

## Labour Economics (F000932)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 4.0**

**Study time 120 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026**

A (semester 1)

Dutch

Gent

seminar

lecture

independent work

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Baert, Stijn

EB21

lecturer-in-charge

Deschacht, Nick

EB21

co-lecturer

Lippens, Louis

EB21

co-lecturer

Omey, Eddy

EB21

co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

[Bachelor of Science in Economics](#)

4

A

[Bachelor of Science in Economics \(Double Degree\)](#)

4

A

[Linking Course Master of Science in Economics](#)

4

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Science in Economics](#)

4

A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

Labour, labour market, labour demand, labour supply, labour market equilibrium, unemployment, inactivity, sustainable employment, labour market research, labour market policy, social dialogue, wage formation, human capital, labour market discrimination, compensating wage differentials, incentive pay, trade unions.

**Position of the course**

The objective of this course unit is to provide students with an understanding of the functioning of the labour market from a rigorous, general-economic perspective. In addition, they are introduced to recent labour economics research, as well as the challenges facing the Belgian labour market and related labour market policies. Compared to the broader, multidisciplinary course Labour and employment, this course is rather quantitative and model-based in nature. This course unit deliberately allows differentiation between students, both in terms of content and level of ambition.

**Contents**

**Part A. Labour economics:** analysis. This part concerns analysis as taught at universities worldwide, based on Borjas' standard textbook and brought via classical lectures. The first lectures cover labour demand, labour supply and labour market equilibrium. Besides the basic neoclassical model, some extensions are discussed. It then discusses model-based and empirical explanations of wage differentials between workers, including factors such as education, discrimination, compensating wage differentials and incentive pay. Finally, it briefly considers an international-science perspective on trade unions and unemployment, topics that Part C elaborates more practically within the Belgian context.

**Part B. Labour economics:** scientific research. Recent scientific articles are discussed during the lectures on supply, demand and labour market equilibrium. In

addition, a specific lecture is dedicated to the state of scientific research on certain topics (via overview studies). As an elective assignment, students can participate in guest lectures on labour economics research and submit a synthesis thereof with an explicit link to the subject matter; as an alternative option, they can look up and analyse a striking labour market figure, also in relation to the subject matter covered.

**Part C. Labour market policy.** This part includes a lecture on social dialogue and industrial relations that characterise the Belgian labour market. In addition, guided self-study of the most recent annual report of the High Council for Employment takes place. As an elective assignment, students can attend guest lectures on labour market vision and submit a synthesis thereof with an explicit link to the subject matter; in addition, they can write an opinion piece, also in relation to the subject matter covered.

**Differentiation by content.** Students have the opportunity to help determine which topics are covered within the capita selecta. In addition, they choose from four different assignments, allowing them to partly shape their learning path themselves.

**Differentiation by ambition level.** Students can determine their own level of ambition. For instance, they can choose to include an excellence track and thus gain bonus points. There is also the option of completing three instead of two assignments. In addition, students can decide whether to use the option of individual feedback on assignments. Finally, they can choose whether to take self-tests to gain additional bonus points.

#### **Initial competences**

The final competences of a course on micro-economics

#### **Final competences**

- 1 Being able to define and understand the common concepts and models in labour economics.
- 2 Being able to analyse and explain the functioning of the labour market (supply, demand and equilibrium).
- 3 Being able to analyse and explain the dynamics of labour supply.
- 4 Being able to analyse and explain the dynamics of labour demand.
- 5 Being able to analyse and explain the role of human capital.
- 6 Being able to analyse and explain inequalities and discrimination on the labour market.
- 7 Being able to analyse and explain compensating wage differentials.
  
- 8 Being able to analyse and explain different types of incentive pay.
- 9 Knowledge of the functioning of the Belgian system of social bargaining.
- 10 Being able to analyse and explain the functioning of the Belgian system of social bargaining.
- 11 Being able to synthesise research in labour economics.
- 12 Being able to discuss research in labour economics.

#### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

#### **Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

Interactive lecture with computer presentations

'Flip class teaching'

Guided self-study: students are guided through a chapter of the material and a policy report (by submitting questions and sharing the answers in class and a self-test)

## Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Labor Economics

Indicative price: € 70

Optional: yes

Language : English

Author : George J. Borjas

ISBN : 978-1-26609-552-8

Number of Pages : 494

Oldest Usable Edition : 9th edition

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Type: Slides

Name: handouts and scientific articles

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Number of Slides : 300

## References

### Course content-related study coaching

Computer presentations used during classes can be accessed via Ufora. Useful links and videos are also available there.

At the beginning of the semester, the different ways in which questions can be asked are communicated (questions during lectures, discussion via Ufora, specific question lectures and a limited possibility for questions via e-mail).

Self-tests will be made available.

Students can receive oral feedback on a preliminary version of some assignments during feedback sessions.

All students receive a feedback form for their assignments at the end of the semester, based on the assessment criteria communicated at the beginning of the semester.

### Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

### Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

### Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

### Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

### Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

### Extra information on the examination methods

Period-based evaluation: written examination with open-ended questions. The type of questions is explained at the start of the semester.

Continuous evaluation: each student completes two out of four possible assignments. Each assignment is assessed on 2 out of the 20 marks. If a third assignment is submitted, only the two highest rated assignments are counted.

In addition, bonus points can be earned via an excellence track and via two self-tests (see next section).

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

The period-based evaluation counts for 80% of the final grade, the permanent evaluation for 20%.

In addition, a bonus of half a point can be earned per self-test by those who answer at least half the questions correctly. These bonus points are carried over to the second examination opportunity (there is no resit of the self-tests).

A maximum of two bonus points can be earned, or a maximum of one point can be lost, via a so-called excellence track. Students who wish to participate in this can apply no later than Tuesday of class week 3. Within this track, they select and study five additional labour economics articles from a longlist. A discussion session will then be organised with these students, with each participant explaining one article and guiding the other students in it. Points are attached to this session: one can lose up to 0.25 point and earn up to 0.5 extra point. There is also room for a broader discussion on the most difficult points of all the articles. Here, they can lose up to 0.5 point and earn up to 1 extra point. Furthermore, the students in this excellence track write a short critical review of a scientific manuscript that has not yet been published in a scientific journal. For this assignment, they can lose up to 0.25 points and earn up to 0.5 extra point.

Total scores above 20 are automatically reduced to 20.

### **Facilities for Working Students**

There are no compulsory lectures. Working students can opt for assignments they can complete from home. In addition, it is possible to get interim feedback on their assignments over the phone.