

Urban Economics

Fall 2026

Department of Economics, National Chung Cheng University

Instructor: 洪以儒 (Yi-Ju Hung)

Lecture: Thursday 13:10-16:00, College of Management 106

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Course Description

Location matters. Economic activities vary across space. Locations shape individuals' labor market opportunities, residential choices, schooling, and accessibility to consumption and services. For firms, locations determine the cost of inputs and outputs, the level of competition, accessibility to markets, local regulations and policies, and, thus, profits. The aggregation of individuals' and businesses' location decisions affects the size and performance of cities and regions.

This undergraduate course, designed for students with a basic understanding of microeconomics, introduces core ideas and models in urban economics, especially related to city formation, size, productivity, and housing prices. In this course, we will apply microeconomic concepts to understand differences in economic activity across space. We will also investigate the role of cities and regions in aggregate economic development. Finally, we will discuss applications to related fields in economics, including labor economics, economics of race and discrimination, environmental economics, and other socioeconomic topics related to space.

Objectives

- Provide you with knowledge about the economics of cities and regions.
- Foster your knowledge about core spatial models, empirical techniques, and the link between the two.
- Encourage you to think critically and creatively about existing research.
- Improve your ability to present complex research output clearly and synthetically.

Evaluation

1. Participation: 10%

2. Problem Sets: 45%
3. Group Presentation: 30%
4. Mini Project: 15%

Problem Sets: There are 5 problem sets, which include (1) data analysis and (2) summaries of reading materials.

Group Presentation: Students should present one or two times throughout the semester, depending on the size of the class. The topics and/or papers will be assigned, and the group size will be determined at the beginning of the semester. Each presentation is around 30-40 minutes. Students can present in either Mandarin or English, with *English slides*. Asking questions while other groups are presenting is required; it will count toward the participation credit.

Mini Project: Students (working in groups) should select a topic or research question related to Taiwan (any theme is acceptable). The aim is to *gather and present data* to address the question, identify a pattern, and build a narrative. I will guide you through the storytelling process step by step. The project includes several in-class presentations (10–20 minutes each); I will provide feedback and recommendations during and after each presentation to help you continue developing the project. Details will be discussed in class.

Topics

The syllabus, lecture slides, and all reading materials will be uploaded on eCourse. Papers marked as “Technical” are optional; though some of them will be discussed in class, the mathematical and econometric skills and details are not required. The papers listed (tentative) will be introduced or assigned for group presentations.

1. **Spatial Distribution of Economic Activity; What is a City?**
2. **Agglomeration Forces**
3. **Migration/Immigration & Its Consequences**
4. **Climate Change and Location Choices**
5. **Segregation**
6. **Neighborhood Effects**