

Economics A294: Introduction to Fisheries Economics and Markets
University of Alaska Anchorage

Gunnar Knapp
Professor of Economics
Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
907-786-7717 (telephone)
Gunnar.Knapp@uaa.alaska.edu

SYLLABUS

Updated August 2009

Course Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to show students how economics can help in understanding fisheries—including fisheries management, fish prices, fish marketing, and important current fisheries policy issues. Other objectives of the course are to introduce students to fundamental principles and tools of economics, to teach students how to read and evaluate economic studies of fisheries, and to teach students about the seafood industry. This course is designed both for students majoring in fisheries programs as well as anyone interested in commercial fishing, the seafood industry, or fisheries management.

An Online Course

The course is offered as an internet-based distance education course in order to make it broadly accessible not only to regular students but also to people living and working in fishing communities. The course will be taught entirely over the Internet using the university's "Blackboard" distance education software. All of the readings, homework, and other course materials will be posted on the Internet in Blackboard. The only things you will not do over the internet are the midterm and final exams. You will take these exams either at a University of Alaska campus or somewhere else under the supervision of a proctor.

After you enroll for the course, to get started in using Blackboard, go to the UAA Computer Services "Blackboard Login" website:

<http://technology.uaa.alaska.edu/blackboard/>

This site has all the information you need to know about using Blackboard. The easiest way to understand how the course works is to get started doing the work. The first homework is designed to teach you how to use Blackboard and how to do the course assignments. For more general information, go the website of the Distance Education Services office:

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/distanceeducation/>

Course Topics

The table below summarizes broad topics that will be covered in the course. All of these are big topics that could easily be the subject of an entire course. My goal in the course is to introduce you to each topic in sufficient detail for you to understand what the topic is about and how economics can help to understand the topic.

Topic	Brief description of topic
The Seafood Industry	Overview of the World, U.S., and Alaska seafood industries. Trends in wild fisheries harvests and aquaculture production. Overview of the seafood distribution chain (harvesting, processing, distribution and retailing). Overview of important current issues facing the seafood industry, and projections for the future of the seafood industry.
Fundamentals of Economics	Introduction to fundamental terminology, principles and models in economics which are most relevant for understanding fisheries, markets and the seafood industry, including (but not limited to): opportunity cost, supply and demand modeling, discounting and present value, marginal revenue and cost, efficiency, economic rent, property rights, and externalities. These will be reviewed and applied throughout the course.
Bioeconomics	Economic analysis of relationships between fisheries harvests and stocks. Contrast between maximum sustained yield and profit maximizing sustained yield. Economic implications of different management systems for sustainable harvest levels.
Economics of Fisheries Management	Economic analysis of different approaches to fisheries management, including open access, limited entry, individual fishing quotas, processor quotas, community quotas, and fishing cooperatives. Case studies of management for selected Alaska fisheries.
Seafood Markets	Economic analysis of seafood markets. Using supply and demand theory to explain what drives markets and prices at different levels of the seafood distribution chain. Economic theory and law of monopoly, oligopoly and "price-fixing."
Seafood Marketing	Fundamentals of seafood marketing, including generic marketing and eco-labeling. Case studies of markets and marketing for selected Alaska fisheries.
Fisheries Economic Impacts	Overview of approaches for measuring the role of commercial fisheries in the Alaska and United States economies. Data sources for economic analysis of Alaska and U.S. fisheries.
Economics of Recreational Fisheries	Overview of Alaska and U.S. recreational fisheries. Overview of approaches for measuring non-market values. Economic comparisons of commercial and recreational fisheries.
Economics of Aquaculture	Growing significance of aquaculture in world seafood supply. Basic economics of aquaculture. Implications of aquaculture for wild fisheries.

Course Units and Assignments

The course will be divided into *units*. We will cover some themes as a single unit and other themes as several units. The units will vary in the amount of work: in terms of course time they may range from less than a week to several weeks.

Each unit will have one more *assignments*. The assignments will include readings, audio and video recordings, homework, discussions, games, and surveys. All assignments will be posted in separate folders for each unit which will be under the "Course Materials" folder in Blackboard.

Readings

There will usually be one or more readings for each unit. These may include notes and presentations which I have prepared for this course, government publications, journal articles, reports, newspaper articles, book chapters, and internet web sites. I have tried to include a variety of readings which give different perspectives on each topic and about fisheries economics. Some readings, like newspaper articles, may be simple and easy to understand. Others, like academic journal articles, may be complicated and difficult to understand. Don't worry if you don't understand everything in the readings! For long or complicated readings, usually I will expect you to read or learn only certain parts, which I will explain in the homeworks.

All readings will be posted online in the Blackboard folder for the unit. You may either read the readings online or download them and print them out. The homeworks will tell you which parts of each reading you need to focus on. You may skim or ignore other parts.

Audio and Video Recordings

I will ask you to listen to and/or watch some audio and video recordings. Usually you will listen to or watch these as "streaming" audio and/or video posted in Blackboard. I will also ask you to watch some videos on Youtube.

Homeworks

There will usually be a homework assignment for each unit. Each homework assignment will be in a "Word" document which you can download to your computer from Blackboard. There is space in the homework document for you to answer each question. After you have filled in the answers, you "upload" the completed assignment back into Blackboard. The first homework will include instructions for how to upload homework assignments.

The homework is the core of this class. The purpose of the homework is to help you understand the course themes and to focus your attention on the most important information for you to learn from the readings in order to answer the exam questions. All of the information you will need to do the homework will be in the readings. For each question, the homework will tell you specifically where in the readings you can find the answer.

I will post answers for each homework shortly after the due date. If you submit homework after the due date, do not use the posted homework answers to do your assignment. If it appears that you are copying answers from posted homework answers, I will grade this as a "less than a good faith effort."

Don't ask someone else to do your homework! If someone else does your work you won't learn from it and you won't be prepared for the exams. And having someone else do your work is cheating. The University of Alaska Anchorage policies regarding cheating are stated very clearly in the catalogue. Please don't make me have to apply those policies.

I encourage you to study together with other students—but your homework answers should be your own. If you have similar answers to a homework assignment because you studied with other students, explain this in the box at the top of the homework where you write your name.

Discussions

There will be class discussions using Blackboard's "Discussion Board" feature. The "Practice and Introductions" discussion is intended to give you practice in using the discussion board and to introduce yourself to other students in the course.

The "General Class Discussion" is for asking questions or sharing observations relating to the course. Examples of how you might use this discussion include: (a) asking about how to answer a homework problem or an exam question; (b) pointing out errors in homework assignments; (c) commenting on or asking about current fisheries policy issues; (d) making suggestions for how to improve the course, or to ask questions about or comment on fisheries policy issues. I will try to respond to all questions and comments.

The remaining discussions will be about current Alaska fisheries policy issues or about readings which I will post. You should make at least one contribution to each discussion. I encourage you to offer your opinions on current fisheries policy issues and to share your own experiences which may be relevant to the topic.

Games

Over the course of the semester, we will play two online "games," in which you will simulate being fishermen or fish processors and make decisions which affect other participants in the game. The purpose of the "Fishing Game" is to help you understand how decisions by individual participants in a fishery, as well as the management system, may affect harvests, fish stocks, prices, revenues, costs and profits in a fishery over time. The purpose of the "Markets Game" is to help you understand how different factors may affect the prices paid for fish. You may be asked to make several game decisions per week, such as how much gear to fish or whether to accept or offer a particular price for fish. I will post announcements about and instructions for the games in Blackboard.

Surveys

Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to do several kinds of short online surveys. Your answers on these surveys will not affect your grade in any way. However, as an incentive to do the surveys, I will give you one point towards your course grade for each survey you complete.

The "pre-test" and "post-test" surveys at the beginning and end of the semester are identical. They will not count towards your grade. The purpose is to help me understand better what students know at the beginning of the semester and how much they learn while taking the course.

The purpose of most of the other surveys is to give me feedback about each of the course units. I will use your answers to help me improve the course for the rest of the semester and for future years.

Exams

There will be proctored midterm and final exams. (More information about where and when you can take the exams is provided below). As part of each course unit, I will give you in advance all of the questions related to the unit which may be on the exams. These may include multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short essay questions (1-2 paragraphs). All of the work for each theme is designed, directly or indirectly, to help you learn the answers to these exam questions. If you can't figure out the answer to an exam question, you may ask me in the General Class Discussion. I post the exam questions for the sole purpose of helping you study for the exam. You do not have to answer them or submit answers.

How Much Work is this Course?

My goal is that the amount of work for this course, the level of difficulty of the material, and the grading standards should be similar to those for an on-campus course. You should expect to spend about the same amount of time as you would for an on-campus 200-level course. Note that if you were taking an on-campus course, you would spend about 2 ½ hours per week in class. Thus, you should expect to spend *more* time working on homework and reading than you would for an on-campus course. In general, I would expect the work to take between 4 and 8 hours per week for most students.

Taking a course online is different from taking it on campus. There are advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that you will have much greater flexibility. You can do the work when and where you want. You also have the opportunity for a continuing online discussion with me and with other students.

But you will also have to take more responsibility for your learning. You can't sit back and listen to lectures: you will have to get most of what you learn by reading. What you get out of this course will directly reflect what you put into it. A lot will depend on the effort you make to do the readings, homework, discussions and games, and to interact with me and with other students in the discussions to share your questions, knowledge, and opinions.

Grading

The grading for this course is based on "points" that you earn over the course of the semester. There will be 1000 possible points. The grading scale is 900-1000 = A, 800-899 = B, 700-799 = C, 600-699 = D, and less than 600 = F. You will be able to keep track of your grades using the "gradebook" feature of Blackboard.

Each homework assignment, discussion, survey, game, and exam will have a point value. I will post information about these point values under the "Course Materials" folder in Blackboard.

Homework grading. Each homework assignment will have a point value. I will grade homework as follows: Good faith effort for all questions: 100% of point value. Less than a good faith effort: less than 100% of point value; homework turned in late: 80% of point value. Homework not turned in: 0% of point value;

What I am looking for in the homework, and what I base homework grading on, is a “good faith effort.” You don’t have to answer the questions correctly. You just have to show that you tried—that you gave the question some thought and effort.

This means that it’s OK to have homework answer like “I looked where you said the answer would be on page 17 and I couldn’t find the answer,” or “I don’t understand which formula I’m supposed to use” or “my computer wouldn’t play the Youtube video the question asks about.” My goal in this course is to help you to learn about the economics of fish! My goal is not to waste your time trying to do questions you can’t understand or which I may have worded poorly.

Discussion grading. Each discussion (except for the “General Class Discussion) will have a point value. I will grade discussions as follows: Good faith effort to participate in the discussion: 100% of point value. Less than good faith effort to participate in the discussion: less than 100% of point value; No participation in discussion: 0% of point value. By a good faith effort to participate I mean that you show that you have thought about the topic, read the previous postings, and tried to share something. I do *not* expect you to necessarily have profound insights or demonstrate huge knowledge about the topic. I completely expect that different students will have different levels of experience with and knowledge of different topics. Many of the discussions will ask for your opinions about a policy issue: there isn’t any “correct” answer to these kinds of questions: my goal is to get you to think about your own opinion. Just make a good-faith effort to participate in the discussion at whatever level you can.

Game grading. I will post information about game grading with the game instructions in Blackboard. In general, your grade will be based on participation—we really need everyone to participate or the games don’t work. But I’ll also base the grading partly on how well you (and others) do in the games, to give you an incentive to think and take the games seriously.

Survey grading. Doing each survey is worth one point. How you answer surveys will have no effect on your course grade.

Keeping Track of Your Grades

As you begin to submit homework and discussion contributions, I will begin posting grades in Blackboard. You will be able to look at your grades using the Tools/My Grades feature of Blackboard. I will post an announcement once I have begun posting grades. It will usually take me at least several days and sometimes 1-2 weeks to grade homework and discussion contributions.

Assignment Due Dates

The homework assignments for this course will have due dates. Most assignments will be due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. (one minute before midnight).

The purpose of the homework due dates is to keep you from falling behind on the work during the semester. However, I realize that people sometimes get sick or have travel or other commitments (including fishing) so they can't meet homework deadlines that I set.

For this reason, you may, without penalty, change your deadline for submitting any homework assignment as long as you do so in advance of the deadline (sort of the way the IRS lets you file for an extension to file your income tax return after April 15—but you have to file for the extension before April 15!). I will provide instructions in Blackboard about how to change the deadline for a homework assignment. You will need to tell me (a) your reason for changing the deadline; and (b) a new deadline which works for you, which you can stick to, and which will allow you to complete all your course work by the end of the semester.

In other words, I want you to have flexibility in scheduling your homework for this course in a way that meets your needs (including the needs of students at campuses other than Anchorage that are on different semester schedules). But I *don't* want students to let all the work pile up till the end of the semester and then find themselves unable to do it in time—which is why if you can't meet the deadlines I set I want you to choose and meet deadlines that do work for you.

You can only change a homework deadline once. You can't keep on rescheduling when a homework will be due.

The game assignments will also have due dates. You can't change the deadlines for these, since we need everyone to participate in the same time frame for the games to work.

Scheduling and Taking Exams

This course, like all UAA distance education courses, is administered by the UAA Distance Education Office Although I write and grade the exams, the Distance Education Services Office administers them. You may take the exams either in Anchorage or at another location under the supervision of a proctor.

Each semester, the Distance Education Office sets a midterm exam week and a final exam week for distance education courses. Information about the exam week dates is posted in the distance education calendar which is posted on the website of the Distance Education office:

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/distanceeducation/>

Most students who live in Anchorage take their exams on the Saturday of the exam weeks at a location on campus announced by the Distance Education office. However, you can take the exams any day during the exam weeks at the Distance Education office. If you plan to do this,

you should telephone the Distance Education Office in advance (at 907-786-4646, option 3) to make sure that they will be open and will have the exam ready for you to take. Be sure to bring an ID card when you go to take your exam!

If you won't be taking the exams in Anchorage, you need to make arrangements for an exam proctor in advance with the Distance Education Office. Information about how to make exam arrangements and other important information related to taking this course is in the "*Distance Education Student Guide*." This document is posted online in Blackboard under the "Syllabus" folder. It is also available online at the Distance Education Office website shown above.

You are responsible for deciding where and when to take the midterm and final exams, and making any necessary arrangements with the Distance Education Office. If you have any questions about when and where you may take exams, or how to make the arrangements, please contact the Distance Education Services Office (not me), at distance@uaa.alaska.edu or 907-786-4646 or toll free at 1-877-633-3888 (for both numbers, choose option #3).

Announcements

Whenever you log onto the course in Blackboard, you should check for new announcements on the "Announcements" page (usually this is the page which comes up first). You are responsible for reading all announcements.

Incompletes

I strongly discourage students from requesting grades of "Incomplete." I am reluctant to give them. I have found that many students who receive grades of incomplete never complete the course, and after a period of time the University automatically changes their grade to an F. However, I realize that circumstances sometimes arise which make it necessary for students to request an incomplete. If you wish to request an incomplete, you should first contact me by e-mail and explain why you are requesting an incomplete. Then you should fill out the Incomplete Grade Contract which will be posted in Blackboard under the "Syllabus" folder and mail it to me.

About Myself

I am a Professor of Economics at the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). I grew up in Maryland and received my B.A. in Economics from Yale University in 1975 and my Ph.D. in Economics from Yale University in 1981. In 1981, I moved to Alaska and have been working in my present job at ISER since that time.

Since 1981, I have been involved in research on the Alaska economy and Alaska resource management and market issues. Since the early 1990s, I have specialized in research on Alaska fisheries markets and management. I have written numerous papers and reports about fisheries topics, many of which are posted on my website: www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/iser/people/knapp.

I have visited fishing, fish farming, and fish processing operations in many countries including Canada, Chile, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, Japan, Russia, China, Vietnam, and Thailand.

Contacting Me

Feel free to contact me directly at any time by e-mail or phone.

My e-mail address is: Gunnar.Knapp@uaa.alaska.edu. If you send me an e-mail, always start the “Subject” header with “ECON294.” This is how I will know the message is from a student in this course. I receive hundreds of e-mail messages each week, many of them spam. If you neglect to write “ECON294” in the subject header, I may delete your message without reading it.

My telephone number is 907-786-7717. If I am not in, please leave a detailed message. Tell me what you are calling about, any questions you may have, and how I can reach you.

You are welcome to drop by my office for a visit. My office is located off-campus at the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), on the fifth floor of the Diplomacy Building. The Diplomacy Building is located at 4500 Diplomacy Drive, off of Tudor Road near the Alaska Native Medical Center. (Detailed directions for how to find the Diplomacy Building are posted on my web site.) It is best to call in advance to confirm that I will be there. I will be traveling out of state several times during the semester, and I often work out of my home, particularly in the mornings. Every morning, I try to record a voice-mail announcement about when I will be in the office and how to reach me if I am not in the office.

There are three reasons for which you should NOT contact me directly:

- If you are having problems with your computer or with Blackboard, don't contact me! Contact the Computer Services “Call Center” at 907-786-4646 or callcenter@uaa.alaska.edu. They will be much more helpful than I can be! I know a lot about fisheries economics. I don't know very much about computers and Blackboard—so you are a lot better asking the people who do.
- If you have questions about how or where you can take an exam, don't contact me! Contact the Distance Education Services office at 907-786-4646 or 1-877-633-3888 (toll free long distance) (select phone option 3) or distance@uaa.alaska.edu. They administer the exams and they are the ones who can help you.
- If you want to ask me about something for which my answer is likely to be of interest to other students, don't contact me directly! Instead, use the class discussion. For example, if you want to ask how to do a homework question, comment on a reading, or debate my interpretation of a particular topic, you should do so in the class discussion.

Support for the Development of this Course

Support for the development of this course was provided by the Icicle Fisheries Fund, which was established by a generous grant from Icicle Seafoods to the University of Alaska Anchorage. The long-term purpose of the fund is to strengthen the capacity of the Institute of Social and Economic Research to engage in research and instruction on Alaska's fishing industry and

Alaska's seafood markets. Short-term priorities are to support development of expanded instruction about the fishing industry and seafood markets, and to support active involvement of students in research about Alaska's fishing industry and Alaska's seafood markets.

Although the Icicle Fisheries Fund provided support for the development of this course, Icicle Seafoods has no involvement in the design of this course or how I am teaching it. All decisions about the course are entirely my own.