6 Apr	Quiz 2 (Examplify)	Optional consultation
13	13 Apr	Project presentation	Quiz 2 reflection. Project reflection.
	18 – 24 Apr	READING WEEK	
	25 Apr – 9 May	EXAMINATION (2 WEEKS)	

Assessment

Assessment Components	Weightage (%)
• Class Participation	20
• Group Project	30
• 2 x Quizzes	20
• Mid Term Test	30
	100

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubt, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

About me

Wen-Chi Liao is Associate Professor of Real Estate and Assistant Dean (UG Academic) at the NUS Business School, National University of Singapore. He is also an affiliated Visiting Associate Professor at MIT Center for Real Estate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Wen-Chi holds a Ph.D. (Economics) from the University of Minnesota, M.Econ (1st Class Honours) and M.Comm (Finance & IT) from the University of Sydney, and B.A. (Economics) from Soochow University.

Wen-Chi's research areas include urban economics, real estate economics, housing economics, applied spatial econometrics, economic development, and transportation economics. He publishes in leading urban and real estate journals including *Journal of Urban Economics*, *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, *Urban Studies*, *Real Estate Economics*, *Journal of Housing Economics*, *Journal of Real Estate Research*, and *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*.

Wen-Chi is an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Regional Science*, and he serves in the editorial boards of the *Journal of Real Estate Research*, *International Journal of Strategic Property Management*, and *Journal of Property Research*. He received a Red Pen Award for being the most outstanding reviewer of JRER in 2023. Wen-Chi is active in the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association (AREUEA), for which he serves in several committees.

Wen-Chi has contributed to the academic and research development of NUS through leadership roles and committee works. He was Deputy Director of the Institute of Real Estate Studies, and Ph.D. Director, Deputy Head (Research), Deputy Head (Academic), and Academic Director (B.Sc. Real Estate) of the Department of Real Estate. He was the founding director of NUS-URA Urban Planning 101, a compulsory executive training for new urban planners of Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority. He directed Asian Development Bank's 2017 Effective Urban Infrastructure Programming for Asian city mayors, in collaboration with Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ADB's City Development Initiatives for Asia. He organizes MIT Asia Real Estate Initiative's Inaugural Asia Real Estate Symposium in Cambridge MA, 2023.

Being an educator, Wen-Chi takes his teaching seriously. He received School Teaching Excellence Award in 2015 and 2019 and a distinguished instructor award from the Department of Economics, University of Minnesota. He also mentors student leaders and supervises student CCA activities in performing arts, productions, and domestic and international community services.