

EC 202: Introduction to Macroeconomics

Section 001 — Spring 2026

Instructor Information

Name: Sierra Smith

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 1:00-3:00 and Thursdays: 12:00-2:00

Location: Marshall–Adams E18

*From the main entrance, go downstairs and through the door on the left

TA Information

Name: Carlos Flores Komatsu

Office Hours: TBD

Location: Old Botany 3

*From the main entrance, go left downstairs and it's the door on the right in the hall

Name: Andrew Helfrich

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-3:00

Location: Old Botany 3

*From the main entrance, go left downstairs and it's the door on the right in the hall

Class Information

Dates: January 12, 2026 – April 26, 2026

Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 1:50 PM – 02:40 PM

Classroom: Wells Hall B115

Final Exam: TBD

Emails

Course Email: EC202Section1@gmail.com

Please send all course-related emails (attendance, grades, Achieve, and general questions) to this address.

Instructor Email: smithsi6@msu.edu

This email should be used only for accommodations and to schedule individual meetings.

Help Room

MSU offers a dedicated help room that provides drop-in tutoring for EC201, EC202, EC301, and EC302. The help room is staffed by current MSU students who have successfully completed these courses and are available to assist you with any challenges you may encounter, including understanding concepts, completing homework, and preparing for exams.

Help room begins the second week of class.

Schedule: 3:00PM–5:00PM (In-person) & 5:00PM–8:00PM (Online) Mon-Fri

Zoom Link: TBA

In person Location: 3rd floor (West Wing) of the Library

Note: Please be aware that help room tutors cannot assist with questions about grading or course structure. If you have concerns related to these matters, please see me or the TAs.

Course Description

This course examines the behavior and performance of the economy as a whole. We will explore how aggregate economic activity is measured and analyze the determinants of output, employment, inflation, and economic growth. The course also studies business cycles and the roles of monetary and fiscal policy in stabilizing the economy. Emphasis is placed on developing intuition through basic models, graphical analysis, and real-world applications. By the end of the course, students will be prepared for further study in economics and better equipped to interpret economic data and policy discussions in everyday life.

Prerequisites: Basic math

Materials

Textbook (Optional): *Principles of Macroeconomics (Any edition would be fine)*, by Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers

Achieve (Required): We will be using the online platform *Achieve* for homework assignments. It costs \$75 and can be purchased through the "Achieve" module under "Contents" in D2L.

Course ID: 3y5nhz

Calculator: You are allowed the use of a physical calculator on exams. However, electronic calculators – such as phone – are not permitted. The use of a prohibited device will be considered an instance of cheating and will be dealt with accordingly.

Engagement

A key part of learning economics is connecting course concepts to the real-world and practicing how economic reasoning is applied. To support this, engagement in this course will be assessed through brief, in-class activities held throughout the semester. Each week, a randomly selected

class meeting will include a short engagement exercise.

Engagement activities will consist of a brief writing prompt asking you to connect material from the course to a real-world example, along with 1–3 practice multiple-choice questions. These activities are designed to be low-stakes and to reinforce material covered in lecture while helping identify areas where additional clarification may be helpful.

Engagement is graded on a participation basis. There are only two possible scores: 100 or 0. As long as you make a reasonable effort to complete the activity, you will receive full credit, even if your responses are not fully correct. A score of 0 will only be given for activities that are not submitted or show no meaningful effort (e.g., left blank).

Engagement activities will be completed during class and will take no more than 10 minutes. Additionally, I know life happens (we get sick, have car troubles, oversleep, your cat eats a hair tie and has to go to the vet... etc.). So, **you can miss THREE activities during the semester without it affecting your grade.**

Problem Sets

Problem sets are an essential component of the course and are designed to help you practice and reinforce the material covered in lecture. All problem sets will be completed using *Achieve*. A link to access Achieve will be provided on D2L and in the syllabus later in the first week of class.

There will be approximately 15–20 problem sets assigned throughout the semester, though the exact number may be lower depending on the pace of the course. Each problem set will be released on Achieve before we begin the corresponding chapter in lecture.

Problem sets are due by **11:59 PM on the Tuesday before each exam**. Deadlines are firm, and late submissions may not be accepted. It is recommended that you start the problem sets early to make sure you met the deadline. Your **TWO lowest problem set scores will be dropped** at the end of the semester. This policy is intended to provide flexibility for missed or low-scoring assignments.

Exams

There are two midterm exams and a final exam, all of which are non-cumulative and graded on correctness. You are expected to be present, seated, and ready to take the exam before the exam begins. You are not permitted to use any outside materials, resources, or electronic devices (including but not limited to mobile phones and smartwatches; calculators are permitted unless otherwise specified). Any violation of this policy constitutes a violation of the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

There will be no make-up exams. A missed midterm exam will count as a zero. However, the lowest midterm exam score will be dropped *only if doing so improves your exam average*. A missed final exam counts as a zero.

The final exam is non-cumulative and will be administered during the university-scheduled final exam period. The final exam is required and will only be given at the announced time. If you have a conflict involving another final exam, you must contact me at least two weeks in advance to

discuss possible accommodations.

Grading

The course grade is determined by the following components:

Midterm 1	20%
Midterm 2	20%
Final Exam*	20%
Problem Sets	25%
Engagement	15%

*Exams collectively account for 60% of the course grade. If dropping the lowest midterm exam score improves your exam average, the remaining midterm and the final exam will each account for 30% of the total course grade. Otherwise, all three exams will be averaged equally.

Exam Drop Policy: Worked Examples

Example 1: Dropping a Midterm Improves the Exam Average

Suppose a student earns the following exam scores:

Midterm 1	72
Midterm 2	0
Final Exam	84

$$\text{Exam Average (no drop)} = \frac{72 + 0 + 84}{3} = 52$$

$$\text{Exam Average (with drop)} = \frac{72 + 84}{2} = 78$$

Result: The lowest midterm (Midterm 2) is dropped, increasing the exam average.

Example 2: Dropping a Midterm Does Not Improve the Exam Average

Suppose a student earns the following exam scores:

Midterm 1	88
Midterm 2	96
Final Exam	60

$$\text{Exam Average (no drop)} = \frac{88 + 96 + 60}{3} = 81.3$$

$$\text{Exam Average (with drop)} = \frac{96 + 60}{2} = 78$$

Result: Dropping a midterm would lower the exam average, so all three exams count.

Grade Scale

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

4.0	93 – 100	2.0	73 – 77
3.5	88 – 92	1.5	68 – 72
3.0	83 – 87	1.0	63 – 67
2.5	78 – 82	0.0	0 – 62

Note: I reserve the right to curve grades if deemed necessary. However, this is not a guarantee, so try your best on every element of this course.

Students with Disabilities

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.”

If you have a VISA or are in the process of getting one, please email or talk to me as soon as possible so we can work together to find appropriate accommodations. If you would like to further discuss your VISA, please visit my office hours or schedule an appointment.

Counseling Services

College students often experience issues that may interfere with academic success such as academic stress, sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events, relationship concerns, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus, and most are free of charge. If you are struggling with this class, please check-in during office hours or contact me by email at smithsi6@msu.edu

Check-in with your academic advisor if you are struggling in multiple classes, unsure whether you are making the most of your time at MSU, or unsure what academic resources are available at MSU.

Access CAPS Services for new counseling and psychiatric services by making a CAPS Phone Request. CAPS is providing remote crisis services 24/7/365. Students can call us at 517-355-8270 and press “1” at the prompt to speak with a crisis counselor. Other prompt options are available for those not in crisis. Visit <https://caps.msu.edu> for additional information and resources.

Academic Integrity

All students in this class are bound by the Spartan Code of Honor which promises honesty and personal integrity in all academic work. In particular, the Spartan Code of Honor reads as

As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.

Any suspected violations will be reported to the department for possible disciplinary action. This includes attempts to circumvent the rules that apply to exams and homework assignments (for example, having any electronic device on hand during an exam or copying a classmate while completing a homework assignment).

Respect Policy

I respect your time:

- I will come prepared to help you understand the course material and prepare you for assignments/problem sets/exams.
- Communication is key: I cannot help you if I do not know what is going on.
- I am here to help you, this is your time, so let me know what I can do to help you succeed.
- If there is something that you would like me to do differently, please, let me know. I am happy to work with you to make class the best it can be.

Respect my time:

- Be on time to class.
- Pay attention when I am lecturing.
- Come to class prepared by doing the work and going to office hours when you need help.

Tips for Success

- Be proactive about your success in the course.
- Do not procrastinate! Begin your assignments and studying early!
- Attend every class.
- Ask questions whether it is during class, office hours, at help room, or via email to your instructor or TAs.
- Form a study group! Working together will help you and others better understand the course material as you can work through different difficulties and offer each other clarifications on concepts.
- Do problems! Reading through your notes is not enough. Seek out new problems and work through them carefully. When you are done, check your answer. If you are wrong, examine carefully what misunderstanding occurred and how to avoid it in the future. If you were correct, examine if there was a faster way, check to see if your solution 'flowed' and was easy to read, and think over what concepts/computations were used and what 'type' of problem the exercise was.

- Every time you approach a new concept, carefully think how it could be applied in your own life.

Tentative Schedule

The following is a *tentative* schedule for the course. Dates are subject to change depending on the amount of material covered each class and will be updated each week.

Monday	Topic	Wednesday	Topic	Friday	Topic
01/12	Welcome	01/14	Chapter 1	01/16	Chapter 1
01/19	No Class	01/21		01/23	No Class
01/26		01/28		01/30	
02/02		02/04		02/06	
02/09		02/11		02/13	No Class
02/16		02/18		02/20	Midterm 1
02/23		02/25		02/27	
03/02	No Class	03/04	No Class	03/06	No Class
03/09		03/11		03/13	
03/16		03/18		03/20	
03/23		03/25		03/27	Midterm 2
03/30		04/01		04/03	No Class
04/06		04/08		04/10	
04/13		04/15		04/17	
04/20		04/22		04/24	

Final Remark

I view this syllabus as a contract between you and me. While I promise to try my best to honor all that I have detailed, I do reserve the right to make any changes I see necessary.