More Information about Econ 135:

Hints on Class Preparation and Readings

Check the class page on upcoming topics. Then do the required readings before class.

When you read chapters or lecture notes before class, it’s understood that you will not understand everything. However, reading before class will introduce you to the topic, allow you to study definitions, terminology, and notation at a more leisurely pace than in class, and help you focus in class on the items that you found difficult on your own. In class, ask questions. I do like questions – and it’s in your interest to ask because I tend to move more quickly if there are no questions. After class, review the readings again in detail and best do some practice problems. You are generally responsible for the required readings even if not everything was covered in class. (Exceptions would be announced in class or on the class page.) Important: don’t fall behind—most classes will build on previous ones.

The recommended and optional readings are just that – some are meant to reinforce class material (labeled recommended), some as guide to further reading in case a topic catches your interest (labeled optional). For some topics, there is no good and concise reading that’s worth making required—either it’s not covered in the book, or there is way too much, or it’s presented in a way that would raise too many distracting questions. In such cases, I tend to present the topic in class without requiring that you read all my sources and instead post key sources as recommended. You may disregard the recommended and optional readings if you had no trouble following the class presentation. Also, there is no need to study them before class—in contrast to the required readings that you are supposed to do in advance.

Throughout the quarter, you should be informed about macroeconomic and financial market news. My default information source is the Wall Street Journal (WSJ). You may ask me about anything reported in the WSJ, and I am prepared to help you interpret the financial data in the WSJ. I also consult bloomberg.com, though less frequently. You may use other newspapers or web sites, but then you are more on your own. In any case, if you find an interesting story that seems relevant to monetary economics, you are invited to bring it up in class or tell me.